

# Speech by CE at International Forum on "Leading in a Time of Transition" (English only) (with video)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the International Forum on "Leading in a Time of Transition" today (November 2):

Deputy Director Lu Xinning (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Acting Commissioner Li Yongsheng (Acting Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR), Professor Herman Hu (Chairman of Friday Culture Limited), Deputy Secretary-General Maria Tam (Deputy Secretary-General of Hong Kong Coalition), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The theme of the international forum today is "Leading in a Time of Transition". The forum is joined by government officials, scholars, as well as leaders of businesses and other sectors. Together, we will explore business trends across the globe, and the impact of leadership on the rapid development of society.

I fondly remember addressing this very forum last year, on the theme of "Towards a fairer, safer world". I said last year that the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century.

Indeed, while we are doing our part to build a fairer and safer society, we are all living in an era of transition. Geopolitical tensions around the world and uncertainties in the global economy, coupled with the threats posed by climate change, food and energy crises, have created challenges to governments, businesses and individuals.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping. In his keynote address at the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing last month, President Xi stressed that humankind is a community with a shared future. The President said, and I quote, "we should jointly address various global risks and challenges, and deliver a bright future of peace, development, co-operation and mutual benefit for future generations".

Under the unique "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong is the only city in the world that enjoys both the China advantage and the global advantage.

As an open economy that champions free trade and multilateralism, Hong Kong is committed to boosting our resilience in adapting to challenges that come our way.

We have already signed free trade agreements (FTA) with 20 economies around the world. Hong Kong is striving for early accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP. RCEP is the world's largest FTA, and we are committed to deepening regional economic co-operation together with RCEP members.

We have also signed investment agreements with 32 economies. The latest addition is Türkiye, with whom we signed a new IPPA (Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement) this week.

We are negotiating an FTA with Peru. Meanwhile, we are also in active negotiations with Bahrain, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia on investment agreements. These would provide Hong Kong enterprises with better market access, as well as more thorough legal protection. A better framework to navigate and lead in a world of changes.

And to realise that, it is important to bring ourselves back to the Belt and Road. The Silk Road spirit of peace and co-operation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit is the most important source of strength for Belt and Road co-operation.

As an East-meets-West centre for international arts and cultural exchange, Hong Kong has signed MOUs (Memoranda of Understanding) on cultural co-operation with more than 10 Belt and Road countries.

Hong Kong is also bestowed with a wealth of museums and exhibition resources. Located at the burgeoning West Kowloon Cultural District, the Hong Kong Palace Museum, which showcases treasures from the Forbidden City, and M+, which is Asia's first global museum of contemporary visual culture, have become must-see attractions for visitors.

In this free and enterprising Asia's world city, we welcome our friends from around the world to rejoice in our cultural venues, and better understand one another. Expanding our circle of friends from around the world, I believe, will go a long way to helping us lead in this time of transition.

As will building a harmonious and cohesive society. Ladies and gentlemen, the District Council Ordinary Election will take place on December 10. I encourage you all to cast your vote on the day, to elect capable, patriotic representatives who are passionate to serve the local community.

On that note, I wish all of you good health and the best of business. Thank you very much.