

CS attends thematic forum of Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2024 and meets with leaders of Hainan Province and youth volunteers of Hong Kong in Hainan (with photos/videos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, attended the Global Free Trade Ports Development Forum of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2024 in Hainan today (March 27) to exchange views with the Governor of Hainan Province, Mr Liu Xiaoming, and leaders across the globe.

Speaking at the thematic forum, Mr Chan said that Hong Kong is a staunch supporter of free trade and has been promoting free trade at multilateral and regional levels, including the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, to eliminate trade barriers and promote economic growth. In 2022, Hong Kong was the world's 10th largest merchandise trading economy, and ranked fourth and seventh in the world in terms of foreign direct investment inflows and outflows respectively, demonstrating Hong Kong's important role in global trade.

Mr Chan added that Hong Kong enjoys the distinctive advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world, and is consolidating and enhancing its strategic positioning as an international trade centre through two major directions, namely actively exploring global partnerships, and actively integrating into the overall development of the country. He stressed that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) will continue to seize the opportunities upon the eastward shifting of the global economic gravity and high-quality development of the country, and strive to strengthen Hong Kong's roles as a "super connector" and a "super value-adder" between the country and the rest of the world, in particular to capitalise on the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development and the Belt and Road Initiative, so as to enhance the strategic positions of the country and Hong Kong in the international economic and trade arena.

Before attending the thematic forum, Mr Chan met with the Governor of Hainan Province, Mr Liu Xiaoming. Mr Chan said that the economic and trade relationship between Hong Kong and Hainan has always been close. Many Hong Kong enterprises are conducting business in Hainan. Hong Kong is also the largest source of foreign investment and an important trading partner for Hainan. Mr Chan continued that he looks forward to Hainan and Hong Kong's continued pursuit of the principles of complementarity and mutual benefits by leveraging Hong Kong's advantage as a highly internationalised city, as well as seizing the development opportunities of the Hainan Free Trade Port, to help Hainan enterprises go global.

Mr Chan added that the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises, Hong Kong Talent Engage, and Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents in various Economic and Trade Offices, of the HKSAR Government have been actively attracting enterprises, investments and talent to Hong Kong, yielding fruitful results. He welcomes enterprises, talent and youth from Hainan to pursue development in Hong Kong and said that the HKSAR Government will continue to foster exchanges and co-operation between Hainan and Hong Kong in various areas including trade, finance, culture and youth development.

Also, Mr Chan interacted with the Chairman of the Y. Elites Association, Mr Lawrence Lam, the Executive Vice Chairman of the Association, Mr Jason Wong, and the Hong Kong youth serving as volunteers at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2024, to understand their work and feelings. He said he was pleased to learn that the association had been organising Hong Kong youth to participate in the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in Hainan over the past years, enabling them to showcase their talents and broaden their horizons. He also showed his appreciation that the Hong Kong youth volunteers have gained rich work experiences at this year's conference and deepened their understanding of the high-quality development of Hainan and the country at large.

Mr Chan encouraged Hong Kong youth to combine reading and travelling, and pay visits to and intern more often in different provinces and cities of the Mainland, to delve into the history and culture of the country and national affairs, thereby fostering Hong Kong's integration into the overall development of the country.

Mr Chan will attend the opening plenary of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2024 tomorrow (March 28) and return to Hong Kong the same day.



