

Speech by CE at reception in celebration of 2024 Bastille Day (English only)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the reception in celebration of 2024 Bastille Day today (July 12):

Consul General Chrstile Drulhe (Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau), Commissioner Cui Jianchun (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Bonsoir. I am currently on a duty visit outside of Hong Kong, so I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this remarkable reception by video.

This reception celebrates the 235th anniversary of Bastille Day, the National Day of France. A day – and a night – of spectacular displays, overflowing with French history, culture and, most importantly, the unity of the French people.

This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between France and China, our country.

In celebration of this momentous occasion, President Xi Jinping made a state visit to France this May. During his talks with His Excellency President Emmanuel Macron, President Xi highlighted that our country stands ready to maintain strategic communication with France, and consolidate the strategic stability of bilateral relations. He remarked that China and France, as major countries with rich cultures, should accelerate people-to-people exchanges, and continue to organise successful events.

Of all the events that foster people-to-people exchanges coming up, one of the most exciting ones must be the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The Games are set to open two weeks from today. I am glad to note that the Hong Kong, China delegation will compete in over 30 events, respectively, in the Paris Olympic Games and Paris Paralympic Games. All of us look keenly forward to the outstanding performance of our athletes, as they compete in the world-class venues in France.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are proud to have a large population of French nationals, as well as hundreds of French companies, here in Hong Kong. You add vibrancy and diversity to our business sector, cultural scenes and, simply, daily lives.

Under the unique "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong is the only city in the world that enjoys both the China advantage and the global

advantage. We boast a simple and low tax regime, a long-standing tradition of the rule of law, and a common law system that dovetails with that of many global financial centres.

Together with our colourful nightlife, plentiful wine and dine locations, as well as proximity to country parks and beaches from the city, our world city offers unique opportunities for tourists, students, professionals, or anybody who wishes to live here. We will continue to open our doors of development to our friends from France, as well as other parts of the world.

On that note, I wish the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and Paralympic Games a resounding success. And to all of you, a happy Bastille Day, and an enjoyable evening. Thank you very much.