

HK future depends on EDUCATION

Hong Kong was honoured by the presence of Education Ministerial Officials from Mainland China, Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Macau at its first education ministerial roundtable held in July.

The roundtable was part of the International Education Forum and Expo (IEFE) hosted by the Education Bureau between July 14 and 16 to showcase the successes of Hong Kong's education reform and the articulation of the New Academic Structure (NAS) with education systems around the world.

The NAS, implemented since September 2009, is a key education reform in Hong Kong to better prepare students for the demands of a dynamic, knowledge-based global village.

Themed "Learning Journey for the Globalised World", the three-day event comprised a Ministerial Roundtable, an International Conference, and an Education Expo. The event signified the launch of Hong Kong's NAS in the international arena.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of IEFE, the Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, said Hong Kong has long recognized the importance of education, with education spending its top priority.

In Hong Kong, every child is entitled to 12 years of free education. Education takes up more than one-fifth of the entire government spending every year. In the current financial year, it amounts to US\$7 billion in recurrent spending alone.

Mr Tsang said, "Education provides our young people with the knowledge and experience they need to contribute to society. It helps lift young people out of poverty and provides them with opportunities to build a better life. It empowers young people to pursue their dreams, and to become the leaders of tomorrow."

At the Ministerial Roundtable, the education officials discussed and exchanged views on how different nations bring forth the desired quality of human resources for sustainable development, and new competencies in facing the ever-changing challenges of today's globalised world.

On the other hand, the International Conference brought together internationally renowned scholars and local and international speakers to discuss how global trends and reform in school and higher education contribute to human resource development. Overseas speakers included Professor Ruth Hayhoe of University of Toronto, Sir Michael Barber of McKinsey & Company, Professor Geoff Hayward of University of Leeds, and Professor Lee Wing-on of National Institute of Education Singapore.

In addition, the Education Expo featured about 60 exhibition booths, including 12 overseas exhibitors, to highlight the articulation of the NAS with local and international education systems.

