

Transcript of remarks by SJ and SCED after LegCo Ante Chamber exchange session
(with photos/video)

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, together with the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau; and the Commissioner for Belt and Road, Mr Nicholas Ho, met the media after attending the Ante Chamber exchange session at the Legislative Council this morning (July 17). Following is the transcript of remarks:

Reporter: Can you recap in English what you have discussed in the Ante Chamber? How will the Government do to increase its attractiveness and also its plan to get into RCEP?

Secretary for Justice: I try to summarise very quickly the gist of the discussion in the Ante Chamber. The focus today concerns the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), or to be more specific, how Hong Kong can participate in the BRI in a more proactive manner. We have invited colleagues from different bureaux, including the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and other colleagues. Among other things, I think the Central People's Government takes the views that Hong Kong, in future, should focus firstly on enhancing Hong Kong's role as a platform for providing professional services, for example, to serve as an international legal service centre. Secondly, to promote financial services and to enhance Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, in particular, in the area of green finance; and thirdly, to strengthen Hong Kong's status as an international cultural exchange centre, for example, to promote or expand the Belt and Road scholarship, which will benefit students or young people from countries belonging to the Belt and Road and to organise more cultural activities which could improve the mutual understanding between different cultures and between different people. As to more specific measures, perhaps I can invite Mr Yau to provide more details.

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: The Belt and Road Office is organising activities in co-ordination with the Central Government such as visits to the Belt and Road countries, taking enterprises and the professional services abroad and meeting different sectors to promote Hong Kong and our advantages. Under "one country, two systems", we have a very good setup in our legal system - we use the

common law, the rule of law, free flow of capital. People from the Belt and Road countries would be very interested. Our professional services, such as legal, accountancy, architecture, innovation and technology, are all providing our advantages for people to look at. These visits would be able to expand our influence in those Belt and Road countries.

Regarding your question on RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), we are working very hard with the RCEP members in getting their support, and hopefully they will go through their normal process and give the accession as quickly as possible.

In the future, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau will work hard on improving the CEPA (Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement) arrangements with the Mainland, and seeking to the RCEP accession. The Belt and Road Office will again take the delegation overseas and lead them to engage with the Belt and Road countries' counterparts to promote the benefits and advantages of Hong Kong.

At the end of this month, the Chief Executive is leading a delegation to go to Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. The whole purpose is to foster closer connection with the new economies to promote Hong Kong and to provide more opportunities for enterprises and the professional services to go overseas. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Ends/Wednesday, July 17, 2024