

Speech by CE at Malaysian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong & Macau 10th Anniversary Cocktail Reception (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong & Macau 10th Anniversary Cocktail Reception today (January 25):

Your Excellency Ambassador Dato' Norman Muhamad (Ambassador of Malaysia to People's Republic of China), Consul-General Muzambli Markam (Consul-General of Malaysia to Hong Kong), Dato' Gan Khai Choon (Chairman of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (Hong Kong & Macau)), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It gives me great pleasure to join you, tonight, in celebration of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce, and its 10th anniversary here in Hong Kong. A decade of continuing contributions to Hong Kong-Malaysia relations – in business, in trade and investment, and in culture, education and people-to-people ties.

With some 800 members, you connect Hong Kong with Malaysia, as well as ASEAN. You make a decided difference for your members, and for Hong Kong. You also make significant contribution to the good and growing relations between our economies.

With its world-renowned hospitality and beautiful landscape, Malaysia is a mesmerising country that celebrates diversity. Meanwhile, Hong Kong prides itself as Asia's world city, and brings our visitors a unique blend of eastern and western cultures. We have long been good friends in the region, and there is so much more we can achieve together.

In 2022, merchandise trade between Hong Kong and Malaysia exceeded 28 billion US Dollars, up seven per cent. Malaysia, I'm pleased to say, is our ninth-largest merchandise trading partner in the world. We have to work hard to push it to an even higher and higher position.

Our much valued co-operation can be counted in more than trade numbers. I visited Malaysia last year. I had the honour of meeting Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and I thanked him for Malaysia's support to Hong Kong's accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP.

Malaysia also announced an extension of the visa-free entry period for Hong Kong SAR passport holders to three months. Very good news. This was warmly welcomed by the people of Hong Kong, who have long regarded Malaysia as one of their top business and holiday destinations. I am one of them!

That visit led to the signing of eleven MOUs with Malaysian companies and institutions, covering trade, finance, digital transformation, and even railway and property development.

And there is much to look forward to in the coming year. We have, for example, been contributing to the Economic and Technical Co-operation Work Programme under the FTA between ASEAN and Hong Kong.

Malaysia, I'm pleased to say, has been participating in the programme, through initiatives related to intellectual property and ESG.

Under the auspices of the unique "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong acts as a "super connector" and "super value-adder" between Mainland China and the rest of the world. Hong Kong would add significant value to RCEP, the world's largest FTA.

And that, of course, includes Malaysia and Malaysian business, trade and investment, given Hong Kong's extensive, continually evolving, and ever deepening, connections with Mainland markets.

I welcome the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce's support – the support of each and every one of you – as Hong Kong strives for early accession to RCEP.

On that optimistic note, allow me, once again, to congratulate the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce on your milestone 10th anniversary.

Ladies and gentlemen, in just over two weeks, we will celebrate the Year of the Dragon. The Dragon will bring us vitality and growth – new projects and opportunities aplenty.

Hong Kong looks forward to soaring to new heights in the Year of the Dragon, together with all of you.

Thank you.