

Government responds to July 1 procession

In response to the procession today (July 1), a government spokesman said that the current-term government has, since inauguration, been following the mottos of "we care", "we listen" and "we act" sincerely, and introduced and implemented in stages various measures in response to people's aspirations. It is also proactively playing the role of "facilitator" and "promoter" to inject new impetus into society and the economy with a view to creating more opportunities to the people of Hong Kong, especially youngsters.

The spokesman said, "In the past 21 years since our return to the Motherland, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has been implementing the 'one country, two systems' principle, 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy in strict accordance with the Constitution and the Basic Law. The Basic Law provides solid support for maintaining the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. It also safeguards the fundamental rights and duties of Hong Kong residents, and protects our core values such as freedom, democracy, rule of law and clean governance."

"Under the arrangement of 'one country, two systems', we have to firmly uphold the 'one country' principle, have a correct understanding of the constitutional order as set out by the Constitution and the Basic Law, and safeguard the country's sovereignty, security and development interests. At the same time, we should also make the best use of the 'two systems' and ride on our unique advantages to develop our economy and improve people's livelihood."

Since the return to the Motherland, Hong Kong has continued to enjoy prosperity and stability, and maintained its status as international financial, transportation and trade centres, thanks to the strong support of the country and Hong Kong's inherent institutional strengths, the spokesman said.

"Hong Kong has been ranked the world's freest economy for 24 consecutive years and is one of the most competitive economies globally. The latest unemployment rate stands at a 20-year low of 2.8 per cent. We are also one of the safest cities in the world, with the global ranking for the rule of law continuously staying at the top," he said.

"The further deepening of economic reform and opening up of the Mainland, together with the two major national development strategies, i.e. the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area, have provided unprecedented opportunities for Hong Kong. Looking ahead, we will further reinforce and enhance the development of our traditional industries and proactively engineer new drivers for economic growth. We will also strive to improve governance, better livelihood and nurture talents, and will join hands with the community at large with a view to building Hong Kong into a

place which is full of energy and hope, and a home where people live and work with contentment."

The spokesman reiterated that chanting slogans which disrespect 'one country' and disregard the constitutional order or which are sensational and misleading was not in line with Hong Kong's overall interests and would undermine its development.