

Hong Kong and Indonesia hold joint webinar to foster bilateral partnerships

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) and the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Hong Kong jointly held a webinar entitled Riding Ups and Downs: Hong Kong-Indonesia Partnership today (August 18) to strengthen partnerships in trade, investment, professional services and technology. A major agenda item of the webinar was exploring the business opportunities of the Mainland's overseas Economic and Trade Cooperation Zones (ETCZs) in Indonesia for interested Hong Kong businesses.

The webinar was part of a series of government-to-government collaboration initiatives to explore ways of capturing business opportunities under the new normal and enhancing people-to-people bonds in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. The CEDB held the first webinar in this series with the Thailand Board of Investment in June 2020.

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, delivered a welcoming speech at the webinar, and this was followed by responding remarks by the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Mr Mahendra Siregar. The Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mr Xie Feng, and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the PRC to the Republic of Indonesia, Mr Xiao Qian, spoke during the opening session.

Mrs Lam said that with both the Hong Kong and Indonesian governments sparing no effort to combat the epidemic it would be important for economic partners to support each other to enhance resilience and to work together to ride through the storm.

Citing the close economic ties between the two places, and the coming into force last month of the part relating to Indonesia in the Free Trade Agreement and Investment Agreement between Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Mrs Lam said she believed that the digital economy, and innovation and technology in general, will bring fresh opportunities for Hong Kong and Indonesian business co-operation after the epidemic has eased.

Highlighting that digital innovation has helped Hong Kong contain the spread of the virus and, in doing so, minimise community disruption, she said the Hong Kong Government launched in June a business-promotion platform featuring applications for testing, contact tracing, e-health, e-learning, e-commerce, e-communications and other smart innovations, and that these are open for sharing with overseas partners, including those from Indonesia.

Mrs Lam added that Hong Kong has a deep pool of multicultural talent

and professionals experienced in working with East and West, and that the ETCZs, which were built for enterprises ranging from processing and manufacturing to trade and logistics, science, technology and more, offer plentiful prospects for collaboration.

Mrs Lam also expressed gratitude to the co-organisers as well as the Ministry of Commerce, the Embassy of the PRC in the Republic of Indonesia and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC in the HKSAR for their vital support of the webinar.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, delivered introductory remarks at the webinar. He noted that economies around the world are facing the common challenge of the epidemic, and that ASEAN economies have demonstrated their resilience and capability to contain the situation and to prepare for prompt recovery from the economic downturn. ASEAN embraces international trade and as a whole is Hong Kong's second largest trading partner. Indonesia, being an important economy in ASEAN, offers a vast market with substantial business opportunities for Hong Kong and the rest of the world. He stressed that Hong Kong is an attractive location for Indonesian companies to expand to the Mainland of China and elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region, and said he looks forward to even closer collaboration.

He emphasised that Hong Kong remains a dynamic global financial centre with a high degree of competitiveness and openness. Hong Kong's uniqueness, stemming from, inter-alia, its own social and legal systems including an open and efficient market as well as the free flow of capital, information and talent, plus a simple, low and territorial based tax regime, means the city is and will continue to be one of the best places in the world to do business and a connecting channel between the Mainland of China and the rest of the world. Indonesian investors can establish businesses in Hong Kong to take full advantage of the preferential treatment and most favourable conditions under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement to tap the business opportunities on the Mainland, especially in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

A panel discussion session entitled "Discovering New Partnership Opportunities" and a presentation on Indonesia's ETCZs also featured in the webinar. Moderated by the Commissioner for Belt and Road, Mr Denis Yip, the panel discussion session was joined by the Chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), Dr Peter Lam; the Chairman of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong (CGCC), Dr Jonathan Choi; the President of the Law Society of Hong Kong, Ms Melissa Pang; the Chairman of the Financial Services Development Council, Mr Laurence Li; the Vice Chairwoman for International Relations of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), Mrs Shinta Widjaja Kamdani; the President of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (INACHAMHK), Mr James Hartono; and the President of Bukalapak, Mr Teddy Oetomo. With different areas of expertise, the panellists spoke with the participants on how Hong Kong and Indonesia could work together to explore joint business opportunities amid the ongoing epidemic and beyond.

With more than 900 business leaders and professionals from both Hong Kong and Indonesia registered, the webinar concluded with closing remarks given by Mr Yau and the Consul General of Indonesia in Hong Kong, Mr Ricky Suhendar.

The webinar was co-organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Jakarta, the HKTDC, the CGCC, KADIN and INACHAMHK, and supported by the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC in the HKSAR.