

SFST elaborates on opportunities and challenges brought by AI to Hong Kong's financial industry at Zhongguancun Forum (with photos)

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, attended the 2024 Zhongguancun Forum Fintech Parallel Forum in Beijing today (April 29).

Mr Hui also called on the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Xia Baolong, on the same day. Mr Hui reported to Director Xia on the latest developments and the way forward for Hong Kong financial market and key areas of work under the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB), which include offshore Renminbi businesses, securities, asset and wealth management, fintech and green finance. Director Xia fully recognised the work of the FSTB. He said that the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee will give full support to Hong Kong in pursuing economic growth and advancing development. He hoped that the HKSAR Government will publicise, leverage and make good use of its unique edges and roles, so as to attract more enterprises and talents to develop in Hong Kong.

Mr Hui expressed his gratitude for Director Xia's encouragement. Mr Hui was especially grateful for the country's announcement on April 19 about a series of measures to further expand the mutual access between the capital markets of the Mainland and Hong Kong. He also looked forward to liaising closely with the relevant Mainland ministries and institutions to implement the measures as early as possible, with an aim to jointly contribute to the country's development as a financial powerhouse and high-quality financial development.

Mr Hui delivered a keynote speech on how Hong Kong's financial sector addresses the opportunities and challenges brought by artificial intelligence (AI) at the Parallel Forum this morning. Developing AI has become a major global trend. Hong Kong, as an international financial centre, should certainly look into its impact on the financial industry. In this regard, Mr Hui shared his three judgements.

Mr Hui said, "Firstly, as a data-driven industry, the financial sector is suitable for embracing AI to enhance its efficiency and competitiveness significantly. Secondly, AI is like a double-edged sword, and improper use can bring considerable risks. Thirdly, as AI will become more and more prevalent, the amount of investment it attracts in the future will continue to increase, creating new businesses that will revamp the industry ecosystem."

"Being an international financial centre, Hong Kong's financial market is open and inclusive towards the application of AI. We are committed to building a healthy and sustainable market environment, encouraging the financial sector to seize the opportunities brought by AI, and at the same time, safeguarding the overall financial security with responsible use of AI," Mr Hui added.

Mr Hui said that the HKSAR Government will issue a policy statement later this year, setting out its policy stance and approach on the application of AI in the financial market. He also looked forward to maintaining close exchanges and co-operation between Beijing and Hong Kong in the areas of AI and digital economy in the future, as well as exploring new development opportunities together.

Organised by the Haidian District People's Government, the Xicheng District People's Government, the Asian Financial Cooperation Association, and Tsinghua University PBC School of Finance, the Parallel Forum invites guests to discuss the prospects of integrated development of digital finance and AI under the theme "AI for Digital Finance Development". At the Parallel Forum, those joining Mr Hui to deliver keynote speeches included the Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences of 2001, Professor Michael Spence; academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and professor of the Department of Computer Science and Technology of Tsinghua University, Professor Zhang Bo; and former vice-president of the Renmin University of China Professor Wu Xiaoqiu.

Mr Hui will return to Hong Kong tomorrow (April 30). Before concluding his visit to Beijing, Mr Hui will meet with the leadership of the China Development Bank and the Bank of China.

