

SCED starts visit to New Zealand

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, started his visit to New Zealand today (August 5, Auckland time) to promote closer business links between the two places. He addressed the Connect Hong Kong business seminar and the opening reception of the Hong Kong Festival in Auckland.

With the theme "Hong Kong - The Best Platform for Business Engagement with China and Asia", the Connect Hong Kong business seminar was organised by the Hong Kong New Zealand Business Association (HKNZBA) to strengthen business partnership between the two places. Representatives from the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Invest Hong Kong spoke in the seminar on Hong Kong's strengths in attracting investment and developing businesses.

Delivering his speech in the business seminar, Mr So said, "Hong Kong provides the shortest and most reliable route for New Zealand companies to do business in the Mainland of China. We are also an effective connector to markets across our region."

On trade relations, Mr So noted that Hong Kong was the seventh largest market for New Zealand goods exports, and in just the past decade the value of New Zealand goods exported to Hong Kong had increased by around 40 per cent to NZ\$870 million last year.

Mr So also told the seminar participants that Hong Kong's unique advantages - a comprehensive network of professional services, unparalleled access to the Mainland market, bilateral trade agreements with trading partners as an individual member of the World Trade Organization, and the position as the world's freest economy - made Hong Kong a showcase for New Zealand brands of goods and services.

Mr So wished the seminar participants a fruitful business gathering for future links with mutual benefits.

In the evening, Mr So addressed the opening reception of the Hong Kong Festival co-organised by the HKNZBA and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney. The annual Festival has been a significant event since 2009. In its fifth anniversary this year, the Festival is being held not only in Auckland but also in Wellington. The diverse activities include today's business seminar in Auckland and Cinema Hong Kong in both Auckland and Wellington.

Mr So invited people in New Zealand to visit Hong Kong to experience the unique East-meets-West culture, the world-class service of the brand new Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, and a special treat for wine lovers given the elimination of wine tariffs in 2008.

Earlier today, Mr So had fruitful exchanges with Hong Kong people working, studying and living in Auckland. He also met with local business leaders at night to learn about the latest commerce environment in Auckland.

Mr So will arrive in Wellington tomorrow (August 6, Wellington time). He will meet senior government officials of New Zealand, including the Minister for Commerce, Minister for Broadcasting and Minister for Consumer Affairs, Mr Craig Foss; the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Mr Bill English; the Mayor of Wellington, Ms Celia Wade-Brown; the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr David Carter; and the Minister for Economic Development, Mr Steven Joyce, to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral relations between Hong Kong and New Zealand. He will also speak at the opening reception of the Hong Kong Festival in Wellington.

Mr So will be back in Hong Kong on August 7.

Ends/Monday, August 5, 2013

Issued at HKT 17:22