

Speech

Speech by SFST at "One Belt One Road One Friendship" Project Commissioning Ceremony for 2016 Dragon 100 cum Backpackers Programme (English only)

Monday, August 1, 2016

Following is the keynote speech by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, at the "One Belt One Road One Friendship" Project Commissioning Ceremony for 2016 Dragon 100 cum Backpackers Programme today (August 1):

Rosanna (Wong Yick-ming), Sir Ti Liang (Yang), Shelley (Lee Lai-kuen), ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I'm very pleased to join you this morning at the "One Belt One Road One Friendship" Project Commissioning Ceremony for 2016 Dragon 100 cum Backpackers Programme. I was just listening to the speeches by Rosanna and Shelley, and I really feel the excitement. I hope that you feel the same excitement as we do. We know that we talk a lot these days about regional integration. In Hong Kong, we talk about "One Belt, One Road" in China as well. I am very glad we have programmes like this to familiarise our youth about the "One Belt, One Road" initiative as well as other initiatives that bring people together. I think this is very timely, and this is very relevant.

We know from the economic and political narratives, the "One Belt, One Road" is a long-term vision for international and regional integration, and this strategy will take years to develop and to come to fruition. Well I won't be around but you are the people who will benefit from this trade integration.

The theme of the Dragon 100 programme this year is "Dragons on The Silk Road: Exploring Opportunities under China's Belt and Road Initiative". We know of course that the Belt and Road Initiative is China's initiative to integrate itself closely with its neighbours and with the regional economies physically, economically and socially. Starting with infrastructure investments and other economic developments, the initiative is supposed to develop tremendous business opportunities for the business as well as the people in this

region.

But we know it is more than that. We know that the "One Belt, One Road" initiative and similar initiatives are meant to do more than that, also to bring people together. Inspired by the ancient Silk Road, the Silk Road Economic Belt seeks to link China with Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe. It is therefore no surprise that this year's programme will be held in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Xian, the starting point of the ancient Silk Road. The ancient Silk Road had brought about a golden age in trade and cultural exchange. And it's trade and cultural exchange, it's people marvelling at the wonders in the different regions that really caused the great trade and culture to flourish. So I encourage all participants to make use of this wonderful opportunity to explore how we can bring about the next golden age by studying the relevant cultural and business environment.

Today we are also here to kick off the second round of the Backpackers Programme under the "One Belt One Road One Friendship" Project. The Belt and Road Initiative is about promoting cultural exchange among all these countries and through a combination of talks, tours and multimedia materials, the programme aims to give our young people a platform to deepen their understanding of the diverse and distinctive cultures that flourish along the Belt and Road.

The programme provides training and information that prepares young people to visit the Belt and Road countries in person and understand their cultures first-hand. I understand that previous participants of the programme are going to share their experience this morning. Even though I have lived some more years than many of you here, I have not been to many of the Belt and Road countries myself. Indeed it is through sharing that we will deepen our collective understanding of these regions that are so near yet so far.

I would like to congratulate the participants on having these excellent opportunities to explore the Belt and Road regions. And more importantly, I would like to thank the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups and the Dragons Foundation for organising the programmes.

Thank you. Have a good trip!

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