

Speech by CE at Riding Ups and Downs: Hong Kong-Indonesia Partnership Webinar (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at Riding Ups and Downs: Hong Kong-Indonesia Partnership Webinar this afternoon (August 18):

Vice-Minister Siregar (Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr Mahendra Siregar), Commissioner Xie (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), Mr Xie Feng), Ambassador Xiao (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Indonesia, Mr Xiao Qian), ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me really great pleasure to welcome you to today's webinar, jointly organised by the Indonesian and Hong Kong SAR governments. May I first take the opportunity to congratulate the Republic of Indonesia on the 75th anniversary of its independence.

As COVID-19 continues to afflict Asia and the world at large, I'm heartened by your participation at today's webinar. It is palpable testimony to the longstanding friendship between Hong Kong and Indonesia, and our mutual determination to build on our strong ties and wide-ranging co-operation.

For several months, Hong Kong was relatively virus free. Unfortunately, we have been battling another viral wave since early July. In response, we have put in place our strictest containment measures to date. This includes tougher social-distancing measures, enhanced testing and expanded treatment and quarantine facilities. We are also encouraged by and deeply grateful for the Central People's Government's support, with which we will soon launch an expanded community testing scheme to help us identify infected persons in the community as early as possible, particularly amongst those who are asymptomatic.

While both the Hong Kong and Indonesian governments are sparing no effort to combat the epidemic, it would be important for economic partners to support each other to enhance our resilience and to join hands to ride over the storm. Such partnership and mutual support are at the centre of the Belt and Road Initiative, which continues to make progress despite COVID-19. As President Xi Jinping pointed out in his message to the High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation held in June, be it in taming the virus or in achieving economic recovery, we cannot succeed without solidarity, co-operation, and multilateralism. The right approach to tackling global crises and realising long-term development is through greater connectivity, openness, and inclusiveness, and this is where Belt and Road

international co-operation can make a big difference.

Hong Kong is keen to strengthen our co-operation with Indonesia, one of Asia's and the world's most promising economies. Despite the challenging global trade environment last year, our bilateral trade still recorded positive growth. Hong Kong last year was also third in the source of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Indonesia, amounting to nearly US\$3 billion – an encouraging 10 per cent of Indonesia's total FDI for the year. People-to-people bonds are no less reassuring, with more than 170 000 Indonesians in Hong Kong supporting our families and actively contributing to our cultural diversity.

Our two economies last month marked a bilateral relations milestone, when the part relating to Indonesia in the Free Trade Agreement and Investment Agreement between ASEAN and Hong Kong came into force. In a time of unparalleled uncertainty, such agreements underline our unwavering commitment to pursuing partnership possibilities wherever they may emerge.

Looking ahead, after we have overcome COVID-19, I believe the digital economy, and innovation and technology in general, will bring fresh opportunities for Hong Kong and Indonesian business co-operation. Indeed, digital innovation has helped Hong Kong contain the spread of the virus and, in doing so, minimise community disruption. In June, the Hong Kong Government launched a business-promotion platform featuring applications for testing, contact tracing, e-health, e-learning, e-commerce, e-communications and other smart innovations. These are open for sharing with our overseas partners, including those from Indonesia.

During my visit to Jakarta in 2018, I enjoyed constructive meetings with President Jokowi, as well as major Indonesian business leaders. In these high-profile discussions, I detailed Hong Kong's deep pool of multicultural talent, embracing law, accounting, financial services, urban planning, engineering and much more. We have professionals who are experienced in working with East and West, and professionals with the expertise to help plan and operate such major development projects as Indonesia's upcoming capital relocation.

The Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones set up with co-operation between the Mainland and Indonesia also offer plentiful prospects for collaboration. These zones, built for enterprises ranging from processing and manufacturing, to trade and logistics, science, technology and more, offer ideal entry points for Hong Kong companies looking to establish a presence in Indonesia. These zones can also serve as springboards for Hong Kong companies to go global alongside our Mainland and Indonesian counterparts. I know that operators of two of Indonesia's Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones will deliver a presentation later today, giving our business sector a much anticipated introduction to all that these industrial parks can offer.

Let me add that the fifth Belt and Road Summit will be held on November 30 in Hong Kong. By now this Summit has become the world's largest annual Belt and Road gathering, featuring commerce, investment and business-matching

opportunities for Hong Kong, Mainland and overseas companies. This year's Summit will take place under the theme of "A Business Vision for a Sustainable and Inclusive Future." I invite our Indonesian friends to join us for this year's Summit and to explore the Belt and Road future together.

Finally, allow me to thank the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Hong Kong for joining us in organising today's webinar. In addition, my thanks to the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce for being co-organisers. Last but not least, my thanks to the Ministry of Commerce, our embassy in Indonesia, and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong for their vital support.

Ladies and gentlemen, the pandemic is the great global challenge of our time. But we will prevail. So, too, will the irreplaceable bonds that exist between the peoples and the businesses of Hong Kong and Indonesia.

I wish you all the best of business and health in the coming year. Thank you very much.

