

It is in HK's interests to have as much free trade as possible

President Xi Jinping (习近平), in his first visit to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum last month to address delegates from the global community, alerted them to the danger of a new round of trade protectionism. He reassured them of China's support for economic globalisation. In his closing statement, the forum's executive chairman, Klaus Schwab, said "the international community is looking to China to continue its responsive and responsible leadership in providing all of us with confidence and stability".

Soon after his inauguration, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order withdrawing the country from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) consisting of the 12-member countries around the Pacific Ocean, excluding China. This was his first measure implementing his "America first" policy to bring jobs back to America that he declared in his inaugural address.

America's withdrawal from the TPP does not mean the remaining 11 members may not want to go ahead with TPP, and may even invite China and other Asian nations to join the pact.

China Daily reported Beijing has been an advocate of two other free trade pacts – the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Free-Trade Agreement of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

The vision and plan for an Asia-Pacific free-trade zone by leaders of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation member economies should be supported.

As a free port and international trading city, Hong Kong has an abiding interest in promoting free trade and opposing trade protectionism. Since its lifeblood is in free trade and being a free economy, it is imperative that whoever becomes chief executive must have the confidence of Beijing so as to cooperate with the central government and to develop Hong Kong's economy and to have broad community support in order to govern the city effectively.

I am a former legislator and believe the next chief executive must have wide experience in working with the political parties and the Legislative Council. That person will also have to have the vision and ability to inspire and mobilise the younger generation to know more about the mainland and realise they are Chinese citizens under the "one country, two systems" principle.

This enables both sides to know and learn from each other under the dynamic and constantly adapting capitalist and socialist economic systems that have enabled China, which includes the Hong Kong SAR, to become in a relatively short period, the world's second-largest economic entity.

Hilton Cheong-Leen, To Kwa Wan

貿易愈自由 香港愈有利

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習近平主席上月首度赴瑞士達沃斯出席“世界經濟論壇”，向與會的全球各地代表致詞，提醒大家要小心重新掀起的貿易保護主義浪潮。他重申中國支持經濟全球化。論壇的執行主席克勞斯·施瓦布在閉幕致詞時說：“國際社會正期待中國繼續發揮領導能力，適時及可靠地給予大家信心和提供穩定力量。”

美國總統特朗普宣誓就任後不久即簽署行政命令，退出由除中國外 12 個太平洋沿岸國家組成的跨太平洋夥伴協定。這是他的第一項舉措以推行他的“美國優先”政策，他就職演說時已聲稱要把職位帶回美國。

美國退出跨太平洋夥伴協定並不是說餘下的 11 個國家便會就此放棄，他們反而邀請中國和其他亞洲國家加入。

據《中國日報》報道，北京一直積極推動其他兩個自由貿易協約，即“區域全面經濟伙伴關係協定”與“亞太自由貿易區”。

“亞洲太平洋經濟合作組織”經濟體成員推動亞太自由貿易區的遠見和計劃值得支持。

香港是自由港和國際貿易都會，促進自由貿易和反對貿易保護主義永遠符合本身利益。自由貿易和自由經濟是香港的命脈，不管誰人成為行政長官，必須取得北京信任，與中央政府合作，發展香港的經濟以及得到社會的廣泛支持，俾能有效管治這個城市。

本人曾任立法局（現稱立法會）議員，認為下任行政長官需有與政黨和立法會合作的充分經驗。當選者亦需有遠見和能力去激發及鼓動年輕一代了解大陸，體會自己是“一國兩制”原則之下的中國公民。

這可令中港雙方在動力十足及不斷適應的資本主義與社會主義經濟系統之下互相了解和學習，中國，包括香港特別行政區在內，在相對短的時間內成為世界第二大經濟實體，畢竟是這兩大系統的成果。

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