

Hong Kong welcomes Year of Pig in London (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London (London ETO), greeted the Year of the Pig in the United Kingdom (UK) by hosting a Chinese New Year reception in London on February 12 (London time) and participating in the large-scale London Chinatown Chinese New Year celebration in Trafalgar Square and Chinatown on February 10.

The Director-General of the London ETO, Ms Priscilla To, welcomed more than 500 guests at the Chinese New Year reception on February 12 at the Banqueting House, Whitehall in London. Amongst the guests were UK government officials, parliamentarians, the Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster, mayors from various London Boroughs, senior diplomats, leading figures in the business world, academics, media representatives and members of the Hong Kong community.

Speaking at the reception, Ms To highlighted Hong Kong's many advantages and opportunities, and its commitment to "Connect and Excel", mentioning how the opening of two very important infrastructure projects in 2018 are enhancing its connectivity: The Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link which links Hong Kong to the Mainland's high speed rail network and brings Guangzhou to less than an hour away and can reach Beijing in less than nine hours; and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, which puts major cities in the Pearl River Delta within a three-hour commute from Hong Kong. She also highlighted Hong Kong's key role in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development.

Ms To added, "Hong Kong would not be able to excel without our fundamentals including the rule of law, judicial independence, free flow of capital and information and freedom of speech and expression, all underpinned by the 'one country, two systems' principle guaranteed under the Basic Law. Our commitment and determination to steadfastly uphold these core values and to implement 'one country, two systems' are unwavering."

Ms To welcomed Hong Kong's continuing and growing relationship with the UK, saying she was optimistic that bilateral trade and economic links between the two places are set to grow even closer. "We expect to see stronger collaboration in some key sectors, notably financial services, innovation and technology, and creative industries. We are also exploring the possibility of a free trade agreement with the UK in future." She also highlighted UK-Hong Kong bilateral co-operation in the emerging and rapidly developing new field of fintech. Fintech, she said, has "opened up even more opportunities for closer collaboration, especially when it comes to startups. Hong Kong now hosts more than 550 fintech companies and about 52 per cent have overseas founders. As the UK is a world leader in fintech, we are pleased to have developed close collaboration with the UK on this front. For instance, the Hong Kong-UK FinTech Bridge Pilot Program just launched recently is a tailored programme to help UK fintech companies to expand into Hong Kong."

Ms To added, "Renowned UK research institutes, universities and private enterprises are welcome to join the growing and exciting innovation and technology ecosystem of Hong Kong, leveraging on the host of new policies and attractive measures that this term of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has put in place."

The reception featured a lion dance as well as a performance by Hong Kong musical group, the CY Leo Electronic Trio, who played a variety of jazz-infused classical and contemporary Chinese and Hong Kong pieces.

On February 10, the London ETO took part in the huge annual London Chinatown Chinese New Year celebration, which was attended by hundreds of thousands of people. The London ETO ran its own marquee in Trafalgar Square to promote Hong Kong, with thousands of visitors coming by to learn about Hong Kong's culture and to enjoy Hong Kong-themed games. The London ETO also sponsored a special stage in Shaftesbury Avenue which featured performers with a connection to Hong Kong, and where Ms To greeted the audience and conveyed Chinese New Year wishes to them. With the support of the London ETO, the CY Leo Electronic Trio performed both on the main stage in Trafalgar Square and on the Shaftesbury Avenue stage.

The London ETO will organise further Chinese New Year events in the countries under its purview in the coming weeks.



