

Hong Kong and UAE organise joint webinar to enhance collaboration (with photos)

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Ministry of Economy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) jointly organised a webinar titled "Hong Kong-UAE Partnership: Immense Opportunities" today (May 24) to explore collaboration opportunities in such fields as trade, investment and professional services. The webinar attracted some 400 sign-ups.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, addressed the opening session, followed by responding remarks by the Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Economy of the UAE, Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi.

Mr Yau underlined Hong Kong's close economic and trade partnership with the UAE, noting that the UAE is Hong Kong's largest trading partner in the Middle East. Following the signing of the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement in June 2019 and the formal opening of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Dubai in October 2021, the mutual collaboration between the two places has reached new heights.

Mr Yau encouraged enterprises of the UAE and member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf to leverage Hong Kong's role as a two-way connector to capitalise on the opportunities brought by the Belt and Road Initiative. Businesses can also make use of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement as well as the Free Trade Agreement between Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as springboards to tap into these markets, in particular the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

In addition to trade collaboration, Mr Yau said that there was plenty of room for enhanced co-operation in the area of professional services. He highlighted the benefits that Hong Kong's professional services could bring to the UAE's infrastructure and investment projects.

The webinar featured a panel discussion session moderated by the Commissioner for Belt and Road, Mr Rex Chang, which centred around opportunities for collaboration in the post-COVID time. Panelists from both places shared their insights on how the two places could join hands to enhance collaboration and seize the immense opportunities in trade, investment, professional services, as well as innovation and technology. The panelists included the Co-convenor of the Belt and Road Working Group of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, Mr Nicholas Ho; the Chairman of the Hong Kong Law Foundation, Mr Larry Kwok; Deputy Executive Director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council Dr Patrick Lau; the Chief Executive Officer of the Dubai Investment Development Agency, Mr Fahad Al Gergawi; and

the Chairman of the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr Abdullah Sultan Al Owais. The webinar was concluded by the Acting Consul-General of the UAE in Hong Kong, Sheikh Saoud Al Mualla.

The webinar today was the first government-to-government webinar that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has organised jointly with a trading partner in the Middle East, and the seventh one since the webinar series commenced in mid-2020.

