

S for S visits Macao (with photo)

The Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, visited Macao this afternoon (June 19) to learn more about the work on safeguarding national security there and its latest developments. He concluded the visit and returned to Hong Kong tonight.

Mr Lee called on the Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), Mr Ho Iat-seng, today. Mr Ho briefed him on the legislative process, considerations and experiences in relation to Macao's enactment of the national security law. Mr Lee then met with the Secretary for Security of Macao, Mr Wong Sio-chak, to exchange views on Macao's experiences regarding its implementation of the national security law since 2009.

During the meeting and related exchanges, Mr Lee learned that Macao has put in place effective measures at the policymaking and implementation levels to safeguard national security. These include the establishment of the National Security Committee headed by the Chief Executive in 2018 to formulate policies and co-ordinate initiatives with an office headed by the Secretary for Security of Macao to oversee the co-ordination and implementation work. The Macao authorities are planning to set up new government departments and divisions to strengthen enforcement of national security.

According to the decision of the National People's Congress, introduction of the national security law applicable to Hong Kong aims to prevent, stop and punish the acts and activities seriously endangering national security. During the exchanges, Mr Lee learned about Macao authorities' experiences in such areas, including the importance of preventive work in reducing threats to national security.

Information indicates that since Macao's enactment of the national security law in 2009, its society has become more stable and the economy has developed in a desirable manner. In 2019, its gross domestic product was 2.5 times as much as before the law became effective, while that year the unemployment rate marked a record low and the number of inbound travellers has since risen by 80 per cent. This has shown that the law has had a positive impact on Macao's society and has enabled a more robust economic development. The example of Macao shows that national security is an important prerequisite and foundation for maintaining the prosperity and stability of society.

Mr Lee held that introducing the national security law applicable to Hong Kong ensures its long-term security and helps continue the development of its economy and people's livelihoods. Macao and Hong Kong are both special administrative regions and Macao's experience is worthy of reference for Hong Kong. The exchanges today help Hong Kong better prepare for its implementation of the national security law.

Mr Lee expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Executive of the Macao SAR and the Secretary for Security of Macao, adding that he was grateful to the Macao authorities for arranging the visit today.

