

[CE highlights Hong Kong's immense business opportunities for New Zealand \(with photo\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (May 6) addressed more than 200 participants from the business community in New Zealand during an online dialogue, in which she highlighted how Hong Kong's uniqueness under "One Country, Two Systems" makes it an ideal gateway for businesses and investment between Mainland China and New Zealand. The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, and the Commissioner for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), Mr Tommy Yuen, also joined the webinar.

Mrs Lam said that Hong Kong has been enjoying close ties with New Zealand over the years, with New Zealand in 2010 becoming the first foreign economy to enter into a free trade agreement with Hong Kong, and pointed out that Hong Kong looks forward to strengthening such ties by joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Mrs Lam assured the participants that Hong Kong's future prospects are bright as the city's traditional strengths such as a free and open economy, the rule of law and judicial independence remain as robust as ever, and pointed out that the two National People's Congress Decisions on national security legislation and improvements to Hong Kong's electoral system are conducive to restoring stability. She emphasised that there are plenty of development opportunities for Hong Kong with the support of the Central Government as stated in the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and illustrated in the past two years since promulgation of the Outline Development Plan for the GBA. She said that, driven by strong recovery in trade and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's continued investment, Hong Kong's economy in the first quarter of 2021 has rebounded strongly, recording year-on-year real growth of 7.8 per cent and an increase of 5.3 per cent over the preceding quarter. As the epidemic situation is easing in Hong Kong, she said it is now an opportune time for New Zealand enterprises to establish a presence in Hong Kong or expand their existing businesses in the city.

Addressing questions from the audience on Hong Kong's potential in innovation and technology (I&T), Mrs Lam said that the current-term Government has invested more than \$110 billion in the various aspects of I&T including infrastructure, research funding, nurturing of talents and venture capital, and the HKSAR Government is also pressing ahead with its collaboration with Shenzhen in the development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park. She highlighted that Hong Kong is making good progress in fintech and health technology and welcomes businesses from New Zealand, including start-ups, to partner with Hong Kong to explore future development opportunities.

In response to a question on travel restrictions owing to COVID-19, Mrs

Lam said that she announced a new direction in fighting the pandemic last month with the aim of restoring the normal operation of society and people's daily lives as far as possible while keeping the epidemic situation effectively in check. She said that with the relatively stable epidemic situation in New Zealand, the compulsory quarantine period for persons arriving in Hong Kong from New Zealand has been reduced from 21 days to 14 days since last month. She expressed the hope that with the continued efforts of both places, facilitation of cross-border travel between the two places, such as through a travel bubble, can be further explored.

The webinar was organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Sydney, co-organised by Invest Hong Kong and supported by the Hong Kong New Zealand Business Association as well as the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. Such events are part of the HKSAR Government's efforts in reaching out direct to overseas business communities. The Chief Executive has attended webinars with European Union and Japanese communities in recent months while other Principal Officials have also taken part in other similar events.

