

Singapore ETO holds first Chinese New Year dinner in Vietnam to promote closer relationship (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore (Singapore ETO) hosted the first Chinese New Year dinner in Vietnam at Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) yesterday (February 28), taking the opportunity to celebrate the new year and the Singapore ETO's 30th anniversary with the rapidly growing Vietnamese partners and counterparts.

Jointly organised with the Hong Kong Business Association Vietnam (HKBAV), the dinner welcomed about 200 guests, including the Consul General of the People's Republic of China in HCMC, Mr Wei Huaxiang; the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs in HCMC, Mr Tran Xuan Thuy; the Deputy Chief of Office of the People's Committee of District 1 of HCMC, Mr Mac Hong Linh; the Chairman of the HKBAV, Mr Michael Chiu; the Director of Indochina of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Ms Tina Phan; and representatives from government and business sectors, chambers of commerce, Hong Kong communities in Vietnam, etc.

Speaking at the dinner, the Director of the Singapore ETO, Mr Owin Fung, recapped the multi-front work and achievements of Hong Kong and Vietnam collaboration efforts. Last summer, the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met with the then Vietnam President and the present General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Vietnam Central Committee, Mr To Lam, during his official visit to Hanoi and HCMC with a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region delegation. Meanwhile, the Permanent Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, Mr Nguyen Hoa Binh, visited Hong Kong last September to attend the Belt and Road Summit.

On business and trade relations, Mr Fung mentioned that Vietnam had become Hong Kong's sixth-largest merchandise trading partner in 2024, with a total trade volume increasing by 26 per cent from 2023. With regard to foreign direct investment (FDI), Hong Kong investors have had a keen interest in the Vietnamese market for years. On an accumulated basis, Hong Kong is one of Vietnam's top five largest FDI investors in areas such as manufacturing, real estate, retail, logistics, infrastructure, etc. In addition to other positive developments, as in tourism and education, the relations of the two places could reach a new level in the imminent future.

During the dinner, the Singapore ETO also introduced to guests the grand opening of Kai Tak Sports Park, the largest sports infrastructure project in Hong Kong history, in the evening of March 1. The cultural performances presented including lion dance, playing of Chinese and Vietnamese songs by a live band using traditional music instruments, and jamming of Cantonese and Vietnamese songs by a local singer.

Mr Fung concluded that Hong Kong has unique advantages under the "one country, two systems" arrangement, serving as a gateway between Mainland China and global markets, with the Greater Bay Area (GBA) as a key focus for collaboration. The Singapore ETO, celebrating its 30th anniversary, will continue to relentlessly enhance bilateral relations and provide help to enterprises and businesses to enter and expand in Hong Kong and take a proactive role to help enterprises and businesses in Hong Kong and the GBA go abroad. Vietnam and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will certainly be a priority destination.

