

## Events held to celebrate 40th anniversary of Netherlands Hong Kong Business Association and commend HK team at finish of Volvo Ocean Race in The Hague (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Brussels (HKETO, Brussels) co-hosted a series of events in The Hague, the Netherlands, on June 29 (The Hague time) to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Netherlands Hong Kong Business Association (NHKBA) and commend Hong Kong's Team Sun Hung Kai/Scallywag for completing the Volvo Ocean Race. The team was the first from Hong Kong to enter the round-the-world sailing race, and tributes were paid during the events to the late teammate John Fisher.

The events were jointly organised by HKETO, Brussels; the Hong Kong Trade Development Council; Invest Hong Kong; and the NHKBA. The first was a business seminar with two themes, namely the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area development and circular economy. In her welcoming remarks at the business seminar, the Deputy Representative of HKETO, Brussels, Miss Fiona Chau, said that aspirations for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area development are very high. "Within the Bay Area, we will work with each other to achieve a win-win situation, and the key co-operation areas in the Bay Area will include infrastructure connectivity in order to achieve a living circle that is very convenient for people; market integration, whether in trade, commerce, financial services or investment; and in technology and innovation," Miss Chau said.

She added that the aspiration to build an international innovation and technology hub in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area on par with, or even exceeding, Silicon Valley stems from the complementarity of the three places. Hong Kong has very strong research and development capacity with four universities in the world's top 100, while Shenzhen has advanced manufacturing capability and other cities in the Bay Area are also boosting manufacturing and electronic production capacity. Dutch companies are welcome to partner with Hong Kong in seizing the opportunities of this very important Bay Area, Miss Chau said.

To tie in with the Volvo Ocean Race's support of clean seas, the business seminar also looked at how Dutch, Hong Kong and Mainland companies can prepare for the circular economy, a new economic model in which waste generation is minimised, and the value of products, materials and resources is maintained for as long as possible.

One of the speakers at the business seminar was the General Manager of Keppel Seghers, Mr Ivan Christiaens. The Belgian engineering firm will, in a

joint venture, construct integrated waste management facilities at an island in Hong Kong. The project will be capable of producing enough green energy for 100,000 households and help to reduce Hong Kong's carbon emissions by 440,000 tonnes per annum.

The business seminar was followed by a cocktail reception and a dinner, both attended by crew members of Team Sun Hung Kai/Scallywag, which was supported by Brand Hong Kong. In January 2018, Hong Kong was a host city for the first time in the Volvo Ocean Race's 44-year history. The Volvo Ocean Race has provided a good opportunity for Hong Kong to showcase its vibrancy and cosmopolitan aspects as Asia's world city to visitors to the Scallywag Team Base at each of the 12 stopover locations, including the stopover in Hong Kong and the finish at The Hague. Speaking at the dinner, Miss Chau commended the Hong Kong team for its determination to finish the Volvo Ocean Race in honour of their late teammate and friend John Fisher. The team's accomplishments have reflected the "never give up" spirit of Hong Kong in facing difficult times and challenges, she said.

