

# **Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs commences visit to Laos (with photos)**

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, commenced her visit to countries along the Belt and Road regions, namely Laos and Vietnam, today (December 10).

Upon arrival in Vientiane, Laos, this afternoon, Miss Mak visited the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Ms Fang Hong. She expressed her gratitude to Ms Fang and the Embassy for the support to the work of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB). Miss Mak and Ms Fang exchanged views on matters related to promoting youth development.

Miss Mak said that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government attaches great importance to youth development and actively promotes exchanges among young people from Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas. Diverse youth exchange and internship activities on the Mainland and overseas have been organised to enhance young people's understanding of the country, broaden their global exposure and expand their horizons. Among these initiatives, the HYAB has collaborated with organisations such as the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Agency for Volunteer Service, to organise the UNV – Hong Kong Universities Volunteer Internship Programme, which funds Hong Kong university students to undertake voluntary internships at different United Nations agencies for six months. This year, the programme has expanded to more countries along the Belt and Road region, including Laos and Vietnam. A total of 25 Hong Kong students participated in the programme and three of them are conducting voluntary internships in Laos.

In the evening, Miss Mak had dinner with three Hong Kong youths who participated in the internship. She learned about their working environment and daily life in different agencies under the United Nations.

Miss Mak will visit the department and organisation responsible for youth affairs in Laos, and will visit agencies providing volunteer internship positions for university students tomorrow (December 11).

