

# CE attends Opening Plenary of Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2025 (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, attended the Opening Plenary of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2025 in Hainan today (March 27) and met with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Dr Qu Dongyu.

In the morning, Mr Lee attended the Opening Plenary of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2025. The theme of this year's conference is "Asia in the Changing World: Towards a Shared Future".

Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Vice Premier Mr Ding Xuexiang delivered a keynote speech at the event. In his speech, Vice Premier Ding highlighted the vision of building an Asian community of common destiny proposed by President Xi Jinping a decade ago, which has since made remarkable progress thanks to the collective efforts of all parties. In the face of growing global uncertainties, Vice Premier Ding put forward "four proposals" to create a brighter future for Asia and the world, namely to strengthen solidarity and co-operation through enhanced mutual trust, to advance economic globalisation through openness and integration, to foster prosperity through promoting mutual benefit, and to safeguard harmony and stability through peaceful coexistence.

Mr Lee said that he was most encouraged by Vice Premier Ding's speech. He emphasised that under the principle of "one country, two systems", Hong Kong is the world's only open economy that enjoys both the China advantage and the global advantage. He noted that amidst geopolitical shifts, and the emergence of protectionism and unilateralism, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government remains a staunch advocate of free trade and multilateralism. With its commitment to consolidating resilience against challenges, Hong Kong is the best platform for foreign enterprises entering the Mainland market and for Mainland companies expanding globally. Mr Lee said that with the nation's support, Hong Kong will further deepen international exchanges and co-operation. Hong Kong will work alongside the country and Asian nations to enhance mutual trust and solidarity, openness and integration, and mutual benefits and peaceful coexistence, driving Asia's economic growth and advancing global economic integration.

Vice Premier Ding also shared his "three views" on the country's economic trajectory. He said that China's economy remains stable, with a consolidated upward trend; innovation-driven development continues to gain momentum, propelling China's economic transformation; and China is further deepening reform comprehensively and enhancing its business environment. Vice Premier Ding noted that the country's economic growth target of around 5 per cent this year is underpinned by strong growth potential, favourable

conditions and robust policy measures, and that the country is devoted to achieving its national economic and social development goals for the year.

Mr Lee stated that these views reinforce global confidence in China's economic future. He stressed that the more complicated and volatile the external environment becomes, the more steadfastly should Hong Kong leverage its distinctive advantage of having strong support from the motherland and close connection with the world to promote economic development and integrate into the overall development of the country. The HKSAR Government should endeavour to break new ground and continue to promote reforms, uphold the principle of developing new quality productive forces tailored to local conditions, and accelerate the development of an international innovation and technology centre. It will also further consolidate and enhance the city's status as an international financial, shipping and trade centre; actively build Hong Kong into an international hub for high-calibre talent; adopt an innovative mindset in taking forward the development of the Northern Metropolis and the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone developments together with market forces; and further promote the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, actively integrating into national development. At the same time, the HKSAR Government will strengthen collaboration with Asian countries to explore diversified economic co-operation, jointly creating a prosperous future and contributing to regional stability and the economic development of both the country and Asia.

Before attending the Opening Plenary, Mr Lee met with the Director-General of the FAO, Dr Qu Dongyu, to exchange views on enhancing co-operation between the HKSAR Government and the FAO. Noting that the HKSAR Government is actively leveraging Hong Kong's stringent food safety standards and good reputation in the food sector, Mr Lee said that Hong Kong strives to become a hub for food processing and the international food trade, with a view to enhancing the value of high-quality agricultural and fishery products from the Mainland and promoting them to global markets.

Mr Lee said that he looked forward to further exchanges between the HKSAR Government and the FAO on areas including the upgrading and transformation of the agricultural and fisheries industries, addressing climate change and the development of a green city, in order to make contributions to global food safety and sustainable development. He mentioned that as an international metropolis, Hong Kong has world-class hotels and conference venues, and gathers renowned academic institutions and experts. Mr Lee said that he welcomed the FAO to consider holding meetings in Hong Kong, and the HKSAR Government will be pleased to provide assistance.

Mr Lee will return to Hong Kong this evening.

