

CE meets Secretary-General of ASEAN and senior government officials from Belt and Road countries attending eighth Belt and Road Summit (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met with the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and a number of senior government officials from Belt and Road countries yesterday and today (September 13 and 14), who are visiting Hong Kong for the eighth Belt and Road Summit.

The Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau; the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong; and the Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, also attended the meetings.

Yesterday at the meeting with the Minister of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Arman Shakkaliyev, Mr Lee said that Kazakhstan is one of Hong Kong's most important trading partners in Central Asia. He encouraged more Kazakhstani enterprises to partner with Hong Kong enterprises and make use of Hong Kong's advantages to venture into the Mainland and other markets.

Afterwards, Mr Lee met with the Advisor in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Mr Fahd bin Abdulmohsan Al-Rasheed. Noting that the formal negotiations on an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement between Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia have commenced since his visit to the Saudi Arabia in February, Mr Lee expressed his hope for the early completion of the relevant work such that the economic and trade co-operation between the two places would scale new heights.

Mr Lee then met with the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Kao Kim Hourn. Mr Lee said he was pleased to see Dr Kao again after his visit to Jakarta, Indonesia, in July. He expressed his gratitude to Dr Kao for his continuous support for Hong Kong's accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will maintain close communication with the ASEAN Secretariat on relevant issues.

Mr Lee also met with the Minister of International Cooperation of Egypt, Dr Rania A Al-Mashat. He said that with Hong Kong's advantages as a professional services and fund-raising platform, the city can contribute to

Belt and Road projects in Egypt, including the Central Business District project in the new administrative capital of Egypt. He also looks forward to strengthening co-operation between the two places in order to explore more new opportunities.

Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Mr Péter Szijjártó, Mr Lee said that Hungary is Hong Kong's seventh largest trading partner among the European Union member states, with bilateral merchandise trade between Hong Kong and Hungary amounting to HK\$17.8 billion last year. The HKSAR Government will continue to promote Hong Kong's advantages and opportunities to more Hungarian enterprises.

Last evening, Mr Lee hosted a networking dinner at Government House to exchange views with guests on promoting the Belt and Road Initiative. Guests included representatives of political, business and professional sectors of Hong Kong, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR Mr Fang Jianming, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Kao Kim Hourn, senior government officials from Belt and Road countries who came to Hong Kong to attend the summit, and Consuls-General and Honorary Consuls of various countries in Hong Kong.

This morning, Mr Lee met with the Minister of Planning and Investment of Vietnam, Mr Nguyen Chi Dung. He thanked Vietnam for its continued support for Hong Kong's accession request to the RCEP. Mr Lee pointed out that Vietnam is Hong Kong's seventh largest trading partner and the economy of Vietnam has grown significantly in recent years. He encouraged more enterprises in Vietnam to co-operate with their counterparts in Hong Kong and make good use of Hong Kong's advantages as the most open international city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to explore the immense investment opportunities on the Mainland.

In the afternoon, Mr Lee met with the Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mr Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri. Mr Lee noted that the UAE is Hong Kong's largest trading partner in the Middle East and he believed that there is much room for forging economic and trade ties between the two places. He also expressed his hope that more enterprises in the UAE will capitalise on Hong Kong's distinctive advantages under "one country, two systems" and its world-class infrastructures and professional talent to seize the opportunities brought about by the Belt and Road Initiative and the GBA development.

Mr Lee said, "The two-day eighth Belt and Road Summit concluded with success and fruitful achievements. I am grateful to all the participants for their strong support for the Summit. The Summit is an important international business platform to promote Belt and Road co-operation. Hong Kong will continue to leverage its distinctive advantages of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world, proactively integrate into national development, and consolidate and develop its status as an international city, with the view to continuously contributing to the promotion of the development of the Belt and Road Initiative."

