

## Toronto ETO celebrates Year of Dragon at joint reception with HKTB (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (Toronto ETO) welcomed over 120 guests and friends to celebrate the Year of the Dragon together at a spring reception jointly hosted with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (Canada) (HKTB) on February 8 (Toronto time). Business, cultural, academia and community partners came together and learned about the latest developments of Hong Kong on its economic and cultural fronts.

In her welcoming speech at the reception, the Director of the Toronto ETO, Ms Emily Mo, shared pleasing economic-related figures with the guests, including a forecast of 3.2 per cent GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth of Hong Kong in 2023, an as-low-as 2.9 per cent overall unemployment rate, a new record of the number of start-ups setting up in Hong Kong, and new policies and measures introduced to connect Hong Kong with other markets.

"Looking forward, we are facing a challenging global economy filled with complexities. Nevertheless, with the institutional advantages of Hong Kong under 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong is prepared and inspired to create and present opportunities for the city and everyone who sees it as their destination for business, career or personal growth," she said.

Turning to cultural aspects, Ms Mo pointed out that international major events bearing strategic significance for Hong Kong all returned to Hong Kong, and some even grew in scale.

She said, "Hong Kong has been presenting its charm as the Events Capital of Asia to the world. In anticipating the full recovery of its flight connection capacity this year, we will stage over 80 mega events in the city in the first half of this year."

At the reception, the Director for Americas of the HKTB, Mr Michael Lim, shared with participants the HKTB's achievements in 2023 and tourism marketing initiatives in 2024. "Over the past year, we welcomed 34 million visitors," said Mr Lim. "The dynamic Night Vibes Hong Kong campaign has brought new life to Hong Kong's night scene as we showcase our city's unique metropolitan charm."

Hong Kong kicked off 2024 with the biggest and longest New Year countdown fireworks musical ever. Mr Lim added that there will be an action-packed calendar of events and festivals, including Arts in Hong Kong with Art Basel returning to full scale. This year, Art Central is expected to be the fair's largest and most dynamic since its introduction in 2015. Together with Art@Harbour and the WestK FunFest, these events position Hong Kong as one of the world's top arts destinations and as an arts hub in Asia. Sporting events will continue, such as Hong Kong Sevens in April and much more.

This year, the Toronto ETO invited an award-winning team of kendama players from Hong Kong to perform in Canada at its spring receptions to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Guests enjoyed the eye-opening tricks, the energetic power and the fun and joy brought by the young performers.

In closing, Ms Mo invited the guests to visit Hong Kong to experience its unique East-meets-West culture and seize the tremendous opportunities presented by Asia's world city.

