

Speech by CS at Singapore Festival in Hong Kong (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at Singapore Festival in Hong Kong today (November 16):

Consul General (Consul General of Singapore in Hong Kong, Mr Ong Siew Gay), Deputy Commissioner Pan Yundong (Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), former Chief Executives Mrs Carrie Lam and Mr Donald Tsang, Lawrence (Chairman, Singapore Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, Mr Lawrence Chia), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I am delighted to join you all today for the opening of the third Singapore Festival.

We thank the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong for this weekend family fun fair, full of Singaporean food and drinks. There is live music, too, along with dance, games, cooking demos, and face-painting and balloon-twisters for kids of all ages. And it is all happening right here, in the Oasis at Hong Kong's historic Central Market.

Hong Kong and Singapore have long enjoyed good times, and close ties. Singapore has consistently been our largest trading partner in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region.

That is evident in the number of Singaporean companies operating in our city – more than 470 at last count.

Both economies share a rich cultural heritage, a history of trade and economic collaboration, and vibrant expat communities. We enjoy strong people-to-people ties, robust business interactions, and frequent cultural exchanges.

The Asia+ Festival 2024, which kicked off in late September and continues through the end of this month, showcases Asia's rich cultural diversity, highlighting the arts and cultures of nearly 30 Asian and Belt and Road countries and regions. That certainly includes Singapore.

Singaporean composer Lee Jiayi, collaborated with local music and arts groups, stage 28 innovative multimedia performances of her composition "After the Rain" at the Western Salt Water Service Reservoirs – a highlight of this year's Asia+ Festival.

Equally well-received in Singapore were the performances by Hong Kong performing arts groups, including the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in February as well as the Spring-Time Experimental Theatre in October this

year.

Last month, let me add, we hosted the inaugural Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo, which attracted more than 1 600 arts leaders and practitioners from some 60 countries and regions, including artists from Singapore.

The Expo expanded their markets, while showcasing Hong Kong's fast-emerging role as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

This happy weekend's Singapore Festival is another welcome illustration of arts and cultural exchange. And it is happening among the best of friends, Hong Kong and Singapore.

I know the people of Hong Kong will enjoy every minute of these two festive days and nights.

Ladies and gentlemen, I look forward to more creative connections between our two cultures and our two peoples. And I wish the Festival every success.

Thank you very much.