

CE's speech at National Day reception

Following is the speech (English translation) by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the National Day Reception in Celebration of the 72nd Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China today (October 1):

Distinguished guests, fellow citizens,

It gives me great pleasure to celebrate with you today the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. As this year also marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), a host of activities, including thematic forums, seminars, large-scale exhibitions, special TV programmes and more, have been organised by various sectors of the community to celebrate the Party's centenary over the past few months. During these activities, the remarkable journey of the CPC – a people-centered Party – in fighting for its people over the past century and in driving the economy forward were recounted. In a way, these activities have served as a prelude to this year's National Day celebrations.

This year's National Day is also of special significance to Hong Kong. As a special administrative region established in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong has truly got on the right track of "One Country, Two Systems" under the double safeguards of the Hong Kong National Security Law and an improved electoral system. One can heartily say that Hong Kong is now in the best position ever since our return to the Motherland to leverage its unique advantages under "One Country, Two Systems" in seeking to integrate into the overall development of our country, thereby creating prosperity and a bright future for Hong Kong.

Every year when we celebrate or make speeches about the National Day, we quote figures to show the economic achievements and livelihood improvements that our country has made, and cite examples to illustrate our country's rapid advancement in science and technology and its status as a major player on the international stage. However, for those not living in the Mainland, including Hong Kong residents, I would say the best way to experience our country's rapid growth is to study, work or live in the Mainland, or to visit the Mainland from time to time. As you all know, I just returned from an official trip to the Mainland three days ago. On this trip, I visited three major cities in the western region of China, namely Chengdu in Sichuan Province, Chongqing, and Xi'an in Shaanxi Province. Although I have been to Chengdu many times in relation to Hong Kong's reconstruction support work in Sichuan earlier, I find the city more and more vibrant every time I visit, and can see why it is described as a charming city that "those who have come do not want to leave, and those who have left want to come back". As for Chongqing and Xi'an, it has been 42 years and 10 years respectively since I last visited these two places. The progress made is even more remarkable and impressive, and reflecting pertinently the journey that our country has gone through in recent decades. In Chongqing, I was dazed by the dazzling lights

on both sides of Yangtze River and Jialing River and the prosperous scene at Chaotianmen on a night tour; I could not help but express my admiration for the miraculous transformation of this inland city with a picturesque landscape. As for Xi'an, an ancient capital with a history of thousands of years and an important birthplace of Chinese civilisation, the protection of the famous terracotta army and the relics of the Daming Palace of the Tang Dynasty shows that our country, while striving to boost its economy, attaches great importance to the preservation of Chinese heritage and the inheritance of Chinese culture.

As far as Hong Kong is concerned, Sichuan, Chongqing and Shaanxi have one thing in common, and that is, Hong Kong is the largest source of external investment in these three places. Hong Kong enterprises can be found throughout the cities of Chengdu, Chongqing and Xi'an, and many developments have become the hot spots for local people. This once again evidently illustrates that Hong Kong has been not only a "participant" in and a "contributor" to the country's reform and opening-up for more than four decades, but also a "beneficiary" in the process. I have to say that such a feeling prevailed whenever I visited any Mainland province, region or city in my four years as Chief Executive of the HKSAR. The investment and business expansion of these Hong Kong enterprises have also contributed to the evolution of Hong Kong into an international financial, commerce and transportation centre, as well as expansion in scope of Hong Kong's professional services. With Hong Kong back on the right track of "One Country, Two Systems", and as long as we all remain steadfast on safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, and ensuring the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong", I am sure Hong Kong enterprises, Hong Kong businessmen and Hong Kong people will only have more and more opportunities and scope for development in the Mainland. This would thus lend stronger impetus to our city's economy and bring more diversified career opportunities to our young people.

Recently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a fact sheet that set out the acts of the United States in interfering in Hong Kong affairs, and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government published the Report on Hong Kong's Business Environment. The fact sheet, once again, shows that the enactment and implementation of the National Security Law in Hong Kong last year as well as the improvement of our electoral system this year are indeed justified. And the Report clearly illustrates that despite a plethora of smearing and defamatory remarks made by foreign politicians and some Western media, Hong Kong's inherent strengths remain intact. Looking forward, our country's strong support for Hong Kong in the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the country's dual circulation development strategy of domestic and international circulations, plus the "Qianhai Plan" and "Hengqin Plan" promulgated last month, will together create unlimited opportunities for Hong Kong.

At this time when we are celebrating the National Day, we should appreciate more deeply the Central Authorities' determination to uphold the "One Country, Two Systems" principle and their unfailing care for Hong Kong people. In return, we should reassure the country by taking a firm stance in

safeguarding national security and implementing the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong".

May I wish our country prosperity and vibrancy, Hong Kong social harmony and stability, Hong Kong people a joyous celebration with their families, and everyone good health and all the best. Thank you.