

Seventh Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to Belt and Road Initiative held in Beijing

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and relevant central ministries held the seventh Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing today (July 12).

Vice Chairman of the NDRC Mr Zhao Chenxin attended the conference with Mainland officials led by him, including the Secretary General of the NDRC, Mr Wu Hao, who is also the Convenor of the Joint Conference, and representatives from the NDRC, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the Supreme People's Court, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Commerce, the National Health Commission, the People's Bank of China, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, the National Administration of Financial Regulation, the National Immigration Administration, and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR.

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, in his capacity as the chairperson of the Working Group on Belt and Road Development under the Steering Group on Integration into National Development, led HKSAR Government officials to attend the conference. They included the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development and Hong Kong-side Convenor of the Joint Conference, Mr Algernon Yau, and representatives from the Department of Justice, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Belt and Road Office of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, and the Office of the Government of the HKSAR in Beijing. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Insurance Authority and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) were also represented at the meeting.

Mr Lam said that as the Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI) has entered its next golden decade, President Xi Jinping announced at the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing in October last year the eight major steps the country will take to support the joint pursuit of high-quality Belt and Road (B&R) development, which Hong Kong's advantages are closely aligned with. Guided by the eight major steps, in particular co-operation in new fields such as green development and innovation, the Steering Group on Integration into National Development chaired by the Chief Executive and its Working Group on Belt and Road Development are steering various policy bureaux and departments to proactively capitalise on Hong Kong's role as the functional platform for the B&RI, as well as to give full

play to its role as a "super connector" and a "super value-adder".

He pointed out that there are seven deliverables directly related to Hong Kong among the Lists of Deliverables announced after the Forum. The HKSAR Government is actively implementing these deliverables and has made good progress. These included an increase in the quota of the Belt and Road Scholarship to 150 per year, the launch of the inaugural Asia+ Festival, the commencement of joint production of television variety programmes with B&RI regions, and the organisation of the first event outside the Mainland for the Green Investment and Finance Partnership which was launched at the Forum. In addition, the HKSAR Government is taking forward the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy and the Meteorological Training Centre for Belt and Road Countries, as well as planning to hold the ninth Belt and Road Summit in September, which will lay the groundwork for the 10th anniversary of the Summit next year. The HKSAR Government is also actively carrying out the preparatory work for the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation.

At the meeting, Mr Yau highlighted the HKSAR Government's achievements in various aspects in promoting the B&RI over the past year, including proactively expanding the HKSAR's economic and trade networks in B&R markets such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Middle East and North Africa; forging free trade and investment agreements with more trade partners in exploring B&R opportunities; and continuous enhancements to the relevant B&RI platforms in Hong Kong, such as the HKTDC Belt and Road Portal, the international carbon marketplace and the Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption.

The meeting focused its discussion on the 12 work proposals on further promoting the B&RI that the HKSAR Government put forward for consideration by central ministries, covering B&R economic, trade and investment co-operation, legal and dispute resolution services, finance and risk management, and innovation and technology (I&T). Representatives of relevant Joint Conference Mainland ministries introduced their respective work in supporting Hong Kong's participation in and contribution to the B&RI, and provided feedback on the HKSAR Government's work proposals. The HKSAR Government is grateful for the support expressed by relevant central ministries at the meeting on various work proposals, and will actively follow up with them to better facilitate Hong Kong's integration into national development.

The meeting also discussed the work priorities of the HKSAR Government in promoting Hong Kong's participation in and contribution to the B&RI under the guidance of the eight major steps in the year ahead. Among them, on supporting an open world economy, the Government will continue to actively seek for Hong Kong's early accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership; on carrying out practical co-operation, the Government will continue to organise a number of outbound missions to B&R markets; on promoting green development, the Government will strengthen Hong Kong's position as Asia's green finance hub; and on advancing scientific and technological innovation, the Government will continue to fully participate in the development of an international I&T centre in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-

Macao Greater Bay Area.

The Arrangement between the NDRC and the HKSAR Government for Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the B&RI, signed between the HKSAR Government and the NDRC in 2017, provides the direction and a blueprint for Hong Kong's full participation in and contribution to the B&RI. The Joint Conference mechanism was set up to follow up on the implementation of 26 specific measures under the Arrangement, and meetings are convened at least once a year.