

London ETO soars into Year of Dragon with festive jubilations (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London (London ETO) greeted the Year of the Dragon in the United Kingdom (UK) by hosting a festive reception in London on February 13 (London time) and supporting a large-scale London Chinatown celebration at Trafalgar Square, Chinatown and Charing Cross Road on February 11.

The Director-General of the London ETO, Mr Gilford Law, welcomed over 500 guests at the Year of the Dragon reception on February 13 at Banqueting House, Whitehall, in London. Amongst the guests were UK government officials, parliamentarians, the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Ms Patricia McAllister, mayors from London boroughs, senior diplomats, leading figures in the business sector, academics, media representatives and members of the Chinese community.

Speaking at the reception, Mr Law introduced the latest developments of Hong Kong on its economic and cultural fronts. Quoting promising trade figures, he highlighted the close economic ties between Hong Kong and the UK, and highlighted that Hong Kong not only is the second largest trading partner of the UK in Asia, but is also home to over 640 British companies.

Mr Law elaborated that, "With Hong Kong's distinctive advantages under 'one country, two systems,' Hong Kong will surely, like the dragon soaring to new heights, continue to prosper and thrive as a global business hub. On attracting enterprises, the measures launched by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government have generated positive results. Last year, over 380 companies set up or expanded their businesses in Hong Kong, including 48 from the UK as our second most significant contributor, just after Mainland China.

"Over the past year, Hong Kong welcomed over 34 million visitors. While anticipating the full recovery of its flight connection capacity this year, we will stage over 80 mega events in the city in the first half of the year alone, including Art Basel in March and the Hong Kong Sevens in April," he added, while inviting the guests to visit Hong Kong.

The reception featured a contemporary lion dance performance by Hong Kong performance art group TS Crew; an acapella performance by The Mockingbird, formed by a group of Hong Kong students studying in the UK; and a traditional dragon dance.

On February 11, the London ETO supported the grand annual Chinese New Year celebration in London's Chinatown, drawing audiences of hundreds in places and thousands in other locations along the streets of Central London. Mr Law, alongside esteemed guests such as Ms Patricia McAllister; the Chairman of the London Chinatown Chinese Association (LCCA), Mr Tang Chu-

ting; and the President of the LCCA, Mr Peter Lam, joined the festive parade. The guests greeted the crowds in London from an open-air double decker bus. Additionally, a variety of cultural and music performances were staged at Trafalgar Square.

The London ETO will organise further events to celebrate the Year of the Dragon in the countries under its purview in the coming weeks.

