

Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator Programme celebrates 10th anniversary milestone (with photos)

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) held the Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programme 10th Anniversary Celebration Ceremony at the Customs Headquarters Building today (November 29) and presented certificates to new members of the AEO Programme and presented Hong Kong AEO Programme Partnership Scheme Awards. Hong Kong and Indonesia Customs exchanged a signed AEO Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) at the ceremony. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Hong Kong Customs and the Mainland Customs was also signed at the ceremony to enhance AEO co-operation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The Hong Kong AEO Programme 10th Anniversary Celebration Ceremony, with "Bringing In & Going Global – Impetus for Hong Kong's Economy" as the theme, reviewed the development of the Programme over the past decade. The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, officiated at the launching ceremony with the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho.

During the ceremony, Ms Ho and the Consul General of Indonesia in Hong Kong, Mr Ricky Suhendar, represented the Governments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Indonesia to exchange the AEO MRA documents. The documents were signed earlier by Ms Ho and the Director General of Indonesian Customs and Excise, Mr Askolani. The Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization, Dr Kunio Mikuriya, in a short video, congratulated and recognised Hong Kong Customs for its efforts in maintaining close partnership with industries to jointly secure the global supply chain. He also sent his blessings for the 10th anniversary of the Hong Kong AEO Programme.

Currently, the C&ED has ratified MRAs with 13 Customs administrations of the Mainland, India, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Canada, Mexico and Indonesia. Under the MRAs, AEOs from the signatory countries or regions can enjoy reciprocal trade facilitation including reduced inspection rates and prioritised clearance.

In the ceremony, Ms Ho and the Director General of the Department of Enterprise Management and Audited-based Control of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Mr Wang Sheng, signed a MoU to enhance AEO co-operation in the GBA. Witnessed by Mr Yau and Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Department and Head of the Commercial Office of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR Mr Liu Yajun, the signing ceremony was conducted through video-conferencing.

Ms Ho said, "In addition to our traditional role as a law enforcer and gatekeeper, the C&ED also takes up the role as an economic development promoter. The C&ED will continue to develop the Hong Kong AEO Programme and

extend the MRA network to bring more benefits to enterprises and further enhance the co-operation between Hong Kong and other adjacent regions, in particular from Southeast Asia to the entire Asia-Pacific region. The C&ED will strive for more trade facilitation measures for maintaining a favourable business environment for local enterprises."

During the event today, the Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Excise and Strategic Support), Mr Jimmy Tam, also presented certificates to 29 new members of the AEO Programme. They have been accredited as Hong Kong AEOs from 2019 to 2022. Due to the epidemic situation, the certificate presentation ceremony had been suspended. Since the implementation of the Hong Kong AEO Programme in 2012, the number of accredited enterprises has now risen to about 80.

About 200 guests, including consuls and customs attachés, as well as representatives from Hong Kong AEO members, trade associations and private sector stakeholders, attended the ceremony today.

