

HKSAR Government welcomes National 14th Five-Year Plan and will proactively integrate Hong Kong into national development

The fourth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) approved the "Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" (the 14th Five-Year Plan) today (March 11). A spokesman for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) said the Government greatly welcomed the contents relating to Hong Kong in the 14th Five-Year Plan and expressed gratitude for the Central Government's support for the future development of Hong Kong in various key areas.

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, said, "The 14th Five-Year Plan is the blueprint and action agenda for the social and economic development of the country in the next five years. I am delighted that contents relating to Hong Kong can be found in its chapter 61 on maintaining the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao, and chapter 31 on proactively and progressively taking forward the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Indeed, the 14th Five-Year Plan has incorporated many concrete proposals put up by the HKSAR Government after more than a year of study, demonstrating the Central Government's unwavering support for Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong has faced unprecedented challenges over the past two years. It has become very clear that only by firmly upholding the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle and safeguarding national security can society and the economy of the HKSAR progress and develop steadily. The part concerning Hong Kong and Macao in the 14th Five-Year Plan states from the outset that to maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao, it is imperative to fully and faithfully implement the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle; uphold the constitutional order as enshrined in the Constitution and the Basic Law; uphold the Central Authorities' overall jurisdiction over the Special Administrative Regions (SARs); implement the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the SARs to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests of the nation and the social stability of the SARs; and resolutely prevent and curb interference by external forces in the affairs of Hong Kong. I fully agree to these fundamental principles."

On economic development, the 14th Five-Year Plan continues to support Hong Kong to enhance its status as an international financial, transportation and trade centre; strengthen its status as a global offshore Renminbi business hub, an international asset management centre and a risk management centre; establish itself as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region; and promote service

industries for high-end and high value-added development. Furthermore, the 14th Five-Year Plan raises for the first time the support for Hong Kong to enhance its status as an international aviation hub, to develop into an international innovation and technology hub and a regional intellectual property trading centre, and to develop into a hub for arts and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. The HKSAR Government is deeply encouraged by such new supporting statements and will continue to press ahead with measures in bolstering Hong Kong's competitiveness in relevant sectors, including the development of the three runway system at Hong Kong International Airport, the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone, the West Kowloon Cultural District, and the various new initiatives announced in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address.

On high-quality GBA development, the 14th Five-Year Plan mentions the deepening and widening of mutual access between the financial markets of Hong Kong and the Mainland and strengthening exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland on different fronts, and, for the first time, includes the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Loop as a major platform of co-operation in the GBA. Pursuant to the Outline Development Plan for the GBA, the HKSAR Government has been taking forward various initiatives over the past two years. During the Chief Executive's visit to Guangdong and Shenzhen in November 2020, key collaboration initiatives for 2021 were formulated with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government respectively. These include facilitation for Hong Kong youths to study, work and start business in the Mainland cities of the GBA, which is in line with the objective of establishing a brand of quality exchanges among the youths of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao as mentioned in the 14th Five-Year Plan.

On social development, the 14th Five-Year Plan points out improving policy measures to enable Hong Kong and Macao residents to develop and live in the Mainland, strengthening education on the Constitution and the Basic Law and national development, and enhancing national awareness and patriotism among Hong Kong and Macao people. The HKSAR Government has been, through education in schools and other means, stepping up efforts to enhance Hong Kong people's understanding of national development, in particular national security, and will roll out a series of promotional and educational activities on this year's National Security Education Day on April 15. The HKSAR Government will spare no effort in explaining to the public the work of the NPC on improving the electoral system of the HKSAR and implementing "patriots administering Hong Kong".

The Government spokesman said that Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy in handling external affairs under "One Country, Two Systems", and that the HKSAR Government welcomes the support from the 14th Five-Year Plan for Hong Kong to foster co-operation and exchanges with countries and regions around the world and will make the best use of its overseas and Mainland Economic and Trade Offices to explore more opportunities for developing bilateral and multilateral co-operation.

In summarising the significance of the 14th Five-Year Plan to Hong Kong, Mrs Lam said, "As a highly market-oriented city and an international economy

underpinned by the rule of law, Hong Kong will proactively become a participant in domestic circulation and a facilitator in international circulation amidst the 'dual circulation' development strategy of our country with the support of the 14th Five-Year Plan. Hong Kong will take the GBA development as the best entry point to better integrate into the overall development of our country, which will bring continuous impetus to Hong Kong's economy."