

Speech by FS at High-level Remarks and Announcement session of Bay to Bay Dialogue between California Bay Area and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the High-level Remarks and Announcement session of the Bay to Bay Dialogue between the California Bay Area and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area on May 29 (California time):

王岐山 (Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Wang Weizhong) 杨万明 (President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Mr Yang Wanming) 姚莹 (Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture of the Macao Special Administrative Region, Ms Ao Yeong U) 张 Jianmin (Consul General of China in San Francisco, Mr Zhang Jianmin), Governor Newsom (Governor of California, Mr Gavin Newsom), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to be back in the United States, and in San Francisco, long one of my favourite cities. I was here only six months ago for the annual APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) meeting.

I'm back this time, pleased to engage in dialogue between the world's two largest economies – China and the United States.

Given the many pressing issues we face today, from climate change to geopolitical crises, it is more crucial than ever that we maintain open and candid communication.

Starting with our two Bay areas. There is much we can work together on.

Today's event, together with the signing of MoUs (Memorandums of Understanding) and consensus we've reached, lays a solid foundation for our co-operation.

And Hong Kong would be pleased to play an important role in this regard. Thanks to the "one country, two systems" principle, we have long been the "super connector" between China and the rest of the world.

We enjoy convenient and sometimes even priority access to the mainland market. No less important, we have a longstanding international reputation for co-operation, a wealth of experience in East and West developments, and

an extensive global network connecting people and businesses.

And our "one country, two systems" principle is alive and well, whatever you may have read or heard from the media. Our common law system and rule of law remain robust. We are the only jurisdiction in China to follow common law. Capital, people, goods and information continue to flow freely in and out of Hong Kong. Our business regulations and practices align with the best international standards.

And we maintain a simple and low tax system and a freely convertible currency pegged to the US dollar.

I can elaborate on these and other salutary points and compelling facts, but the best way to appreciate Hong Kong is to see it for yourselves. And I invite you to do so. There's never been a better time.

Between July and year's end, we're organising a major event every few days in Hong Kong. Everything from culture and arts attractions to sports and festive events, business, finance, technology and a good many other high-profile international gatherings. There's something happening everywhere you look in Hong Kong.

Certainly, our two Bay Areas can explore greater co-operation on climate change, an area Hong Kong has a particular interest in, as a rising green tech and green finance centre.

I talked about this in the panel discussion just now.

But let me say how pleased I am that our Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau has reached an understanding with the California-China Climate Institute to strengthen co-operation, to enhance communication, knowledge exchange and capacity building in areas ranging from sustainable finance and green fintech to carbon market developments, climate risk analysis and sustainability disclosures. Talent training for climate action is also in the works, I'm pleased to note.

The University of Hong Kong's Institute for Climate and Carbon Neutrality and the California-China Climate Institute have also reached an understanding to co-operate. It aims to strengthen thought exchanges, visits and talent training by forging close collaboration with think tanks, higher education institutes, and more.

I hope, too, that we can encourage financial and technological exchanges. The global gap for green funding and technology is enormous, measured in trillions of US dollars. Let's turn this need into opportunities. The success of the net-zero transition will ultimately depend on how well, and how fast, we work together.

When it comes to investment and business, Hong Kong is your ideal base for exploring opportunities in the Greater Bay Area (Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area), throughout the Mainland and across Asia.

Life and health-tech companies in the Silicon Valley, for example, will find Hong Kong an ideal base for research and business expansion in Asia.

Our two medical schools are among the world's top 40, and Hong Kong is home to numerous world-class scholars and research institutes.

We now have 14 laboratories and health-science centres, established in collaboration with prestigious universities from around the world. Universities from the US participate in five of them.

No less important, Hong Kong has access to Mainland data. An area bordering Shenzhen – what we call the Lok Ma Chau Loop – will become a major site of innovation and technology co-operation with Shenzhen.

The Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute will be established there. It will provide one-stop support to international pharmaceutical companies, allowing them to conduct clinical trials in Hong Kong. And we'll be developing additional health research clusters in the Loop down the innovation road.

For the past 18 months, we have welcomed strategic tech companies from all over the world to build a presence in Hong Kong. To date, more than 50 partner companies have committed to establishing a presence in Hong Kong. They include eight pharmaceutical companies from the US. They see the long-term promise of Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area and will help to realise it.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong is busy creating business partnerships for our two Bay Areas. In this regard, Invest Hong Kong signed an MoU with San Francisco's Bay Area Council strengthening mutual investment and business support.

Our two Bay Areas are among the most affluent, technologically advanced and influential regions in the world. And our progress, our larger influence, will only continue to grow, of that I am confident.

Working together, there is much we can achieve – for our respective economies and communities, for the world at large.

Let today's dialogue mark the beginning of a far-reaching and mutually rewarding co-operation for us all.

I wish each and every one of you the best of health and success. And I look forward to seeing you, soon, in Hong Kong. Thank you.

