

SITI attends LEAP 2024 technology conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (with photos)

A delegation of representatives from the innovation and technology (I&T) industry led by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, continued its visit in Riyadh on March 4 (Riyadh time) and attended the opening of the LEAP 2024 technology conference. Delivering a keynote speech at the conference, Professor Sun said Hong Kong, being one of the most international cities of the country, as well as one of the key nodes of the Belt and Road Initiative, has the potential to act as a "super value-adder" between Mainland China and the rest of the world, including Saudi Arabia and the entire Middle East, to enhance mutually beneficial relationships and foster global innovation collaboration.

Professor Sun said, "Hong Kong can pool together innovation resources from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the Mainland and the world to promote I&T development, which is the best springboard for overseas enterprises to venture into the GBA, Mainland China and even the Asian markets."

He pointed out that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government this term has been proactively promoting I&T development, adding that the Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Development Blueprint promulgated in December 2022 set out the city's role as a bridge connecting the Mainland and the world as one of the key development strategies. Under the Saudi Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is well-positioned to emerge as a tech leader in the Middle East region and is making remarkable progress in developing a diversified, sustainable and technology-based economy. Professor Sun believed that Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia share the same vision and there is much room for a closer and deeper co-operation, particularly in the aspects of research and development, artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalisation.

Professor Sun also officiated at the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong Pavilion jointly presented by the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks (HKSTP) Corporation and the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited (Cyberport), the first of its kind at the technology conference. The Hong Kong Pavilion showcases 16 cutting-edge technologies covering fields of AI, biotech, healthtech, green technology from tech enterprises of the two flagships. During the ceremony, Professor Sun witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the HKSTP Corporation and Cyberport, and the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology to establish a strategic partnership in promoting I&T cooperation and deepening exchange, and facilitating companies from both places to establish market presence by providing support and assistance to startups and entrepreneurs.

On the sidelines of the technology conference, Professor Sun met with

the Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia, Mr Bandar bin Ibrahim AlKhorayef, to brief him on Hong Kong's latest development in the I&T, advanced manufacturing and new energy industries, as well as Hong Kong's unique advantages of leveraging on the Motherland and connecting with the world and internationalisation under the "one country, two systems" principle. He hoped to further enhance exchanges and co-operation between the two places.

He then met with the Deputy Minister of Investment of Saudi Arabia, Mr Saleh Ali AlKhabti, saying that Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia have been maintaining close bilateral trade relations. He hoped that through this visit, Hong Kong could establish connection with various sectors, especially I&T, in Saudi Arabia, and promote co-operations in areas such as technology, investment and advanced manufacturing.

Professor Sun and the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, who is paying a duty visit there at the same time, called on the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr Chen Weiqing. Professor Sun hoped that the HKSAR Government would continue to work closely with the Embassy to promote the advantages of Hong Kong in building into an international I&T centre and explore emerging markets.

Members of the delegation include the Chief Executive Officer of the HKSTP Corporation, Mr Albert Wong; the Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited, Mr Peter Yan, and representatives of more than ten technology enterprises from the two I&T flagships and relevant industries.

They will depart for Dubai, the United Arab Emirates today (March 5, Riyadh time).



