

# CE meets Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Mr Sergey Lavrov, at Government House this morning (February 26). The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, also attended the meeting.

Welcoming Mr Lavrov's first visit to Hong Kong, Mrs Lam briefed him on Hong Kong's latest developments, including the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area promulgated by the country recently. She said that this key development strategy of the country will bring immense opportunities to Hong Kong, adding that the city will play a key role in the initiative, especially in the development of an international innovation and technology (I&T) hub in the Greater Bay Area with the advantages of Hong Kong.

Mrs Lam pointed out that Hong Kong and Russia have made good progress in co-operation in various areas in recent years. She said that the total merchandise trade between Hong Kong and Russia amounted to around HK\$35.8 billion last year, up more than 20 per cent compared with that of 2017, and that it was also encouraging to see a remarkable increase in the number of Russian visitors to Hong Kong, demonstrating the increasingly close ties between the two places. Mrs Lam said the Comprehensive Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation between the two sides came into force in 2016 and has bolstered their economic and trade connections, and added that she looks forward to an early agreement on promotion and protection of investment between both sides to boost the investment flow. She said that Hong Kong plans to establish a Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) in Moscow and that she was pleased to learn that the Russian Government has responded positively towards the proposal. She said she believes that the HKETO will take co-operation between the two places in economic affairs and trade, I&T and youth exchanges to a new level.

