

# “One Country, Two Systems”

## Overview

“One country, two systems” is the bedrock of Hong Kong’s stability and continued success since the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) on 1 July 1997. The Basic Law, a constitutional document and a national law of China, is the legal foundation for the establishment of the HKSAR under Article 31 of the PRC Constitution and the “one country, two systems” principle. Under “one country, two systems”, Hong Kong exercises a high degree of autonomy while preserving its own economic and social systems, and common law system. Since 1997, the HKSAR has continued to prosper and thrive as an international financial and trading centre and Asia’s world city.

## Successful Implementation of “One Country, Two Systems”

- Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China.
- Hong Kong’s capitalist system, free economy and trusted legal system provide the foundation for economic development and social progress.
- Hong Kong residents continue to enjoy freedom of speech, assembly, procession, information, press and religious belief.
- HKSAR passport holders enjoy visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to over 160 countries and territories.
- Hong Kong’s legal system is separate from the legal system in Mainland China. The continuation of the common law system in Hong Kong is protected by the Basic Law.
- Hong Kong maintains its own laws, own courts, an independent judiciary and own legal professions.
- Hong Kong is a free port and a separate customs territory, exercises its own immigration control and maintains its police force as well as other law enforcement agencies.

## Participation in International Organisations

- Hong Kong continues to actively participate, as a separate member, in relevant international organisations such as the World Trade Organization, the World Customs Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation using the name “Hong Kong, China”. The HKSAR may also participate as a separate team under the name “Hong Kong, China” at international events such as the Olympic Games.
- Over 260 multilateral treaties apply to Hong Kong, while there are more than 250 binding bilateral agreements between Hong Kong and over 70 countries. Major topics of these agreements are air services, investment promotion and protection, surrender of fugitive offenders, mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, transfer of sentenced persons, avoidance of double taxation and tax information exchange.

### **Closer Connections with the Mainland of China**

- Since 1997, much closer connections and deeper exchanges have been forged with the Mainland in trade, commerce and finance, as well as infrastructure, innovation and technology, education, art and culture, environmental protection, tourism and public health.
- Economic integration with the Mainland has become entrenched, as Hong Kong plays to its strengths to assist national development and expand its own economic footprint and potential in the Mainland and globally.
- The Mainland and Hong Kong signed the "Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" (CEPA) in June 2003 to foster progressive market liberalisation as well as facilitate trade and investment. CEPA applies a zero tariff on goods of Hong Kong origin entering the Mainland, and basically achieves liberalisation of trade in services between the two sides.
- Hong Kong plays a pivotal role in the internationalisation of the Renminbi and the opening up of the Mainland's financial markets and is the world's largest offshore RMB hub.
- Hong Kong is poised to be a "facilitator" and "beneficiary" of important national development strategies such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative.

### **Under "One country, two systems" Hong Kong has been rated:**

- World's freest economy for 25 consecutive years (US-based Heritage Foundation)
- World No 1 for economic freedom since 1996 (Canada-based Fraser Institute)
- Second-most competitive economy (IMD World competitiveness Yearbook 2018)
- World's most business-friendly tax system (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and the World Bank Group: Paying Taxes 2019)
- World's No.2 for financial system (World Economic Forum: Global Competitiveness Report 2018)
- World No.1 for Initial Public Offering (IPO) funds raised in 2018
- 4th easiest place in the world to do business (World Bank's Doing Business Report 2019)
- 1st in Asia for judicial independence (World Economic Forum: Global Competitiveness Report 2018)

### **Under "One country, two systems" Hong Kong remains:**

- A global business and financial hub with more than 8,750 overseas and Mainland companies operating in the city
- An major publishing hub in Asia – around 80 daily newspapers and 557 periodicals (including a number of electronics newspaper) are published in Hong Kong, which is home to more than 80 international media organisations
- Asia's world city – welcoming people from all over the world to work, live and study in the world's freest economy and global nexus for international finance, trade, aviation, shipping, logistics, arts, culture and creativity where people and businesses come to connect and excel.