

Speech by FS at reception to celebrate birthday of His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at a reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom today (November 28):

Consul General Davidson (British Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao, Mr Brian Davidson), Consuls-General, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It's a pleasure to be here, with you this evening, in celebration of His Majesty King Charles III's birthday.

This evening's King's Birthday Party speaks, and eloquently, of the close relations between our two economies, our two peoples, our two cultures.

Indeed, it was less than a week ago that I joined the Consul General and others of you, here, at the Hong Kong Palace Museum, for the much-anticipated opening of the dazzling "Botticelli to Van Gogh: Masterpieces from the National Gallery, London" exhibition.

That this superlative art exhibition, spanning more than 400 years of Western art history, is being held at the Hong Kong Palace Museum, creates a clear and inviting path forward. An East-West harmony rooted in our longstanding ties and our deep and mutually rewarding cultural bonds. I'm confident we can, and will, build on that cultural foundation.

After all, with the blessing, and full support, of our country, Hong Kong is destined to become an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

But beyond arts and culture and the creative industries, there is much more we can accomplish, by working together. I saw that, firsthand, in September, during my visit to London. After a hiatus of four years since my last visit back in 2019, we were seeing good friends again, many from the business and financial communities. Many things have changed, I said, but what remains is our steadfast adherence to the "one country, two systems" principle, our unflinching commitment to the common law system and the rule of law, and the many unique advantages that have made Hong Kong what it is.

For those who are coming from afar, for joining this event, or for business or leisure, I am sure you are able to see for yourselves. Hong Kong continues to be an open, vibrant and safe metropolis full of vitality and vigour. And a city with shining beauty under this perfect autumn weather.

In the UK, and here in Hong Kong, my discussions with leading businesses and financial institutions were uniformly heartening: we know that British businesses are keen to further enhance business relationships, keen to tap into the vast opportunities of Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area and the Mainland.

Just last Friday, we welcomed AstraZeneca which had decided to establish its research and development centre and incubator in Hong Kong. Our arms are wide open to British enterprises who wish to make good use of our unique connectivity. Our Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises and Invest Hong Kong are here to help.

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight I see it again, the far-reaching promise of Hong Kong and the UK. The future is bright as we work together.

Finally, may I wish His Majesty King Charles III a very happy birthday.

And I wish everyone here happy holidays and the best of health and business in the coming year.

Thank you.

