

# Speech by CE at Law Society of Hong Kong's International Summit 2023 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Law Society of Hong Kong's International Summit 2023 in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative today (October 11):

Deputy Director Liu Guangyuan (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR), Mr C.M. Chan (President of the Law Society of Hong Kong), Consuls-General, members of the legal profession, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all. A warm welcome to the sixth Belt and Road Conference organised by the Law Society of Hong Kong, on the auspicious occasion of the 10th anniversary of our country's – and the world's – Belt and Road Initiative.

I'm told that some 340 of you are taking part in today's conference, with another 400 or more viewing online, and from all over the world. I'm pleased to note, as well, that representatives from a number of local law associations from different Mainland cities are here with us today.

"Peace and Prosperity on the Belt and Road" is the resonating theme of today's conference. I'm grateful to CM Chan, President of the Law Society of Hong Kong, for his considered address on today's theme and the critical role of law in ensuring "peace and prosperity".

President Xi Jinping attaches great importance to "peace and prosperity", right when he personally introduced the concept of developing the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century" in 2013.

In his address at the inaugural Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, in 2017, President Xi said, and I quote, "the pursuit of the Belt and Road Initiative requires a peaceful and stable environment." And, he added, "we should build the Belt and Road into a road of prosperity. Development holds the master key to solving all problems."

Just yesterday, the Central Authorities published a white paper titled "The Belt and Road Initiative: A Key Pillar of the Global Community of Shared Future". As detailed by the paper, the Belt and Road Initiative has contributed to the sound development of economic globalisation, and helped to resolve global development challenges and improve the global governance system.

The Hong Kong SAR Government welcomes and fully supports this all-encompassing white paper. Hong Kong continues to contribute to the efforts of building a global community of shared future under the Initiative. Contribute to furthering the Belt and Road Initiative's cause in promoting peace and prosperity.

Under the "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong practises the common law, and that makes Hong Kong the only such jurisdiction in China.

We are a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services, boasting a vibrant pool of legal talent. Together, they provide professional services for corporate investment and deal-making, as well as dispute resolution. These strengths – and they are internationally recognised – give Hong Kong enviable tools for settling conflicts peacefully.

Alongside our long-established judiciary which exercises its judicial power independently, Hong Kong is constantly ranked among the world's most preferred seats for arbitration.

And, let me add, the International Organization for Mediation Preparatory Office was set up in Hong Kong in February. It is the first multilateral organisation dedicated to providing mediation services for settling international disputes. And that, ladies and gentlemen, will contribute significantly to international relations built on peace and harmony. Hong Kong is committed to promoting the use of mediation for resolving international conflicts in an amicable manner, and we will do our utmost to support the Office's work here.

The National 14th Five-Year Plan supports Hong Kong's continued development as a centre for international legal and dispute-resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Our recognised prowess will ensure Hong Kong's pivotal role as a value-added gateway of the Belt and Road. It will, as well, consolidate our status as a global city contributing to the prosperity and development of the Belt and Road.

The Steering Group on Integration into National Development, which I chair, was set up last year to enhance Hong Kong's integration into national development. Supported by three secretaries of departments as my deputies, this new leadership structure ensures the most effective use of Hong Kong's advantages to seize, and sustain, the opportunities arising from national development. And that, of course, includes the Belt and Road Initiative.

Last month, more than six thousand senior government officials and business leaders from Belt and Road countries took part in the eighth Belt and Road Summit in Hong Kong. Its theme, "Prospering on a Decade of Collaboration", just like the theme today, tells us that Hong Kong has a clear and compelling role to play in helping to realise peace and prosperity throughout the Belt and Road.

I am pleased to note that the number of foreign officials attending, and the MOUs exchanged at the summit was the largest this year, showcasing our determination to promote international co-operation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

My thanks to the Law Society of Hong Kong for once again organising this essential gathering, for putting a welcome spotlight on the rule of law, and our valued legal sector, in pursuing the far-reaching promise of the Belt and Road Initiative.

I know you will enjoy today's Belt and Road Conference, and I wish you the best of business, and health, in the coming years.

â€‹Thank you very much.