

# Marine traffic control and safety measures to be followed at 2018 National Day Fireworks Display

With regard to the 2018 National Day Fireworks Display to be held on October 1, the Marine Department (MD) will implement marine traffic control and strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels on the event day to ensure that safety requirements are met.

The MD will establish a Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai, where barges for the fireworks display will be anchored, from 2pm to about 11pm on the event day. All vessels will be prohibited from entering the area. A Restricted Area will be established in the Central Harbour from 8pm to about 10.15pm on the event day. Other than authorised vessels, no vessels will be allowed to enter. Scheduled ferry vessels with permission may continue services until 8.40pm.

For landside crowd control, all public landing steps within the Restricted Area will be closed temporarily from 7.45pm to about 10pm on the event day. Buffer Zones at Kowloon Public Pier, Kwun Tong Public Pier and Central Piers 9 and 10 will be established immediately after the event for safe and orderly disembarkation of passengers.

In addition, to ensure vessels disperse in an orderly manner, the Eastern and Western Cordon Lines of the Restricted Area will be lifted in stages after the event. The Western Cordon Line will be lifted first at about 10pm. Spectator vessels behind the Western Cordon Line and those wishing to move to the east must follow the instructions of officers from the MD and the Police at the scene. The Eastern Cordon Line will be lifted later depending on traffic conditions in Victoria Harbour. It is anticipated that the Restricted Area will be lifted by about 10.15pm.

Officers from the MD and the Police will also maintain order at major landing facilities after the event. In order to ensure the smooth and safe disembarkation of passengers, coxswains and crew members should remind passengers to pack their personal belongings early before the vessels arrive alongside the landing steps, as well as assist passengers to disembark. Coxswains and passengers should follow the guidance of the MD and the Police at the scene.

The MD and the Marine Police will also strengthen law enforcement, especially on speeding and overloading. Coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels should check again and reconfirm that the operating licence, the certificate of survey and the third party risk insurance are valid before setting sail.

Officers from the MD will strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels. Requirements include providing sufficient life-saving appliances on

board, ensuring that children wear a lifejacket at all times and that coxswains keep a passenger and crew list on board.

If any vessel fails to meet these requirements, inspecting officers will issue directions at the scene and request the person-in-charge of the vessel to take remedial action. If the person-in-charge of the vessel refuses to comply with the directions, the department will take the necessary follow-up action, such as prohibiting the vessel from departing or considering prosecution.

MD Notice No. 140 of 2018 on the marine traffic control and safety measures has been issued and is available for viewing on the MD's website ([www.mardep.gov.hk](http://www.mardep.gov.hk)).

---

## External merchandise trade statistics for August 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (September 27) the external merchandise trade statistics for August 2018. In August 2018, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year increases, at 13.1% and 16.4% respectively.

In August 2018, the value of total exports of goods increased by 13.1% over a year earlier to \$376.3 billion, after a year-on-year increase of 10.0% in July 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 16.4% over a year earlier to \$428.5 billion in August 2018, after a year-on-year increase of 14.0% in July 2018. A visible trade deficit of \$52.1 billion, equivalent to 12.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in August 2018.

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods rose by 9.9% over the same period in 2017. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 11.8%. A visible trade deficit of \$373.6 billion, equivalent to 12.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first eight months of 2018.

Comparing the three-month period ending August 2018 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 0.2%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 1.6%.

### Analysis by country/territory

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 12.0%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular Malaysia (+42.5%),

Vietnam (+21.5%), India (+18.2%), the mainland of China (the Mainland) (+13.6%), Thailand (+8.9%) and Singapore (+7.8%). On the other hand, a decrease was recorded in the value of total exports to Taiwan (-24.2%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular the United Kingdom (+31.2%) and the USA (+17.9%). Concurrently, a decrease was registered in the value of total exports to Germany (-1.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+79.0%), the USA (+31.4%), India (+22.0%), Korea (+20.8%), Thailand (+16.7%), the Mainland (+16.0%) and Japan (+5.5%).

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular the Mainland (+12.3%), Singapore (+11.1%), the USA (+10.3%), the Netherlands (+10.1%), Germany (+9.1%) and Thailand (+8.7%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports to India (-14.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+90.3%), Korea (+21.6%), Taiwan (+12.8%), the Mainland (+9.9%), the USA (+9.4%) and the Philippines (+8.3%). On the other hand, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports from India (-14.1%).

#### Analysis by major commodity

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, increases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$26.1 billion or 21.2%), "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$6.5 billion or 9.9%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$4.2 billion or 26.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$24.9 billion or 18.1%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$9.9 billion or 32.3%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$8.8 billion or 44.9%).

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$163.9 billion or 18.8%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$42.6 billion or 16.9%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$23.9 billion or 18.4%). However, a year-on-year

decrease was registered in the value of total exports of "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$15.3 billion or -11.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$172.6 billion or 17.4%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$56.6 billion or 26.1%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (by \$16.3 billion or 35.8%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$1.4 billion or -0.3%).

#### Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that the value of merchandise exports registered double-digit year-on-year growth in August, along with the continued expansion of global economic activities. Exports to many major markets, including the Mainland and the US, recorded further notable increases.

However, the spokesman commented that, while the impacts of the US-Mainland trade conflicts on Hong Kong's exports were seemingly limited thus far, they are likely to turn visible in the period ahead. If the trade conflicts are to escalate further, the global economy and Hong Kong's exports would face more notable downward pressures. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely.

#### Further information

Table 1 at the annex presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for August 2018. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2015 to August 2018, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for August 2018 are shown in Table 4, whereas the values of imports of goods from 10 main suppliers are given in Table 5.

Tables 6 and 7 show the values of total exports and imports of 10 principal commodity divisions for August 2018.

All the merchandise trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and no account has been taken of changes in prices between the periods of comparison. A separate analysis of the volume and price movements of external merchandise trade for August 2018 will be released in mid-October 2018.

The August 2018 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in August 2018 and will be available in mid-October 2018. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp)).

Enquiries on merchandise trade statistics may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 5042).

---

## Wage and payroll statistics for June 2018

### Overall wage and payroll statistics

According to the figures released today (September 27) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the average wage rate for all the selected industry sections surveyed, as measured by the wage index, increased by 3.8% in nominal terms in June 2018 over a year earlier.

About 64% of the companies reported increase in average wage rates in June 2018 compared with a year ago. 31% of the companies recorded decrease in average wage rates over the same period. The remaining 5% reported virtually no change in average wage rates.

After discounting the changes in consumer prices as measured by the Consumer Price Index (A), the overall average wage rate for all the selected industry sections surveyed increased by 1.2% in real terms in June 2018 over a year earlier.

As for payroll, the index of payroll per person engaged for all the industry sections surveyed increased by 3.8% in nominal terms in the second quarter of 2018 over a year earlier.

After discounting the changes in consumer prices as measured by the Composite Consumer Price Index, the average payroll per person engaged increased by 1.6% in real terms in the second quarter of 2018 compared with a year earlier.

The wage rate includes basic wages and other regular and guaranteed allowances and bonuses. Payroll includes elements covered by wage rate as well as other irregular payments to workers such as discretionary bonuses and overtime allowances. The payroll statistics therefore tend to show relatively larger quarter-to-quarter changes, affected by the number of hours actually worked and the timing of payment of bonuses and back-pay.

### Sectoral changes

For the nominal wage indices, year-on-year increases ranging from 3.0% to 4.7% were recorded in all selected industry sections in June 2018.

For the real wage indices, year-on-year increases ranging from 0.4% to 2.1% were recorded in all selected industry sections in June 2018.

The year-on-year changes in the nominal and real wage indices for the selected industry sections from June 2017 to June 2018 are shown in Table 1.

As for the nominal indices of payroll per person engaged, year-on-year increases ranging from 3.1% to 5.0% were recorded in all selected industry sections in the second quarter of 2018.

For the real payroll indices, year-on-year increases ranging from 1.0% to 2.8% were recorded in all selected industry sections in the second quarter of 2018.

The year-on-year changes in the nominal and real indices of payroll per person engaged for selected industry sections from the second quarter of 2017 to the second quarter of 2018 are shown in Table 2. The quarterly changes in the seasonally adjusted nominal and real indices of payroll per person engaged between the second quarter of 2017 and the second quarter of 2018 are shown in Table 3.

#### Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that year-on-year wage gains were observed in both nominal and real terms across major industries and occupational groups in June 2018, thanks to the strong local economic conditions and tight labour market. Lower-paid workers continued to see appreciable wage growth.

Payroll per person engaged, which covers discretionary bonuses and other irregular payments, registered a further solid and broad-based increase in the second quarter of 2018. More visible increases in payroll were seen in accommodation and food services activities, real estate activities, as well as professional and business services.

The spokesman added that the persistently tight labour market should continue to render support to workers' income situation in the near term. Nonetheless, the Government will stay vigilant as to how developments in the external environment will affect the local labour market going forward.

#### Other information

Both wage indices and payroll indices are compiled quarterly based on the results of the Labour Earnings Survey (LES) conducted by the C&SD.

Wage statistics are conceptually different from the payroll statistics. Firstly, wage rate for an employee refers to the sum earned for his normal hours of work. It covers basic wages and other regular and guaranteed allowances and bonuses, but excludes earnings from overtime work and discretionary bonuses, which are however included in payroll per person engaged. Secondly, the payroll index of an industry is an indicator of the simple average payroll received per person engaged in the industry. Its movement is therefore affected by changes in wage rates, number of hours of work and occupational composition in the industry. In contrast, the wage index of an industry is devised to reflect the pure changes in wage rate, with the occupational composition between two successive statistical periods

being kept unchanged. In other words, the wage index reflects the change in the price of labour. Thirdly, wage index only covers employees up to the supervisory level (i.e. not including managerial and professional employees), whereas payroll index covers employees at all levels and proprietors actively engaged in the work of the establishment. Because of these conceptual and enumeration differences between payroll and wage statistics, the movements in payroll indices and in wage indices do not necessarily match closely with each other.

It should also be noted that different consumer price indices are used for compiling the real indices of wage and payroll to take into account the differences in their respective occupation coverage. Specifically, the Composite Consumer Price Index, being an indicator of overall consumer prices, is taken as the price deflator for payroll of workers at all levels of the occupational hierarchy. The Consumer Price Index (A), being an indicator of consumer prices for the relatively low expenditure group, is taken as the price deflator for wages in respect of employees engaged in occupations up to the supervisory level.

Detailed breakdowns of the payroll and wage statistics are published in the "Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics, June 2018". Users can download this publication free of charge from the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp210.jsp?productCode=B1050009](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp210.jsp?productCode=B1050009)).

For enquiries on wage and payroll statistics, please contact the Wages and Labour Costs Statistics Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5550 or email: [wage@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:wage@censtatd.gov.hk)).

---

## **EDB announces details of Special Grant on Typhoon Disturbance for schools**

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (September 27) issued a circular memorandum to all public sector schools, schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), and kindergartens which have joined the Kindergarten Education Scheme (KG Scheme), announcing details about the provision of the Special Grant on Typhoon Disturbance.

An EDB spokesman said, "Typhoon Mangkhut wreaked havoc in Hong Kong and at the same time caused varying degrees of damage to school premises. To help schools pay the extra cost to be borne as a result of their recovery works subsequent to the typhoon, the EDB will provide the Special Grant on Typhoon Disturbance to all government schools, aided schools including special schools, caput schools, DSS schools and kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme according to the actual expenses of schools."

The basic ceiling of the special grant for public sector schools and DSS schools is \$150,000 each, and that for kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme is \$50,000 each. Schools can submit applications to the EDB based on their actual needs on or before November 30, 2018. The special grant is expected to be disbursed to schools in January 2019. In case of special circumstances whereby schools need to apply for an amount of subsidy exceeding the basic ceiling, they are required to explain their special circumstances and the EDB will consider such applications prudently on a case-by-case basis.

Public sector schools can use the special grant to cover the expenditure incurred from the cleaning up, repair works, replacement of standard facilities/equipment within school premises, or procurement of necessary items as a result of the typhoon, and which cannot be covered by the Emergency Repairs mechanism but have to be carried out as soon as possible. These include emergency restoration works which need to be conducted out of safety concerns or for enabling expeditious resumption of normal school operation, such as removal and trimming of fallen trees, clearing of waste from school campus, minor repairs and cleaning of school premises/facilities and equipment, etc.

Caput schools, DSS schools and kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme can also use the special grant to pay for the costs of emergency repairs and replacement of standard facilities within their school premises, including repairs of doors, windows, fences, pipes on external walls, outdoor lighting facilities, etc, which have been damaged by strong winds.

The spokesman said that with the concerted efforts of various parties, all schools have now resumed classes. The EDB will continue to maintain close contact with schools and the sector to better understand their needs and offer support.

---

## [Speech by CS at Asia House's roundtable discussion in London \(English only\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the Asia House's roundtable discussion held in London today (September 27, London time):

Michael (Chief Executive of Asia House, Mr Michael Lawrence), ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great honour to join you all today. Hong Kong



values our friendship with Asia House, a friendship that provides important opportunities for insightful sharing on a wide variety of topics.

Last September, Asia House staged its Signature Conference in Hong Kong for the first time, and I am pleased to be back here today for the return fixture, so to speak.

When the current-term Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) took office last year on July 1, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, set out her new approach to governance, specifically, to expand the Government's role beyond that of the conventional and time-honoured "regulator" and "service provider" to include the roles of the dynamic and proactive "facilitator" and "promoter". But this major change is taking place within the parameters of our free-enterprise and business friendly economy. In fact, this metamorphosis adds to the flexibility and attractions of Hong Kong as the freest economy in the world for 24 consecutive years in a row.

To kickoff this roundtable discussion, I would like to talk about some of the ways that this new approach is being implemented. I will also share with you some of the results that we have achieved, guided by the principle of being more "innovative", "interactive" and "collaborative".

Firstly, innovative. Over the past 15 months, we have been testing new ways to better engage the public, especially our younger generation, some of whom somehow feel left behind in the city's development or excluded from being involved in public policy-making. We need to find innovative ways to connect with our young people. For they represent our hope and the future of our city. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind. Indeed, every single youth counts!

To this end, we have taken a fresh approach in encouraging more young people to engage in public affairs. A shining example is the introduction of the first-ever "Be a Government Official for a Day" programme to provide senior secondary students with the opportunities to "job shadow" designated top government officials for a day during the summer vacation.

All the three Secretaries and 13 Bureau Directors took part in the programme and shared with students their work experience while learning from students the views and suggestions of the younger generation on different policy issues and Hong Kong's future development. The programme can also help inspire students to develop positive values, adopt multi-perspective thinking, strive to realise their potential in full and seize opportunities for upward mobility.

Turning to innovation and technology (I&T) which will be a key driver for social and economic development locally, nationally and internationally for many years to come, I note with great interest that Asia House hosted a roundtable just yesterday entitled "China's growing quest for technology innovation".

Hong Kong has a key role to play in our country's innovation and

technology development –not least through our deep pool of local and international I&T talent and world-class hardware including the Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport.

To keep pace with global trends and capture I&T opportunities, the HKSAR Government is investing boldly in I&T initiatives. We have set a goal to double the Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product to about HK\$45billion a year (i.e. from 0.73 per cent to 1.5 per cent) by the end of the current Government's five-year term of office in 2022.

Further to the \$10billion announced in 2017 Budget, we further announced in this year's Budget another HK\$50billion for I&T development in Hong Kong. This includes HK\$20billion for the first phase of development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park located at the boundary between Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

Other related incentives include additional tax deduction for expenditure incurred by enterprises on research and development to encourage them to invest in innovation and technology. The first HK\$2 million eligible research and development expenditure will enjoy a 300 per cent tax deduction and 200 per cent for the remainder.

We have also launched a HK\$500 million Technology Talent Scheme just last month (August 2018) to recruit talent from outside Hong Kong to carry out research and development activities and train their local staff to apply cutting-edge technology for adding value to their businesses. The "Postdoctoral Hub" founded under the Scheme provides funding support for enterprises to recruit postdoctoral talent for scientific research and product development. The Scheme will also fund local companies on a 2 to 1 matching basis to train their staff in high-end technologies, especially those related to Industry 4.0 through its Reindustrialisation and Technology Training Programme.

In parallel, we launched the Talent List last month (August 28) to draw in high quality talents from all over the world in respect of 11 specified professions, including Fintech professionals and Innovation and Technology experts under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme to support Hong Kong's development as a "high value-added and diversified economy".

To address the healthcare services demand arising from the growing ageing population, we also aim to attract more qualified medical professionals to Hong Kong. In particular, we want to entice Hong Kong people who have studied medicine overseas, including many of them in the United Kingdom (UK) to return home after their studies and work in Hong Kong in anticipation of a strong demand for medical professionals in our public hospitals as the Hospital Authority rolls out the first ten-year Hospital Development Plan (HDP) amounting to HK\$200 billion investment to facilitate timely commencement, progression and completion for major hospital development projects for meeting future service needs. In fact, our huge and ever increasing demand for health services, in both hardware and software,

open up vast services and career opportunities for UK firms and institutions.

Notably, the first ten-year HDP will provide around 5 000 additional bed spaces through development of new hospitals or redevelopment/expansion of some existing ones. In the light of an increasing demand for healthcare services, the HKSAR Government has invited the Hospital Authority to start planning the second ten-year HDP. A sum of HK\$300 billion has been earmarked as an initial provision to support the second ten-year HDP, improve the clinic facilities in the Department of Health, and upgrade and increase healthcare teaching facilities.

Of course, we welcome medical talents from the UK and elsewhere to work in Hong Kong too! In fact, we are making Hong Kong a more attractive place for non-locally trained doctors keen to work in. We recently extended the validity period and renewal period of limited registration from not exceeding one year to not exceeding three years in order to offer a more predictable and prosperous career development opportunities for overseas medical professionals in Hong Kong. One of my missions to London this week is to meet and appeal to medical professionals here to work in Hong Kong. We expect that we need at least an extra of 1 000 full-time equivalent doctors by year 2030 based on the existing level of services.

Attracting quality overseas talents to Hong Kong not only fills a talent void in specific sectors, it also helps our home-grown talent to raise their game. They can learn a great deal by working alongside experienced professionals from different countries, cultures and backgrounds. So it is a win-win scenario. In return, our overseas talents will be exposed to new ventures and widen their network in Asia.

Just last month, the HKSAR Government launched our first Talent List to target overseas talent from 11 specific professions to come to Hong Kong and contribute to our economic development. Professional sectors included in the List range from finance, biotechnology to engineering and creative industries

We have also launched a HK\$500 million Technology Talent Scheme last month. One of the initiatives set up under the Scheme is to establish a "Postdoctoral Hub" to provide funding support for enterprises to recruit postdoctoral talent for scientific research and product development. Another initiative, namely the Reindustrialisation and Technology Training Programme, will fund local companies on a 2 to 1 matching basis to train their staff in high-end technologies, especially those related to Industry 4.0.

I have mentioned some of our innovative approaches to governance; turning now to the principle of being "interactive". Let me be clear: the HKSAR Government is not planning to interfere in Hong Kong's famously free and open economy. Rather, we see areas where the Government can be more proactive in facilitating and promoting opportunities.

A good example of this is a new "Space Sharing Scheme for Youth". This is a tripartite collaboration among the business sector, NGOs and the Government to provide co-working space for young entrepreneurs at

concessionary rental (not more than two-thirds of market rent). So far, 10 developers have offered more than 100 000square feet of space for the scheme.

The HKSAR Government does not take part in the operation of tenancy arrangements. Instead, our facilitator role helps to match participants from the business community with the operating organisations, mostly NGOs. This new form of cross-sectoral collaboration has achieved positive results and good feedback from stakeholders and the community at large.

We are also taking a more interactive approach to resolving big issues in Hong Kong. We have also taken a fresh approach in encouraging more young people to engage in public affairs. The launch of the "Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth" which aims to enable young people to directly participate in policy formulation is a case in point. By appointing more young people aged 18 to 35 to specified government advisory boards and committees, we can better understand their views and address their concerns. In a number of areas, we have formed expert groups and commissions to tap into the city's deep pool of expertise and experience. Amongst those that I chair are the Youth Development Commission, the Commission on Children and the Human Resources Planning Commission. They all have members drawn from the relevant sectors and young people selected from the Self-recommendation Scheme. The target is to increase the overall ratio of youth members on government boards and committees from the current 8.6 per cent to 15 per cent within the duration of the current-term Government.

Our third guiding principle is "collaborative". We are joining hands with stakeholders in the private sector to nurture career paths and create opportunities. We provide an average of more than 70 000 annual places for our young people to participate in exchange and internship programmes on Mainland China and overseas including Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road countries.

In addition, the HKSAR Government launched a new Pilot Corporate Internship Scheme this summer in collaboration with major Hong Kong companies. The Scheme provides quality internship places for local tertiary students on the Mainland and overseas. The response has been very encouraging. 16 major participating corporations offer a total of around 250 internship places, distributed across various Mainland provinces and cities as well as seven overseas countries, including Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia and the UK.

These internships give participants valuable chances to expand their horizons. Not only do the interns get a taste of life in the workplace, they also gain fuller understanding of how their career paths can align with the bigger picture of regional and global growth opportunities, thereby contributing to the diverse development of Hong Kong.

Indeed, cross-boundary connectivity is a timely topic for the long-term prosperity of Hong Kong and our future generations.

Infrastructure-wise, the 22-kilometre Hong Kong Section of the

Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link has just come on stream on September 23, plugging Hong Kong into the over 25000-kilometre national high-speed rail grid in our Motherland. Meanwhile, the mega 42-kilometre long Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, one of the longest bridges above water in the world, is about to commence operation, opening up new markets in the Pearl River Delta region.

We can expect these large-scale infrastructure developments to bring significant economic opportunities to Hong Kong, notably in the tourism, logistics, professional services sectors and more. The Bridge and Express Rail Link will also help secure Hong Kong's position as a bridgehead economy for the many ventures led by the Greater Bay Area and along Belt and Road corridors.

Indeed, the Belt and Road Initiative is a core element of our business collaboration strategy with the UK. Amongst other things, the Belt and Road is mentioned in the Joint Statement on Closer Collaboration between UK and Hong Kong on Trade and Economic Matters announced in March this year. The Joint Statement pays tribute to the strong and well-established relations between the UK and Hong Kong, and it identifies priority areas for deeper and broader collaboration such as innovation and technology and smart city development.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong, as always, continues to be a fast-paced and rapidly evolving city. The HKSAR Government also responds to changes swiftly, tackles challenges unyieldingly, addresses public concerns compassionately and creates opportunities for economic and social development tirelessly.

The positive responses from the general public in the past 13 months have proven that this term of HKSAR Government is on the right track under the principles of "innovative", "interactive" and "collaborative" governance. But there is no room for complacency. There is a long road ahead and we look forward to hearing your views on the possible way that we may explore to deepen the bilateral ties between Hong Kong and the UK to continue to flourish.

On this encouraging note, I would like to thank all of you again for being here today. We are grateful to you all for sharing your valuable time and expertise with us during this roundtable.

So, without further ado, let me hand back to Michael.

Thank you.