

**Joint Statement on Deepening and Broadening of Co-operation between
Japan and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
of the People's Republic of China**

In the light of the first official visit of Mrs Carrie Lam in her capacity as the Chief Executive (“CE”) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”) to Japan, Mr Taro Kono, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Chief Executive recognise that Japan and Hong Kong enjoy strong and long-standing economic and trade relations, and both sides are committed to forging broader and deeper co-operation on various fronts.

I. General

1. Both sides share the view that high-level exchanges between Japan and Hong Kong are conducive to strengthening bilateral relationship. Following the visit to Hong Kong by Mr Taro Kono, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, in March 2018, Mrs Carrie Lam, the CE of the HKSAR, visited Japan from 29th October to 2nd November 2018 and participated in the “Hong Kong Week” held in Tokyo. Both sides hope to steadily build up high-level exchanges between the two governments.
2. During the CE’s visit to Japan, both sides recognise that the long-established bilateral ties between Japan and Hong Kong have been growing constantly and reaching new heights. Both sides are committed to further deepening and broadening practical co-operation in a variety of areas in the future, by leveraging on Hong Kong’s role and advantages as an international trade and financial centre in the Asia-Pacific region, with its unique status under “one country, two systems” enjoying a high degree of autonomy.
3. Both sides share the view that strengthening practical co-operation between Japan and Hong Kong will not only contribute to the prosperity and development of the two economies, but also foster collaboration within the Asia-Pacific region.

4. Both sides share the view that Hong Kong's open and free economy, including a simple tax regime and low tax rates, free trade, business-friendly environment and the rule of law are important to continuously strengthening Japan-Hong Kong relationship.

II. Economy

Free trade

5. Both sides are strong advocates for free and open trade, and active participants in international fora such as the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Both sides reaffirm their shared commitment to advance the liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment and to uphold the multilateral trading system.

Agricultural products

6. Noting that Hong Kong has since 2006 been Japan's number one agricultural products export destination, both sides share the view to continue exchanges in the trade of Japanese agricultural products and other food products through the various large-scale promotions such as the Hong Kong Trade Development Council's annual "Food Expo", the Hong Kong Tourism Board's annual "Wine & Dine Festival", etc.. To support Hong Kong's initiatives in enhancing professional and vocational education and training, such as the recently established International Culinary Institute, both sides share the view to further co-operate in culinary training and promotional events to nurture local talents in the art of Japanese cooking.
7. The Hong Kong side welcomes the establishment of ZEN-NOH International Hong Kong Limited in Hong Kong in April 2018. The Japanese side will make efforts to provide a constant and stable supply of safe, fresh and high quality Japanese food products in response to the demand and market needs of Hong Kong.

8. The Japanese side welcomes Hong Kong's decision to relax the import ban on food from four Japanese Prefectures, namely Chiba, Gunma, Ibaraki and Tochigi, with conditions. Both sides will continue to work closely together to ensure effective gatekeeping at the export and import levels to safeguard food safety and public health. Both sides share the view to continue their communication on matters relating to the import restrictions on Japanese food, including those on Fukushima Prefecture.

Tourism

9. Both sides welcome the year-on-year growth in the total number of visitors between Japan and Hong Kong, which reached a record-high level of 3.46 million in 2017, comprising 2.23 million visitors from Hong Kong, which was the highest in history. Both sides recognise the need for more efforts to maintain this growth momentum.
10. Both sides welcome the nomination of 2019 as "Hong Kong - Japan Tourism Year 2019" by the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Japan National Tourism Organization and the Japan Tourism Agency and the expansion of interactive exchange between the two places, particularly between Japanese rural areas and Hong Kong, through the "Tourism Year".

Ageing society

11. Both sides consider it encouraging that Hong Kong and Japan are having the longest and the second longest average life expectancies in the world respectively. Both sides recognise the benefits of strengthening co-operation and exchange in tackling the challenges of an ageing society.
12. Both sides welcome the "Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit 2018" to be held in Hong Kong in November 2018 and the participation of Japanese companies. Both sides expect that Japanese and Hong Kong companies will continue to invest actively and strengthen their co-operation in gerontechnology in the future, thereby enhancing the quality of life of the elderly in the two places.

Smart cities development

13. Both sides recognise that smart city will make their cities greener, and more livable, sustainable and competitive. Both sides have decided to share good practices and innovative solutions in building smart and resilient cities to respond to challenges posed by the ageing population.

Science, technology and innovation

14. Both sides share the view that the promotion of science, technology and innovation is a common priority issue. Both sides have decided to strengthen communication to promote mutual understanding of science, technology and innovation policies of Japan and Hong Kong. Hong Kong is vigorously building up technology clusters in healthcare technologies, and artificial intelligence and robotics technologies with the provision of financial and other support to suitable overseas scientific research institutions. The Hong Kong side expresses its expectation for notable Japanese technology and research institutions to join these clusters.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (“Greater Bay Area”) Development

15. The Hong Kong side emphasizes its important role under the Greater Bay Area Development, especially in the light of enhanced infrastructural connectivity with the opening of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. The Hong Kong side welcomes Japanese businesses to collaborate with their Hong Kong counterparts to seize these new opportunities for growth.

Creative industries

16. Both sides share the view to identify opportunities for collaboration and exchange for the creative industries sectors such as film, design and digital entertainment, while reaffirming the importance of the protection of intellectual property rights based on their respective laws and regulations.

Investment

17. Recognising that both sides have been working closely in promoting bilateral investment through co-operation among their departments, agencies, chambers of commerce and other business organizations, both sides share the view to strengthen collaboration and enhance information and experience sharing. Both sides will also encourage their respective businesses and professionals to participate in each other's seminars and events.

III. Culture, Sports, Education & Youth Exchanges

Cultural exchange

18. The Japanese side appreciates the Hong Kong side's effort in holding the biennial "Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum" which aims at deepening cultural exchange between Hong Kong and other countries and areas, including Japan. The Japanese side welcomes further exchanges in the field of arts and culture between Japan and Hong Kong through various events, including the "Forum".
19. Both sides welcome the holding of the "Japan Autumn Festival in Hong Kong" annually since 2016. The Hong Kong side will continue to support and facilitate the holding of the "Festival" on a regular basis in the future.
20. Both sides share the view to facilitate exchanges among relevant entities to further explore collaboration with the West Kowloon Cultural District.

Olympics and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020

21. Heading towards Olympics and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, both sides shares the view to strengthen co-operation and exchange in the field of sports, including training of elite athletes and development of sports in the community.

Co-operation between Hong Kong and local governments in Japan

22. Both sides welcome frequent visits by prefectural governors of Japan to Hong Kong and officials of the HKSAR Government to Japan which contribute significantly to the promotion of exchanges in areas including culture and youth development. Such exchanges include Hong Kong's continual participation in the "Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale" which also showcases the artworks of Hong Kong artists, as well as organization of the "Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference" and the Hong Kong-Kagoshima Youth Exchange Programme, both with over 35 years of history.

Education and youth exchanges

23. Both sides appreciate the frequent exchanges between the higher and secondary educational institutions as well as youth organizations in Japan and Hong Kong. Both sides welcome youth exchange between Japan and Hong Kong including the Japan-Asia Youth Exchange Program in Science ("SAKURA Science Plan") in the fields of science and technology. Both sides express mutual interests to promote the exchanges between research institutions in the fields of science, technology and innovation to further promote exchanges between high/secondary schools in respect of teachers and students and to provide exchange opportunities for post-secondary students. Both sides also confirmed their shared objective of developing future generations who become promoters of mutual understanding between Japan and Hong Kong.

IV. Co-operation in Other Fields

Promotion of people-to-people exchange

24. Both sides appreciate the smooth flow of people visiting the two places over the years. The Japanese side decided to issue multiple visas for Chinese nationals who have the Hong Kong Document of Identity for Visa Purposes with a view to promoting people-to-people exchange between the two places. The Hong Kong side welcomes this Japanese decision and prepares to continually consider the further facilitating arrangements for Japanese.

Agreements relating to criminal matters

25. With reference to the Agreement between Japan and the HKSAR of the People's Republic of China on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, both sides appreciate the co-operative and constructive legal co-operation which has accumulated over the years. Both sides share the view to continue communicating with each other on the commencement of negotiations on an agreement on the transfer of sentenced persons and negotiations on an agreement on extradition, as a further move in legal co-operation between Japan and Hong Kong.

Exchange and co-operation in the field of international dispute resolution

26. Both sides share the view to further co-operation and exchange of information regarding training in international dispute resolution including arbitration and mediation.