

Remarks by CE at media session in Doha (with photo/video)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, concluded the visit of the business delegation comprising representatives from Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises to Qatar together with the Chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Dr Peter Lam; the Chief Executive Officer of the MTR Corporation Limited, Dr Jacob Kam; and the Chairman of the Luyi Investment Limited, Mr Yin Haijie, in Doha, Qatar, today (May 12, Doha time). Following are the remarks by Mr Lee:

Chief Executive: I will now turn to our English-speaking friends in the media.

This marks my second duty visit to the Middle East since taking office. Our delegation comprises over 50 professionals and leaders of enterprises from Hong Kong plus Mainland China. The composition of the delegation demonstrates Hong Kong's unique role as a "super connector" and "super value-adder" under the principle of "one country, two systems". Hong Kong is dedicated to capitalising on its connectivity with both Mainland China and the world, collaborating and synergising with economies and enterprises that are eager to pursue high-quality development with us.

I have set out three major goals for our visit to the Middle East this time. First, to strengthen government-to-government relations; second, to explore new areas of co-operation; third, to make friends and expand our network.

Yesterday, I had the honour of meeting His Highness the Amir of the State of Qatar, followed by a meeting with the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. We also visited the Qatar Investment Authority. I introduced to them Hong Kong's latest developments in finance, professional services, and innovation and technology. We agreed to deepen collaboration across sectors between Hong Kong and Qatar.

We have also expanded our business networks. During this visit, we have achieved 35 MOUs and agreements spanning trade, investment, technology, legal co-operation, financial markets and so on.

In addition to Hong Kong-Qatar co-operation, two agreements were reached between enterprises from Mainland China and Qatar, supporting the development of financial services and advanced manufacturing.

A tripartite agreement among organisations from Hong Kong, Mainland China and Qatar was also reached, focusing on fintech collaboration, showcasing Hong Kong's bridging role between different economies.

The delegation has first-hand insights from the visit. The delegation

visited the Qatar Foundation to learn about its R&D, education and community projects, and visited Lusail City to better understand the smart infrastructure in Qatar's second-largest city.

Later today, I will visit an autonomous vehicle project at the airport – a project designed by a Mainland Chinese tech firm with its international headquarters in Hong Kong, and first piloted in the Hong Kong International Airport. This exemplifies our role as a launchpad for global innovation.

Tonight, we will depart for Kuwait and will announce the outcome of our duty visit later.

Reporter: Thank you honourable sir. I wanted to ask you if you could you give a rough figure of the value of the 35 memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that have been signed today? And if you can go into a little bit more about the sectors whereby Qatar and Hong Kong can both benefit from each other? For example, you mentioned earlier technology in autonomous vehicles manufactured by Yutong.

Chief Executive: There are 35 agreements signed within two days. I think that is quite a record. I am very glad that delegate members, plus our counterparts in Qatar, both have been very active and supportive in developing co-operation, collaboration and networking, and I see them really spending their time exchanging contact details and also exchanging ideas on how they can develop the relationship. The 35 co-operation agreements cover areas including economic co-operation, investment, technology, legal co-operation, finance, banking and also capital arrangement. If you want to look at the 35 areas of co-operation, I think if you look at the fullest, then you will see the focus areas of co-operation.

The result of these 35 agreements will have to be judged by those who will then continue their work. What a visit led by the Chief Executive will achieve, and can achieve, is opening the doors first with governments, so that the delegates, business players and entrepreneurs can then continue the liaison to open more doors, windows and opportunities. It is up to them to work hard, and this is something I will be demanding – for them to work hard. But if you look at my last visit to the Middle East, which was about two years ago, after we signed a number of MOUs, we have seen companies producing hydrogen buses for a country in the Middle East. We have seen, for example, on the stock exchange side, stock exchanges exchanging agreements for dual listing. We also see professionals set up their offices in the countries that I visited in the Middle East last time, and they have been receiving work orders and doing their services. I expect the delegates to continue these liaisons amongst themselves. But I am glad to inform you that the amount of enthusiasm is very strong. I will say that there will be more exchanges between not just governments, but in the private sector, chambers, businessmen and associations. And I will see not just exchanges between themselves, but also their participation in some of the events organised in Hong Kong, including both conferences, a lot of match-making deals, etc. I am very positive that the momentum will continue.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the remarks.)

