

HKETO Jakarta celebrates Year of Snake in Manila (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Jakarta (HKETO Jakarta) hosted a business seminar and luncheon entitled Building a Stronger Future: The Synergistic Power of Fintech and Logistics in Manila, the Philippines, today (February 14) to celebrate the Year of the Snake. Some 200 guests from the local government, business, academic, cultural and media sectors attended the event.

In her welcome speech, the Director-General of the HKETO Jakarta, Miss Libera Cheng, noted that commercial and people-to-people ties between Hong Kong and the Philippines have continued to develop. Bilateral trade in goods amounted to US\$13.9 billion last year, and Hong Kong was the fifth-largest trading partner and third-largest export market of the Philippines.

"The Philippines is Hong Kong's largest source of tourist arrivals from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). We welcomed close to 1.2 million Filipino visitors last year, far exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) is connected to five major cities in the Philippines, not only enabling tourists to visit Hong Kong with ease, but also serving as an important international gateway to the Philippines. As we press ahead with the Skytopia airport city plan, HKIA will become a new world-leading commercial and logistics landmark."

Miss Cheng added that fintech and logistics are the economic pillars of the future. Their synergistic power has driven the rapid growth of e-commerce and other sectors. In this regard, the Chief Executive introduced in his 2024 Policy Address a series of relevant measures, including expanding the geographical coverage of "e-commerce Easy" under the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales to ASEAN countries, and holding the Hong Kong Shopping Festival in the ASEAN market in due course to help small and medium-sized enterprises tap into the local e-commerce sales market.

"We also welcome Philippine enterprises to make use of various business-friendly measures, such as the reduction in the duty rate for liquor last year and the world-class gold storage facilities at HKIA, to fully leverage Hong Kong's role as an international financial and trade centre."

The Acting Deputy Director (Commercial Relations) of the HKETO Jakarta, Ms Ida Ho, moderated the subsequent panel discussion to explore with local industry leaders the latest developments of the relevant sectors and explore opportunities for co-operation between the two places.

Dignitaries attending the dinner included the Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines, Mr Huang Xilian; the Undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines, Ms Mary Jean Pacheco; the Mayor of Taguig, Ms Maria Laarni Lopez Cayetano; the Regional Director of South East Asia and

South Asia of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Mr Ronald Ho; and senior representatives from major local business chambers.

The HKETO Jakarta will be hosting events in Malaysia in the coming two weeks to celebrate Chinese New Year.

