

## **Press Release**

### **Asian Financial Forum explores Asia's role in global growth (with photos/video)**

Monday, January 18, 2016

The 9th Asian Financial Forum (AFF) opened today (January 18), providing a high-level platform for more than 2,600 influential members of 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: Shaping the New Paradigm for Growth". Addressing the opening session of the AFF this morning, the Chief Executive, Mr C Y Leung, outlined Hong Kong's unique role as the "super-connector" bringing East and West together in pursuit of business and investment opportunities.

Looking ahead, Mr Leung said that Hong Kong would continue to strengthen its financial market infrastructure and talent pool, as well as diversifying Renminbi (RMB) products with a view to grasping the opportunities arising from greater connectivity among Belt and Road economies.

"We will, as announced in my Policy Address last Wednesday, strive to capture the wealth of the Belt and Road and meet the demand for risk management services, professional insurance and reinsurance services, and corporate treasury," Mr Leung said in his opening remarks at the AFF.

At a cocktail reception held in the evening, the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, highlighted the Government's incentives to facilitate the development of Hong Kong as a premier centre for corporate treasury activities by enhancing the existing interest deduction rules for the intra-group financing business of corporations and introducing a concessionary profits tax rate for qualifying corporate treasury centres.

Mr Tsang said, "Hong Kong gives multinational corporations what they need - superb financial, banking and professional services, as well as deep capital markets for liquidity and portfolio management. We hope our initiatives will help all the multinational corporations doing business in the region. Our

goal is to make them more efficient - primed to flourish in business here in Asia and around the world."

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, chaired the plenary session on "Asia: Shaping the New Paradigm for Growth", during which he exchanged insights with panelists on the challenges and opportunities in Asia. These included the implications arising from collaborative initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, as well as government policies in driving high value-added economic activities. Heavyweight speakers joining Professor Chan in this session were Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Arkady Dvorkovich; Luxembourg's Minister of Finance, Mr Pierre Gramegna; Sweden's Minister for Financial Markets and Consumer Affairs and Deputy Minister for Finance, Mr Per Bolund; and Thailand's Vice Minister for Finance, Mr Kiatchai Sophastienphong.

The AFF is a two-day forum co-organised by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. This annual forum is a signature event which gathers government officials, representatives from central banks and regulatory organisations, and finance and business leaders from around the world to discuss developments and trends in the markets of Asia.

Other highlights of the first-day programme included a policy dialogue chaired by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Norman Chan, along with other central bankers and financial regulators as well as key personnel from financial institutions, who shared their views on the United States' interest rate normalisation process and its impact on financial stability and growth. In addition, three panel discussions focused on global and Asia-Pacific economies, allowing the participating global finance and business leaders to share their insights on regional free trade agreements, the Mainland's financial reform and the internationalisation of the RMB.

The AFF will continue tomorrow (January 19). One of the highlights will be the keynote remarks delivered by the former Chairman of the Board of Governors of the United States Federal Reserve System, Dr Ben S Bernanke, at the luncheon. He will examine a host of issues, including the implications for global economic growth of the Federal Reserve's decision to start normalising

interest rates.

Tomorrow's programme will also comprise a breakfast panel on Hong Kong as the "super-connector" for the Belt and Road Initiative; a panel discussion on big data, Fintech and e-commerce; a deal flow matchmaking session; a global investment summit and concurrent workshops on topical issues including private wealth management, internationalisation of the RMB and corporate treasury activities.

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