

HKSAR Government today holds 2022 Constitution Day Seminar (with photos/video)

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR today (December 4) jointly held a seminar on Constitution Day, with the Endeavour Education Centre as the supporting organisation, with a view to enhancing public understanding of the constitutional basis and order of the country and Hong Kong.

About 650 participants from various sectors of the community attended the Seminar themed "Constitution and New Journey of the New Era" to actively explore how the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (the Constitution) takes a more vital role in the development of "one country, two systems" at the critical moment when our country embarks on a new journey and Hong Kong enters a new stage in the new era. The Seminar comprised two parts, namely a keynote speech and a panel discussion. The keynote speech was delivered by the President of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies, Mr Deng Zhonghua. The panel discussion was moderated by the Chairman of the Management Committee of the Endeavour Education Centre, Mrs Rita Fan, who hosted a discussion on the vital role of the Constitution on the new journey of the new era with the Vice-chairperson of the HKSAR Basic Law Committee of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Ms Maria Tam, and Member of the Legislative Council Dr Simon Lee.

Speaking at the Seminar, the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said that with the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) successfully held in October, this year's Seminar themed "Constitution and New Journey of the New Era", timely highlights the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC, and allows us to have a profound understanding of the Constitution's importance in country governance as well as the implementation of "one country, two systems". Mr Lee said that as stated in the Policy Address, the Government will further strengthen publicity and education on the Constitution, the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the Basic Law) and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the Hong Kong National Security Law); the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee, led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, has been renamed the Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee to underline the importance the Government attaches to the promotion of the Constitution as well as its determination to take forward relevant work.

In his speech delivered at the Seminar, the Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, Mr Luo Huining, highlighted "three musts" are necessary to ensure the leading and safeguarding roles of the Constitution on the implementation of "one country,

two systems". Firstly, all sectors in Hong Kong should maintain the authority of the Constitution consciously and ensure the "one country, two systems" in practice is not bent or distorted. Secondly, all sectors in Hong Kong should commit to safeguarding the sovereignty, safety, and development interest of the nation as the ultimate principle. Thirdly, Hong Kong must promote the mainstream values of the core of "be patriotic and love Hong Kong" and implementation of "one country, two systems". All sectors in Hong Kong should keep enhancing the strong atmosphere of learning and promoting the Constitution, the Basic Law, and the Hong Kong National Security Law and respecting and maintaining the Constitution in the society.

While delivering a keynote speech, Mr Deng Zhonghua pointed out that the Constitution is the most fundamental law of the state, as well as the general guidelines of administering state affairs. It has supreme legal status and effect. To the SAR, the Constitution is a fundamental manifestation of "one country". Meanwhile, the Constitution applies to the SAR as a whole and its effect is inseparable. Any law of the SAR, including the Basic Law, must not contravene the principles and the spirit of the Constitution. He said that the report of the 20th National Congress reiterated again that "will remain committed to law-based governance in Hong Kong and Macao and maintain constitutional order in these two special administrative regions as stipulated in China's Constitution and their basic laws". The Constitution gives the legislative foundation and source of authority for the Basic Law. The Constitution and the Basic Law together form the constitutional basis of the SAR. He also added that we can better understand the home country and its history through the Constitution. He suggested Hong Kong youths to take initiative to read the Constitution and pay more frequent visits to the Mainland. He believed that Hong Kong youths will benefit a lot from "reading a book, traveling ten thousand miles".

During the panel discussion of the Seminar, Ms Maria Tam said that with the advantage of global connectivity, Hong Kong's role should be positioned as "embracing the motherland with heart, Chinese learning as substance, Western learning as practical use" so as to overcome competitions with the West and resist various pressures from foreign countries. She added that the Hong Kong National Security Law must be fully and accurately implemented, and with the improved electoral system to safeguard jurisdiction firmly in the hands of patriots, the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems" can be ensured.

Dr Simon Lee said that Hong Kong's role has been taken into full consideration in the blueprint of the entire country and national rejuvenation since "one country, two systems" was proposed. The country's reform and opening-up and "one country, two systems" have been a twin relationship at the very beginning, and served as the main driving force to promote the development of the two systems. In addition, in response to the questions, he explained that full process of democracy meant voting intentions are the result of long-time discussions among various groups of society. Experts, scholars and different stakeholders continuously expound, prove and negotiate to introduce democratic policies and keep monitoring after legislation and implementation of policies.

