

Speech by FS at Cathay Pacific Airways Cocktail Reception in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (English only) (with photo/video)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Cathay Pacific Airways Cocktail Reception in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia today (October 29, Riyadh time):

Lavinia (Chief Customer and Commercial Officer of Cathay Pacific, Ms Lavinia Lau), ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am delighted to be here, with you, tonight, just one day after the exhilarating inaugural flight of Cathay Pacific's relaunched Hong Kong to Riyadh service.

For that, for reconnecting Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia through this vital new route, and the huge potential it brings, I am grateful to Cathay Pacific. Your dedication to excellence in service is internationally recognised. And this flight resumption is a clear testament to Cathay's commitment to Hong Kong and our strategic development.

I can tell you that the high-powered delegation I've brought with me to Riyadh is equally exciting. They count more than 100 Hong Kong financial, business and entrepreneurial leaders, eager to connect with Saudi business. With you.

During our three-day stay here in Riyadh, we're meeting with business, finance and technology companies, with investors and government leaders, too. Our goal is clear: to expand ties with Saudi Arabia, building friendship and exploring the many mutually beneficial collaboration opportunities this renewed connection will surely create.

The new service, in short, marks a new chapter for the ever-growing ties between our two cities, our two regions.

It helps, and enormously, that Hong Kong is the global gateway to China. We are also part of China's "Air Silk Road" initiative, seeking to enhance connectivity, economic and trade cooperation, as well as cultural exchange with countries and regions along the Belt and Road.

Saudi Arabia sits at the crossroad between three continents. The resumption of flights underlines the strategic importance of the country's location, and will boost economic, cultural, business and people-to-people ties between Saudi Arabia and China, Hong Kong included; and all the more so, between the East and West.

With this reinstated service, I know the people of Hong Kong would be

eager to dive into all sorts of adventures around different Saudi cities, your timeless culture, deserts, World Heritage sites and so much more. And, yes, Hong Kong also looks forward to welcoming you to Asia's world city, the East meets West centre of international cultural exchange. And good times, too.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me now in a toast: to Cathay Pacific, to the continuing growth of Hong Kong-Saudi ties and to the promising future that awaits our two economies and peoples.

I know you will enjoy this very special evening.

Thank you.

