

# Speech by CE at ceremony of Asia+ Festival (English only) (with video)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the ceremony of Asia+ Festival today (November 12):

Consuls-General, representatives of overseas cultural organisations, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is with great pleasure that I address you at the inaugural edition of Asia+ Festival, a brand new arts festival with a focus on Asia.

At the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation last month, President Xi Jinping remarked that the Belt and Road Initiative has opened up a new path for exchanges among countries, and established a new framework for international co-operation. Belt and Road co-operation, the President has noted, is based on the principle of "planning together, building together, and benefitting together".

Under the unique "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong is the only city in the world which converges the China advantage and the global advantage. Hong Kong is not only a city deeply rooted in Chinese culture, it is also a metropolis known for its dynamic fusion of the cultures of Asia and other parts of the world. We have a unique role to play in fostering people-to-people exchanges along the Belt and Road.

With the support of the National 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong is fully dedicated to developing into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. The Hong Kong SAR Government is expediting the advancement of Hong Kong's cultural scene, and connecting our city with other parts of the world by leveraging our own strengths and advantages.

With that in mind, we have launched the Asia+ Festival this autumn. Our aim is to celebrate the cultural diversity of Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere along the Belt and Road, and explore the endless possibilities of cultural collaboration.

The colourful calendar of this year's Asia+ Festival features 11 exciting events. They include stage performances, exhibitions, and even an outdoor carnival, with over 20 countries joining hands to present their unique cultures and arts. I am confident that the two-month festival will promote cultural appreciation, and strengthen Hong Kong's ties with the world.

We hope to turn the festival into a regular annual event, to showcase our Asian talents, and to build it as a platform for sustainable cultural exchange.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the Consuls-General and representatives of overseas cultural organisations in Hong Kong, for your enthusiastic support on this new initiative with their wonderful programmes. I wish the festival a resounding success and all of you an enjoyable afternoon. Thank you very much.