

**Speech of Ms Teresa Cheng, SC**  
**Secretary for Justice**  
**58<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Day Reception of**  
**the State of Kuwait**  
**26 February 2019 (Tuesday)**

Consul General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here, celebrating the National Day of Kuwait with all of you tonight. On behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, may I extend to you, Consul General, and the people of Kuwait, our warmest congratulations on your National Day.

2. This is also a welcome opportunity to meet again with the Consul General, who assumed office in Hong Kong last October. We had the pleasure to meet before the National Day Reception today.

3. The economic structure, culture and resources of Hong Kong and Kuwait are distinctly different, but our two economies share great success in the global landscape. With only few natural resources, Hong Kong thrived to become an international financial centre and a hub for professional services. While traditionally Kuwait is a country with rich oil reserve, your visionary plan to

transform into a regional financial centre and cultural hub offers abundant cooperation opportunities for our economies.

4. It is particularly relevant when it comes to the Kuwait National Development Plan. The comprehensive plan was initiated to transform Kuwait from an oil-and-gas-driven economy into an international commercial and financial hub, while also emphasising education, technology and other knowledge-centered sectors.

5. Under the sheer speed of globalisation, Kuwait is well aware of the importance of achieving synergy with partners. Kuwait is among the first countries to sign a Belt and Road agreement with the Mainland. Moreover, during the visit of the Kuwaiti Emir to Beijing last July, the two countries agreed to establish a strategic partnership to inject new impetus into bilateral ties, aiming to generate synergy in the Belt and Road Initiative and the Kuwait National Development Plan.

6. As one of the fruits borne, the Mainland and Kuwait agreed last November to develop Silk City in Kuwait as a huge economic free zone that will link the Arabian Gulf to central Asia and Europe.

7. Among the flourishing cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, Hong Kong's role as an effective

connector will become more important. From the beginning of the Mainland's reforms and opening up in 1970s, our companies served as a window to the world for the Mainland under the one country, two systems framework, bringing in investment capital, wide-ranging expertise and modern business-management capabilities.

8. Today, we remain the largest source of foreign direct investment in the Mainland and the major destination for the Mainland's outward direct investment. Apart from financial services, we are also the leading international legal and dispute resolution services centre in the Asia Pacific region.

9. Being the world's freest economy for 25 years in a row as named by Washington's Heritage Foundation, and coupled with our financial and professional services prowess, Hong Kong is a natural hub for the Mainland's Belt and Road Initiative.

10. There will be huge opportunity as well in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Its Outline Development Plan was announced just last week.

11. The Greater Bay Area boasts a collective population of nearly 70 million people and a GDP of about US\$1.5 trillion.

12. Hong Kong will serve as the Greater Bay Area's professional services hub. We will also be a central player in the Greater Bay Area's development as a high-tech industrial region. In this regard, the Department of Justice will endeavor to achieve this aim by promoting amicable resolution of intellectual property right dispute through arbitration and mediation. Our friends in Kuwait are much welcome to seek your new business opportunities in the Greater Bay Area and participate in this fruitful development which is closer to Hong Kong and all of us here.

13. With plenty of collaboration opportunities, I hope the friendship between Hong Kong and Kuwait, built on the firm foundation we have, continue to grow from strength to strength.

14. As you celebrate your National Day, I take this opportunity to wish you all a healthy and prosperous New Year of the Pig.

15. May I now propose a toast "To the People of Kuwait".