

## Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs visits Laos to learn about youth development work (with photos)

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, continued her visit to Vientiane, Laos, today (December 11).

Miss Mak met with the Secretary General of the Lao Youth Union, Mr Monexay Laomoaxong, in the morning, and shared work and experiences in nurturing the new generation of young people and promoting youth development with the Youth Union.

Miss Mak then visited the Minister of Education and Sports, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Dr Phout Simmalavong. During the meeting, Miss Mak expressed her gratitude for Laos' support to the youth development work of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) held the inaugural Youth Development Summit in August this year, which featured officials responsible for youth policies from various countries as guest speakers, including the Deputy Minister of Education and Sports, Lao PDR, Mr Kingmano Phommahaxay. The Summit attracted over 2 400 young people to register to participate, and about 500 of them came from the Mainland and other overseas locations such as Laos, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. Miss Mak and Dr Phout Simmalavong also exchanged views on the youth development work of the two places and explored possibilities for strengthening bilateral cooperation to provide Hong Kong youth with more opportunities to broaden their international perspectives.

In the afternoon, Miss Mak visited the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Laos, where she met with representatives from the agencies and volunteer interns to learn about the operation of the United Nations Volunteers – Hong Kong Universities Volunteer Internship Programme and the working environment of the interns. The HYAB promulgated the Youth Development Blueprint at the end of 2022, which proposed further strengthening of the breadth and depth of the Mainland and international internship and exchange programmes with a view to enhancing young people's understanding of the development of the country and the world. In 2024, the HYAB collaborated with the United Nations Volunteers, the Agency for Volunteer Service, the Hong Kong Volunteers Association and the Peace and Development Foundation to launch a new round of the United Nations Volunteers – Hong Kong Universities Volunteer Internship Programme, offering a total of 25 internship positions under various United Nations agencies and expanding to more countries along the Belt and Road region. Hong Kong university students participating in the programme will have the opportunity to undertake six-month voluntary internships at United Nations field units located overseas, which will enable them to develop their personal capabilities while contributing to the international community as Chinese

youth volunteers.

Miss Mak said that 130 Hong Kong university students have participated in the programme so far. They had the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in the country's involvement in international affairs and understand China's contributions and influences on the global landscape, thereby deepening their understanding of Hong Kong's role and positioning. The HYAB will continue to leverage Hong Kong's unique advantages to actively promote exchanges among young people in Hong Kong, the Mainland, and overseas.

Miss Mak will arrive in Hanoi, Vietnam, in the evening, and will continue her visit tomorrow (December 12).



