

Financial Secretary and Vice-Minister of Commerce officiate at forum

The Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, and the Vice-Minister of Commerce, Mr Liao Xiaoqi, officiated today (September 19) at the Business Forum on Supplement IV to CEPA at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Jointly organised by the Ministry of Commerce of the PRC, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Trade and Industry Department, the forum aimed to update Hong Kong industry on the implementation progress of CEPA and help them understand more about the new CEPA liberalisation package and business opportunities it brings.

Mr Tsang said the forum was one of the events in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR). It marked the importance of CEPA to the economic development of Hong Kong since its reunification. It also showed the dedicated joint efforts of the HKSAR Government, the Central and local governments in implementing CEPA.

Mr Tsang pointed out that since its implementation nearly four years ago, CEPA had established a new economic platform which further strengthened the status of Hong Kong in both regional and international markets. CEPA also facilitated the recovery of Hong Kong's economy and enhanced the access of professionals to the mainland market.

He urged Hong Kong industry to keep abreast of development on the Mainland and the increasing influence of globalisation and economic integration to the nation, prepare itself to reap the opportunities and fully utilise the potentials of CEPA.

At the plenary session of the forum, the Director-General of Trade and Industry, Mr Joseph Lai; the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Taiwan, Hong Kong & Macao Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce, Mr Sun Tong; the Vice-Chairman of Shanghai Municipal Foreign Economy and Trade Commission, Mr Ma Yinfang, and the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation of Guangdong Province, Mr Zhong Jianhui, delivered keynote speeches.

Representatives of 11 central ministries and 13

provincial/municipal governments were invited by the Ministry of Commerce to brief forum attendants on the new areas of liberalisation under Supplement IV to CEPA signed late June this year as well as the implementation arrangements at local levels. About 400 Hong Kong traders and professionals attended the forum.

The second part of the forum comprised Breakout Sessions with Q&A discussions. Forum attendants were briefed on the liberalisation measures regarding service sectors under Supplement IV to CEPA as well as facilitation measures implemented by local governments. Officials from the Mainland and other speakers also answered questions from the industry. Representatives of Hong Kong service sectors also shared their experience in investment and business operation on the Mainland.

Concurrent breakout sessions by service sectors included (1): Finance, Transport and Logistics; (2): Tourism, Convention and Exhibition, Cultural; and (3): Medical, Social Services for the Elderly.

For details of Supplement IV to CEPA, please refer to the Trade and Industry Department's website at <http://www.tid.gov.hk/english/cepa/index.html>.

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