

Speech by CE at reception in celebration of 22nd anniversary of establishment of HKSAR (with video)

Following is the translation of the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the reception in celebration of the 22nd anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre this morning (July 1):

Distinguished guests, fellow citizens,

Today marks the 22nd anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. Every year, July 1 gives us an opportunity to look back on our past and look forward to a new year ahead for the SAR.

Two years ago, at the Inaugural Ceremony of the Fifth Term SAR Government, I solemnly pledged that in response to the new circumstances and conflicts in society at that time, I would do everything within my ability to identify the crux of the issues, to ease anxiety in the community, and to pave the way forward for Hong Kong. Over the past two years, the SAR Government has endeavoured to fulfil this pledge by implementing a host of policies and initiatives, large and small.

However, the incident that happened in recent months has led to controversies and disputes between the public and the Government. This has made me fully realise that I, as a politician, have to remind myself all the time of the need to grasp public sentiments accurately. I am also fully aware that while we have good intentions, we still need to be open and accommodating. While the Government has to ensure administrative efficiency, it still needs to listen patiently.

After this incident, I will learn the lesson and ensure that the Government's future work will be closer and more responsive to the aspirations, sentiments and opinions of the community. The first and most basic step to take is to change the Government's style of governance to make it more open and accommodating. We also need to reform the way we listen to public views. Such work should be carried out without delay and will start from me:

- I will make more time for meeting with individuals from different political parties, walks of life and backgrounds. This will enable me to maintain my political awareness and gauge the pulse of the community;
- I will actively reach out to young people of different backgrounds through various channels to listen to their thoughts;
- I will enhance the Government's overall work in communicating with

different people and carrying out more comprehensive, accurate and timely analysis on the community's views on various government policies or issues of public concern in order to better gauge the public sentiments;

- I and my team will further strengthen communication between the executive authorities and the legislature. The objectives are to understand earlier the concerns of Members of different political affiliations when policies are being developed, and to discuss with them and gather their views at the different stages of policy formulation to facilitate constructive interactions; and
- I will ensure that in formulating policies, the Government itself will make critical assessment of the situation and make thorough deliberations. In implementing policies, there will be adequate co-ordination among departments to ensure that the policies bring benefits and convenience to the public.

I know that the Government has a lot to improve. We will continue to listen to the community's views and make continuous improvement to our work.

At present, Hong Kong is facing a lot of problems. The external environment is unstable and the trade conflict between China and the United States is yet to be resolved. Hong Kong's economy is facing greater downside risks. We should devote our energy to taking precautionary measures as well as making appropriate responses. The Government's work cannot stop.

Serving over seven million people in Hong Kong, we also have much to do in the future to improve people's livelihood. We have to further improve education and healthcare, provide more opportunities for young people and increase social services such as elderly and child care services, as well as address the most challenging housing problem and more.

Distinguished guests, fellow citizens, during the past 22 years since Hong Kong returned to the motherland, Hong Kong has experienced some changes, ups and downs, in the political, economic and social areas. Yet, Hong Kong has, generally speaking, remained stable and prosperous. Backed by the motherland and open to the world, Hong Kong has continued to leverage its unique advantages under "One Country, Two Systems". Under "One Country", Hong Kong has benefited from the country's reform and opening-up and has enjoyed greater room for growth and development in social, economic and livelihood areas. On "Two Systems", after its return to the motherland, Hong Kong is still internationally recognised as one of the freest economies in the world, with the basic rights and freedoms of Hong Kong people fully protected by the Basic Law.

To successfully implement "One Country, Two systems" and capitalise on Hong Kong's various advantages to develop our economy and improve people's livelihood, we have to make plans together and work in concert. Every one of us in Hong Kong, though holding different views and assuming different roles, loves this place and treasures our long-cherished values. I and the SAR Government will double our efforts to restore people's confidence and get Hong Kong off to a new start. Thank you.