



Making Big Strides in Economic Development

Hong Kong should actively align with national development strategies to promote economic growth



發展經濟 大步向前

香港應積極配合國家發展策略，推動經濟增長

國家把今年經濟增長目標訂為約 5%，並擴大高水平對外開放，加大力度吸引投資，共建一帶一路。內地致力發展經濟，同時亦為香港經濟穩步發展提供最強支撐。

國務院在 3 月發表《政府工作報告》，提出着力擴大內需、推動經濟良性循環，以及擴大高水平對外開放。其他措施包括推動外貿、支持企業開拓多元化市場，並繼續縮減外資准入限制措施。國家亦支持高質量共建「一帶一路」，深化多雙邊和區域經濟合作。

事實上，外國投資者亦希望走進內地的龐大市場，因此國家放寬外資管制措施對投資者而言是好消息。香港作為粵港澳大灣區一分子，不僅得到國家大力支持，同時享有聯通世界的優勢，應當充分發揮「超級聯繫人」的角色，配合國家發展經濟，以把握內地高速發展的時機及有利條件，協助兩地企業走出去，把外資引進來。

面對全球經濟復蘇乏力及複雜的地緣政治，香港商界除了着眼於歐美等傳統市場，亦應積極開拓新興市場。就此，香港特區政府已向貿發局撥款，協助中小企把握「一帶一路」倡議和大灣區建設的機遇，開拓新興市場，並加強環球推廣。

新一份《財政預算案》亦有多項開拓中東市場的措施，包括與沙特阿拉伯及巴林進行投資協定談判，並計劃在利雅得、土耳其和埃及分別增設經貿辦及顧問辦事處，在新興市場加強貿易推廣。

開拓市場亦要有良好的交通運輸配套。我樂見香港特區政府配合國家「空中絲綢之路」的建設，針對具潛力的「一帶一路」航線加強航空服務。香港商界一貫懂得靈活變通，在國家及香港特區政府支持下，應當把握新機遇，踏步向前。

With a GDP growth target of around 5% for 2024, China will take steps to pursue a high standard of opening up, intensify efforts to attract investment and promote cooperation in building the Belt and Road (B&R). These endeavours to spur development will provide a strong backing for steady economic growth in Hong Kong.

According to the government work report released in March, the authorities are working to expand domestic demand, drive the economy to realize a virtuous cycle and pursue a high standard of opening up. Other measures include promoting foreign trade, supporting businesses in diversifying overseas markets, and the continued relaxation of market access restrictions on foreign investment. The Government is also looking to support high-quality B&R cooperation, and deepen multilateral, bilateral and regional economic cooperation.

Indeed, foreign investors are also eager to tap into China's huge market. As such, the relaxation of foreign investment control is good news for them. As part of the Greater Bay Area (GBA), Hong Kong enjoys unwavering support of the motherland while being connected to the world. We should therefore give full play to our role as a "super-connector" to dovetail with the country's push for economic development. This will allow us to take advantage of the opportune timing and favourable conditions brought by the nation's rapid development, helping businesses on both sides of the border to go global while bringing in foreign capital.

Given the sluggish global economy and complicated geopolitics, the Hong Kong business community should seek to explore emerging markets beyond traditional markets like Europe and the United States. In view of this, the HKSAR Government has provided additional funding to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to help SMEs seize opportunities arising from the B&R Initiative and GBA development, tap into emerging markets, and step up promotional efforts worldwide.

The latest Budget also rolled out various measures to strengthen economic and trade relations with the Middle East. These included conducting negotiations with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain on an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, opening an Economic and Trade Office in Riyadh, and setting up consultant offices in Turkey and Egypt, with a view to enhancing trade promotion in emerging countries.

Sound transport infrastructure is essential for access to new markets. I am pleased to see the HKSAR Government's move to support the country's initiative to develop the "Air Silk Road" by strengthening aviation services on routes with potential along the B&R. Known for their flexibility and adaptability, Hong Kong businesses should embrace new opportunities to make big strides, with the solid support of the Mainland and the HKSAR Government.

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