

# LegCo delegation concludes duty visit to Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The delegation, led by the President of the Legislative Council (LegCo), Mr Andrew Leung, and comprising seven members of the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee, concluded their duty visit to Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore today (May 18).

On the last day of the visit, the delegation paid a call to the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), Singapore. ITE, the largest institute in Singapore that specialises in the provision of vocational and technical education, is a post-secondary education institution under the Ministry of Education. It is also the main administrative body responsible for developing national occupational skills certification and standards. The delegation toured various training facilities of ITE including the User Experience Hub, which utilises virtual reality technology to emulate workplace environment, as well as the IoT Experiential Centre and Aerospace Hub. During the tour, the delegation gained insight into the effectiveness of the training programmes provided by ITE for young people and working adults. Members also attended a luncheon and engaged in discussions with representatives of ITE to explore ways for strengthening collaboration with institutes in Hong Kong.

The delegation departed for Hong Kong in the afternoon. The leader of the delegation, Mr Leung, concluded that the seven-day duty visit was fruitful and carried great significance, adding that Members gained valuable insights from it. He said, "The visit not only enabled the LegCo to establish closer ties with the three member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), but also kept them abreast of the latest development in Hong Kong. This will help facilitate more collaborations in areas such as finance, infrastructure, innovation and technology, tourism, education, arts and culture between Hong Kong and ASEAN, thereby achieving mutual benefits and also injecting new impetus into Hong Kong's economy."

ASEAN is Hong Kong's second-largest trading partner. The Government has been promoting trade co-operation with ASEAN and striving for Hong Kong's early accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free trade agreement. During the visit to Indonesia, the delegation invited 10 ASEAN member states, Observer State and Dialogue Partners to attend a networking reception.

Mr Leung said, "The reception was the highlight of the duty visit. The direct interaction between the delegation and ASEAN member states has fostered greater mutual trust. Their reaffirmed support to Hong Kong's accession to RCEP has brought great meaning to the visit."

During the visit, the delegation took the opportunity to pay a courtesy call on the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN to exchange views on topics related to Hong Kong's accession to RCEP. The delegation also met with the Chinese Ambassador to ASEAN, during which Members expressed gratitude for her support and assistance in enabling the delegation to engage with representatives of the ASEAN community. In meetings with the Chinese Ambassadors to Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, the delegation exchanged views with the Ambassadors on how to explore the ASEAN market and promote regional economic development and people-to-people exchanges. On behalf of the delegation, Mr Leung expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government and the Ambassadors for supporting Hong Kong's accession to RCEP.

While in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, the delegation visited local parliaments. Apart from sharing parliamentary experience and strengthening connections, Members observed how a Member of the Singapore Parliament engaged with the public. This provided the delegation with deeper insights into how other legislatures establish effective communication with the public in order to stay connected with the people.

Members also exchanged views with various chambers of commerce, exploring how Hong Kong can more effectively play a bridging role to enable ASEAN countries to access to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area market and jointly promote the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, the delegation highlighted to representatives of the chambers of commerce that the enactment of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance has provided Hong Kong a stable and secure environment for business and investment.

The duty visit covered a wide range of areas, including visits to local government departments, enterprises and key facilities relating to innovation and technology, industry, housing, education, culture and Halal certification. Members gained a deeper understanding of the respective strengths of Hong Kong and ASEAN member states in different fields, allowing mutual learning and driving co-development. Mr Leung added that the first-hand information obtained through the duty visit would enable Members to discuss with the Government on strengthening collaboration with ASEAN countries, and to jointly study more policies and measures that are beneficial to the people.

The delegation is led by Mr Leung. Deputy delegation leader is the Chairman of the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee, Mr Tommy Cheung. Other participating members are Mr Jeffrey Lam, Ms Nixie Lam, Ms Joephy Chan, Mr Tang Fei, Ms Carmen Kan and Mr Yim Kong.

Members of the delegation were excited about the successful completion of the duty visit and shared their experience. Mr Cheung said, "Every time I visited a parliament, and introduced myself as a representative of catering sector and strive to promote the development of Hong Kong's tourism industry, they all expressed envy. Coincidentally, the parliaments of the three ASEAN countries have engaged us in discussion about the economy, which showed

everyone's keen focus on economic development. Therefore, we should engage with each other more often in the future, and enhance our parliamentary liaison efforts to deepen mutual trust and understanding."

Mr Lam said, "In addition to learning about the latest developments of the three countries, we had in-depth engagement with the local parliaments and representatives of the political and business sectors, effectively telling the good and true stories of Hong Kong. We also seized the opportunity to introduce Hong Kong's post-pandemic landscape in terms of economics, trade, and tourism, welcoming enterprises and talents from the ASEAN countries to settle in Hong Kong. We looked forward to attracting more investors to establish regional headquarters and family offices in Hong Kong, taking our multilateral co-operation with ASEAN to new heights. I believe that Hong Kong and the three countries are both competitors and partners, and this relationship will enable mutual benefit and promote the development of the Belt and Road Initiative."

Ms Lam said, "This duty visit provided an opportunity to deepen Hong Kong's relationships with the three ASEAN countries on multiple aspects. I will actively advocate for establishing platforms for deepening exchanges between Hong Kong's youth and ASEAN member states, enabling them to have a deeper understanding of the advancement in neighboring countries, broaden their horizon, so as to equip themselves to become talents who can contribute to the development of 'ASEAN+'."

Ms Chan said, "This duty visit established objectives and directions for parliamentary liaison work. Under the leadership of the LegCo President, we established strong ties with three ASEAN member states and promoted Hong Kong's early accession to RCEP. We also took the opportunity to invite legislators, business representatives, and youth delegates from various regions to visit Hong Kong. Cross-border E-commerce was one of the major themes of this visit. China has a mature E-commerce market, while ASEAN countries are focusing on developing E-commerce and promoting digital transformation. Hong Kong, enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world, can leverage its strength as a 'super-connector' to explore opportunities under the initiative of Digital Silk Road and achieve breakthrough in traditional trade."

Mr Tang said, "This LegCo duty visit to the Southeast Asia was rewarding, establishing stronger ties with the parliaments, government departments, business sectors and various sectors of the community in the three countries. It truly demonstrated that communication and exchanges are the best way to promote the mutually beneficial co-operation and friendship between Hong Kong and countries in the Southeast Asia. Beneath the solemn parliamentary buildings of each country, we encountered parliament members and government officials who are down-to-earth and dedicated to development. Although we are from different countries, we share the common objective of serving the public and working towards their betterment."

Ms Kan said, "The most impressive aspect of this visit was the exchange with the Chinese Ambassador to ASEAN and representatives from other ASEAN

countries. I felt deeply the mutual enthusiasm and close partnership among each other, as well as the mutual benefits of Hong Kong's early accession to RCEP. I was also deeply impressed that the Ambassadors placed importance on ASEAN, as well as their concern and assistance for Hong Kong, local Hong Kong businesses and communities."

Mr Yim said, "This duty visit was successfully completed. We had substantive exchanges with the parliaments, government departments, Chinese Embassies, business communities, overseas Chinese community leaders as well as scientific research and educational institutions of the three ASEAN countries we visited. We also highlighted the necessity of enacting legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law, which has enhanced the business environment, and promoted Hong Kong's early accession to RCEP. With the deepening mutually beneficial co-operation between China and ASEAN, Hong Kong can better play its role as a 'super-connector' in going global and attracting foreign investment, vigorously pursuing our economic growth and striving for development."

The delegation visited Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore from May 12 to 18. The delegation expressed its gratitude to the relevant government departments and reception units of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore for the thoughtful arrangements, as well as the overseas Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices for the assistance provided. Their support contributed significantly to the success of the duty visit.

