

CE attends APEC Informal Leaders' Retreat (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Informal Leaders' Retreat via video conferencing tonight (July 16) to exchange views with leaders of the other economies on strategies to fight against COVID-19 and accelerate economic recovery.

The retreat was hosted by the Prime Minister of New Zealand and Chair of APEC 2021, Ms Jacinda Ardern. The session began with a briefing by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Ms Kristalina Georgieva, on the global economic situation, and the Executive Director of the Health Emergencies Programme, World Health Organization, Dr Michael Ryan, on the pandemic situation around the world.

In the proceedings that followed, participating leaders took turns sharing their views on collaboration opportunities for the Asia-Pacific region to emerge from the health crisis and accelerate the economic recovery in a manner that will lay the foundation for a better future. Highlighting the importance of vaccines, Mrs Lam said that it is imperative for APEC member economies to ensure adequate access to vaccines and take part in the World Health Organization system. For places like Hong Kong, China, the Government has to double its efforts to overcome people's "vaccine hesitancy" in order to build a defence immunity as soon as possible, she said, adding that Hong Kong is racing against time to do so through public-private collaboration.

As members of the global community, Mrs Lam called on APEC member economies to pursue areas for further collaboration. These include collective efforts to remove unnecessary trade barriers and enhance trade facilitation to support open and effective supply chains for vaccines, gradually resume cross-border travel when public health conditions are met, facilitate research and development, enhance the application of technology to prevent the spread of the virus in the community and to cure the infected. She also took the opportunity to reaffirm Hong Kong's commitment to multilateralism and appeal to APEC member economies to inject political impetus into the negotiations under the World Trade Organization.

At the end of the meeting, Mrs Lam and leaders of the other economies adopted a statement on overcoming COVID-19 and accelerating economic recovery. The leaders will meet again virtually at the annual APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November this year.

