

# CE: Middle East visit yields fruitful results and elevates Hong Kong's relations with Qatar and Kuwait to new level (with photos/videos)

â€‹The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, today (May 14) led a business delegation comprising representatives from Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises to continue its visit programme to Kuwait. He met with representatives of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and exchanged views with local political and business leaders. He witnessed the achievement of multiple outcomes of co-operation between government departments, enterprises and organisations of Hong Kong, the Mainland and Kuwait, including the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). He also visited a local enterprise.

In the morning, Mr Lee met with the Director General of the KDIPA, Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to learn about Kuwait's strategies and achievements in attracting business and investment. Mr Lee noted that last year, Kuwait was Hong Kong's sixth-largest trading partner in the Middle East, and both places have significant room for development in trade and business between the two places. Hong Kong will continue to serve as a bridge to assist enterprises in going global and attracting external investment, welcoming Kuwaiti enterprises to leverage Hong Kong's world-class financing support and professional services to explore international markets.

Mr Lee later attended a business luncheon cohosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Dubai and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, where he delivered a speech to near 300 local business leaders promoting Hong Kong's business advantages and development opportunities. He highlighted that the merchandise trade between Hong Kong and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) reached nearly US\$20 billion last year, an increase of over 53 per cent in the past four years, while Hong Kong's merchandise trade with Kuwait last year amounted to US\$200 million, up more than 20 per cent from the previous year. Hong Kong is an international financial centre and the world's largest offshore Renminbi business hub. Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises can complement each other's strengths. Hong Kong will give full play to its role as a "super connector" and "super value-adder" to deepen international exchanges and co-operation. Mr Lee added that he believes the ties and co-operation between Hong Kong and Kuwait will continue to flourish.

At the luncheon, government departments, enterprises, and organisations from Hong Kong, the Mainland, and Kuwait exchanged and announced 24 MOUs and co-operation agreements, covering areas such as economy and trade, investment, financial services, technology, legal co-operation, cargo clearance and flow, aviation, and post-secondary education.

In the afternoon, Mr Lee and the delegation visited Zain Group, a major mobile telecommunications company, to learn about its business in innovative technologies and digital communications, and exchanged views with company representatives on topics such as drones, AI, and smart city development. Mr Lee remarked that Hong Kong is actively developing into an international innovation and technology centre, and he welcomes the company to invest and pursue co-operation opportunities in Hong Kong.

In the evening, Mr Lee will host a dinner for members of the business delegation comprising representatives from Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises to thank them for their active participation in the programme of the past four days and for working together to explore co-operation opportunities for Hong Kong and the Mainland in the Middle East.

Concluding the visit, Mr Lee said that the business delegation comprising representatives from Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises, which he led to visit Qatar and Kuwait, has yielded fruitful results. He mentioned that the Middle East visit successfully made achievements in six areas, namely:

1. further strengthening the relationship between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and the governments of Qatar and Kuwait, and building consensus for collaboration;
2. reaching a total of 59 MOUs and agreements, laying a diversified foundation;
3. leveraging Hong Kong's strengths under the "one country, two systems" principle in connecting the Mainland and the world, deepening international exchanges and co-operation, and demonstrating the synergistic power of the complementary advantages between Hong Kong and the Mainland;
4. further building relations with the GCC countries to explore greater business opportunities;
5. deepening mutual understanding and strengthening commercial and trading networks; and
6. further enhancing cultural exchanges with the GCC countries.

Mr Lee said that Hong Kong has the distinctive advantages of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world, noting that the Middle East countries are actively diversifying risks and seeking investment opportunities in China and the HKSAR, which aligns with the global economic shift towards the East. The opportunities in Hong Kong are limitless. This Middle East visit has elevated Hong Kong's relations with Qatar and Kuwait to a new level, bringing more business opportunities to Hong Kong.

Mr Lee will return to Hong Kong tomorrow (May 15).





