

Speech by SCED at 55th OSEAL Forum Hong Kong Reception in Bangkok (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, at the 55th Orient and Southeast Asian Lions (OSEAL) Forum Hong Kong Reception in Bangkok, Thailand, today (December 5):

Dr Yamada (International President of Lions Club International, Dr Jitsuhiro Yamada), Dr Tam (Past International President of Lions Club International, Dr Tam Wing-kun), Khun Kedsawadevong (Past International Director of Lions Club International and Chairperson of the 54th OSEAL Forum, Khun Pongsak Kedsawadevong), Mr Leung (Chairperson of the 55th OSEAL Forum, Mr Tommy Leung), Lions dignitaries, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It gives me great pleasure to speak in front of so many motivated and public-spirited Lions who are committed to serving the community over the years.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of you for joining the reception this evening. I know, for most of you here, it's been very rewarding in the past three days, gathering with thousands of members from all over the world, including the Hong Kong Lions.

Hong Kong has had a long and close association with the Lions Club. District 303 was established in our city in the early 1960s. Today, we have 72 Lions Clubs and 45 Leo Clubs with more than 2 600 members. The spirit of the Lions touches every walk of life including our commerce, finance, tourism and professional sectors.

As an international city, Hong Kong is proud to be a hub for the Lions in Asia. We hosted many well-attended Lions events, including the international conventions and previous OSEAL Forums. I am delighted that Hong Kong has been chosen again for hosting the 55th OSEAL Forum next year. The triumphant return reinforces our position as an international convention and exhibition capital in the region.

In fact, our excellent hardware and software support makes Hong Kong capable of hosting various large-scale international conferences. Our easy accessibility, world-class conference facilities, excellent logistical and venue support, convenient intra-city transportation system and state-of-the-art telecommunication facilities are all essential for a successful conference.

Hardware aside, the Hong Kong Tourism Board has been working closely with District 303. Our Tourism Board will render full support to facilitate the staging of the OSEAL Forum in Hong Kong. To make your travel experience more memorable, our Tourism Board colleagues will also tailor-make exciting itineraries for all your members, families and friends. I am sure that you will not be disappointed.

A successful conference is definitely more than just a gathering of people. Against the backdrop of the ambitious "Belt and Road" initiative which calls for regional and international co-operation, Hong Kong, by staging large-scale events like the OSEAL Forum, can make the most of our extensive network of trade and economic connections. This extensive network of ours will serve as a platform for sourcing and business matching.

Trade is also not just about doing transactions. All long-lasting trade relationships must be based on trust and mutual understanding. Indeed, one of the central themes running through the "Belt and Road" blueprint is to foster mutual trust with the countries along the route. Hong Kong was built on trade, and we remain one of the world's greatest trading economies. Hong Kong is well equipped to be your strategic partner should you decide to venture into the vast markets of the "Belt and Road".

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong is ready to welcome you. I will count on you to tell your fellow Lions friends that Hong Kong has everything to suit every taste and interest. Just ask them to take a short flight here to experience our round-the-year offers. I sincerely look forward to greeting you all in November next year in Hong Kong.

Have a great evening. Thank you.

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