

Fifth Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to Belt and Road Initiative held (with photos)

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and relevant Mainland ministries held the fifth Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI) today (September 5) via video-conferencing.

The meeting discussed the strategies and future work priorities of the new-term HKSAR Government in taking forward the B&RI. These included maintaining and leveraging Hong Kong's unique competitive edges and premier business environment under "one country, two systems", actively dovetailing with the opportunities brought about by national development strategies such as the 14th Five-Year Plan, and adherence to the spirit of the important speech of President Xi Jinping as well as following the "four hopes" raised by Vice Premier of the State Council Mr Han Zheng at the Belt and Road Summit, with a view to seeking the betterment for Hong Kong.

Leading the HKSAR Government officials to attend the conference, the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, expressed his sincere gratitude to the Central Government for its long support for the HKSAR Government and community in taking part in and contributing to the B&RI. He said that Hong Kong will fully utilise its distinctive status and advantages, and proactively take forward its work to seize the opportunities brought by the nation's development, with a view to making remarkable contributions to high-quality Belt and Road co-operation.

Mr Chan added that Vice Premier Han has clearly charted the way forward for Hong Kong's participation in the B&RI. The HKSAR Government is working hard to consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's international competitiveness, and create strong impetus for growth. In addition to strengthening Hong Kong's professional services, the HKSAR Government will seek to strengthen co-operation with Mainland provinces, regions and municipalities to open Belt and Road markets together. Hong Kong will also step up efforts to foster people and cultural exchanges as well as practical co-operation with Belt and Road countries. These will allow Hong Kong to better serve as the key link and functional platform for the B&RI.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development and Hong Kong-side Convenor of the Joint Conference, Mr Algernon Yau, said that despite the tough challenges posed by the pandemic, the HKSAR Government has taken forward a lot of B&RI-related work in the past year with progress made, such as strengthening connectivity in various areas.

Mr Yau pointed out that the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) will strengthen its work according to the "four hopes", including fostering wider connectivity between all sectors in the community and the international markets; promoting the advantages of Hong Kong's professional services through various means to consolidate and enhance competitiveness; promoting Hong Kong's dual function of "attracting foreign investment" and "going global" through the continued publicity work carried out by overseas Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) in Belt and Road countries and regions, with a view to enhancing cultural exchanges and attracting more Mainland and overseas enterprises to invest in Hong Kong; and planning to invite major Mainland enterprises to visit Hong Kong for exchanges and exploring innovative co-operation when the pandemic stabilises.

Today's meeting also reviewed the work of the HKSAR Government in promoting Hong Kong's participation in and contribution to the B&RI in the previous year, including the implementation of initiatives under the six key areas of the Arrangement between the NDRC and the HKSAR Government for Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the B&RI.

Vice Chairman of the NDRC Mr Lin Nianxiu attended the conference with officials led by him, including Deputy Secretary General of the NDRC Mr Su Wei who is also the Convenor of the Joint Conference, and representatives from the NDRC, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Transport, the People's Bank of China, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council and the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission.

Also attending the conference were HKSAR Government representatives from the CEDB, the Department of Justice, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Development Bureau, the Belt and Road Office of the CEDB, the Innovation and Technology Commission, Invest Hong Kong, and the Office of the Government of the HKSAR in Beijing. Other attendees included the Chairman of the HKTDC, Dr Peter Lam, and representatives of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Insurance Authority.

The Arrangement signed between the HKSAR Government and the NDRC in 2017 provides the direction and a blueprint for Hong Kong's full participation in and contribution to the B&RI. The Joint Conference mechanism was set up to follow up on the implementation of the Arrangement, and meetings are convened at least once a year.

