

Press Release

Asian Financial Forum looks at sustainable economic growth in Asia (with photos/video)

Monday, January 19, 2015

The 8th Asian Financial Forum (AFF), which has brought together more than 2,000 influential financial players and business leaders from around the world, opened today (January 19), providing a high-level platform for the global financial community to tap the investment opportunities of the evolving Asian and global economies.

The theme of this year's forum is "Asia: Sustainable Development in a World of Change". Addressing the opening session of the AFF this morning, the Chief Executive, Mr C Y Leung, highlighted Hong Kong's unique role as a "super-connector" between the Mainland and the rest of the world, which has helped both Hong Kong and the country as a whole.

Mr Leung cited the launch of the Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect in November 2014 as an example, adding that the scheme consolidated Hong Kong's position in the internationalisation of the Renminbi while opening up opportunities for Mainland investors.

"Stock Connect promotes the gradual opening of the Mainland's capital account and provides a fresh channel for international investors looking to profit from the Mainland's burgeoning economy. It also encourages co-operation between the stock markets in Hong Kong and Shanghai, expanding their sources of investment and boosting their competitiveness. And Hong Kong's 'super-connector' role is bound to strengthen further, as the Mainland's economic reforms continue to deepen," Mr Leung said.

Meanwhile, Mr Leung is confident that Hong Kong's combined "One Country" and "Two Systems" advantages can enable it to maintain its status as a leading offshore Renminbi centre.

"It is the 'Two Systems' that makes us stand out from other financial centres in Asia or China. And it is the 'One Country' aspect that allows Hong Kong to serve as China's offshore Renminbi hub rather than financial centres outside China," he said.

Looking at the global economy, Mr Leung said he believed that Asia would continue to offer promising prospects for sustainable economic growth, with the ongoing reforms in Mainland China and predictable growth of its emerging neighbours.

To achieve sustainable economic growth, Mr Leung said Hong Kong would continue to enhance its physical infrastructure and human capital, and streamline efforts to attract and retain entrepreneurs and talent from around the world. In addition, Hong Kong would build even stronger ties with its economic partners in Asia and strengthen the resilience against external turbulence.

At the cocktail reception held in the evening, the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, highlighted the robust growth of Hong Kong's asset management industry and shed light on the industry's way forward.

He noted that the Government's proposal to extend the profits tax exemption for offshore funds to private equity funds would further broaden Hong Kong's fund management business so as to boost Hong Kong's reputation as a full-service asset-management hub.

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, chaired the plenary session "Asia: Sustainable Development in a World of Change", which examined the prospects for long-term sustainable growth in Asia and beyond against the backdrop of a tentative global recovery and evolving financial sector regulations.

The forum, co-organised by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, comprises a plenary session, a keynote luncheon, policy dialogue sessions and panel discussions.

It will continue tomorrow (January 20) with a breakfast panel on Hong Kong as Asia's premier asset and wealth management centre, a keynote luncheon, a deal flow matchmaking session and workshops on topical issues including Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect, Renminbi internationalisation and Internet finance as well as Association of Southeast Asian Nations

developments and the New Silk Road.

Ends

