"One Country, Two Systems" Success in HK

The principle of "One Country, Two Systems" had been successfully implemented in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's Secretary for Constitutional Affairs Stephen Lam told a visiting delegation of the Alliance for the Reunification of China from Taiwan Thursday.

"The basic rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Basic Law for Hong Kong people have been fully protected. The system of different aspects of Hong Kong are operating smoothly," Lam said.

Hong Kong is an international city where investors look vigorously for business opportunities. The number of regional headquarters and offices in Hong Kong set up by international corporations has increased from 2,500 in 1997 to 3,100 in 2002, which represents a 24 percent increase, he pointed out.

Lam noted that the European Commission, the United States and the United Kingdom, in their reports to their legislative bodies in August last year, and in April and July this year respectively, recognized that the "One Country, Two Systems" had been implemented successfully in Hong Kong.

Moreover, he said the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" had maintained Hong Kong-Taiwan relations. For instance, Taiwan airlines could continue their flights between Hong Kong and Taiwan after Hong Kong returned to the motherland in 1997, Taiwan businessmen could set up factories in the Chinese mainland and list their companies in Hong Kong.
Last week, views were expressed in Taiwan that there were signs of Hong Kong receding in political and economic developments since Hong Kong's return to the motherland, and that this was a result of the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems."

Lam told the Taiwan delegation, "This is plainly not the case."

On constitutional development, Lam cited the example that the proportion of directly elected seats in the Legislative Council had been increasing progressively in accordance with the Basic Law. The number of directly elected seats had increased from 20 in the first term to 24 in the second term. It would be further increased to 30 in 2004, accounting for half of the number of Legislative Council seats.

The Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) recently concluded between Hong Kong and the mainland would enable a variety of Hong Kong products to enter the mainland market duty-free, and would make room for Hong Kong's service industries and professionals to develop the mainland market.

"'One Country, Two Systems' provides the important foundation which enables Hong Kong to enjoy this special status," Lam concluded.

The Alliance for the Reunification of China was set up in 1998 with the aim of promoting peaceful reunification of China.

*Editor: Li Guixiang.*