

# City can play even bigger role in opening of China and region, Lam says

**Gary Cheung**

gary.cheung@scmp.com

Hong Kong is eager to play a bigger role in China's further opening up and to share its experience in helping emerging economies to develop, Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor told a seminar yesterday.

She said the city had played a unique role in the 40-year journey: "We are a contributor as well as a beneficiary in China's reform and opening up.

"We shared our experience with the mainland and contributed to the rapid modernisation of the country in different aspects."

Lam said Hong Kong businesses and entrepreneurs had been the first to invest on the mainland, starting production lines in the Pearl River Delta region and bringing capital, talent and management systems.

She was speaking at a seminar co-organised by the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong and the Better Hong Kong Foundation.

The *South China Morning Post* was a media partner of the event at the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre.

"Having served as our country's window to the world in the past 40 years, Hong Kong is a beneficiary of the country's reform and opening up," Lam said.

"The city has successfully transformed herself into an important bridge linking the mainland and the global market."

Former Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama also made a speech. He hoped his country would join the "Belt and Road Initiative" – Beijing's global trade strategy – as soon as possible.

Other speakers included Dominique de Villepin, French prime minister from 2005 to 2007, former Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing and ex-United States

trade representative Charlene Barshefsky.

Lam said: "Hong Kong is eager to play an even bigger role than before and make [a] contribution to the country and the world. To make economic development in the Asia-Pacific more inclusive, we need to improve systems and institutions to uphold safety, equity, efficiency and justice.

"Hong Kong is more than willing to share our experience and help build capacity in emerging economies as part of Hong Kong's contribution to the promotion of people-to-people bonds in the global environment."

She said the city had huge experience in areas such as new town planning, revitalising historic sites and flood prevention.



**Carrie Lam delivers her address at the seminar.** Photo: K.Y. Cheng

"We have also built institutions to fight against corruption, promote equal opportunities and deal with administrative complaints. We will be most pleased to share our experience with emerging economies," she said.

Xie Feng, the foreign ministry commissioner in Hong Kong, said reform and opening up had transformed China, ensured Hong Kong's great success and benefited the world. He said the first joint venture on the mainland was established by a Hong Kong firm and the first five-star hotel was built by a Hong Kong consortium.

"Today Hong Kong remains the biggest source of foreign direct investment to China," Xie said.