

Speech by DSJ at Spanish National Day Reception in Hong Kong (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, at the Spanish National Day Reception in Hong Kong today (October 10):

Consul General (Consul General of Spain in Hong Kong, Mr Miguel Aguirre de Cárcer), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I'm delighted to be here tonight to celebrate the national day of Spain. This is a proud and festive occasion throughout Spain, one of the major economies in the European Union.

A celebration, too, of the growing ties between our two economies.

Less than three weeks ago, the Financial Secretary visited Madrid, leading a high-profile delegation of Hong Kong start-up companies, together with the heads of Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport.

Over three fruitful days, the Financial Secretary and his delegation visited a variety of Spanish start-ups, investors and corporate representatives, such as start-up accelerators IMPACT and Wayra, and Spanish telecommunications company Telefónica, and met with the Director General of CDTI (the Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico y la Innovación), which promotes I&T (innovation and technology) co-operation between Spain and other economies.

They also met with Spain Startup President and officials from IE University, the organisers of the renowned innovation and entrepreneurship event South Summit, which brings together a world of start-ups, investors, and entrepreneurs each year. The Financial Secretary welcomed the prospect of holding the South Summit in Hong Kong, and for good reasons.

Asia's super-connector, Hong Kong is at the heart of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-

Macao Greater Bay Area and its consumer-powered population of more than 80 million people. Technology and innovation will drive the flourishing future of both Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.

Hong Kong is also among the world's leading financial centres – placing third worldwide and topping the Asia-Pacific in the latest Global Financial Centres Index. Also, in the World Bank Group Business Ready 2024 Report which was just published last week, Hong Kong is among the top ten performers among 50 economies covered in that report.

We are familiar with the common law and we have connection with the Mainland legal system through a number of very important mutual legal assistance arrangements. Hong Kong is also a unique gateway. We can help Spanish start-ups find markets, and fund their expansion in the Mainland China and throughout Asia.

Our legal co-operation with Spain is also well-established. I'm pleased to say that there has been well-established regimes for legal co-operation on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, and the co-operation has been smooth and effective.

Our good ties extend to culture and culinary creativity, too. This year's Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival opens in less than two weeks at Central Harbourfront. And I know Hong Kong will revel in the Festival's Spanish gourmet delights and featured wine and spirit tastings. They will surely be among the highlights of this year's Wine & Dine Festival. I'll see you there.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a toast: to the people of Spain.

Ends/Thursday, October 10, 2024