

Speech at the Welcoming Dinner  
Hosted by the Government of  
The Macao Special Administrative Region

December 19, 2024  
Xi Jinping

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng,  
Incoming Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great pleasure to return to the beautiful Macao after a span of five years and join you in celebrating the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland. On behalf of the Central Government and people of all ethnic groups, I extend cordial greetings and best wishes to you and, through you, to all the residents in Macao and to all our international friends who care for and support Macao's development.

The past five years have been extraordinary in the history of Macao's development. Against the background of accelerating global transformation not seen in a century and the once-in-a-century pandemic, with the unreserved support of the Central Government and the mainland, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and the fifth-term government of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) rallied and led the people of all sectors in Macao to rise to the challenges, made results-oriented efforts, ensured a steady economic recovery and achieved progress in all undertakings. Macao has written a new chapter in the successful implementation of One Country, Two Systems with Macao characteristics.

Macao has made new progress in appropriate economic diversification. With the gaming industry developing in a healthy and orderly manner in accordance with the law, Macao, as a world-class tourism and leisure center, continues to offer new services, and major emerging industries are booming. Macao has taken an active part in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The Hengqin-Macao integration is deepening, as the In-Depth Cooperation Zone goes into closed customs operation, and the levels of physical connectivity of infrastructure and institutional connectivity of rules increase. Macao's cooperation with the mainland in science and technology is also deepening and expanding. The successful launch and smooth operation of "Macao Science 1" satellites is just one example. Today's Macao enjoys a stronger foundation and broader space for economic development. It is on an ever-widening path of shared development and common prosperity along with the mainland.

Macao has reached a new level in improving people's well-being. To meet the practical needs of its residents, Macao has increased spending on improving the

people's well-being and taken solid steps on the ground to deliver tangible benefits to residents in areas that directly impact their lives, including housing, health care, education, and elderly care. The apartments for senior citizens and the Macao New Neighborhood project are completed. The Macao Bridge is open to traffic. The quality of basic education continues to improve, and the sector of higher education is making steady progress. The region-wide application of e-government is on a fast track and the efforts to build Macao into a more livable city are intensifying. Local residents enjoy remarkably greater comfort and convenience. With public well-being better secured and social undertakings making all-round progress, Macao today has become a pleasant and favorable place to live and work in.

Macao's political and social foundation, rooted in love for the Chinese nation and love for Macao, is more solid and strong. The laws and institutional mechanisms of the Macao SAR for safeguarding national security are improved. Elections of the seventh Legislative Assembly and the sixth-term Chief Executive have been held smoothly. Macao residents' rights, including democracy, human rights and freedoms, remain fully guaranteed. The Macao SAR has strengthened its public education of the Constitution, the Basic Law, the national conditions and history, and the national security. As a result, people of all sectors now have a stronger sense of national identity and cherish deep feelings for our nation as much as they love their family. People of all ethnic communities live in amity, and cultural events are colorful and numerous. In Macao today, more than ever, the love for the Chinese nation and the love for Macao have become a stronger theme in a multicultural symphony that features coexistence and co-prosperity.

Macao's international influence and visibility have risen significantly. Solid progress has been made in establishing Macao as "One Center, One Platform, One Base." The Center for Science and Technology Exchange and Cooperation Between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries has been inaugurated, and Macao's exchange and cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries are closer. Macao has deepened cooperation with countries and regions participating in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and established friendly ties or twinning relationships with more cities. It has also maintained stable economic and trade ties with more countries and regions. Macao has been awarded the Culture City of East Asia and the Best Convention City (Asia). Its international competitiveness and influence has been enhanced.

These remarkable achievements of Macao over the past five years are attributable to the full and faithful implementation of the One Country, Two Systems policy, to the vigorous support of the Central Government and the mainland, and to the active involvement of the international community. They are the result of the hard work and all-out efforts of people of all sectors in Macao united under the leadership of the Macao SAR Government.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Macao's unique strength comes from the policy of One Country, Two Systems. The policy provides a strong foundation for Macao's development. Riding the wind of the national efforts to build a great country and advance national rejuvenation, Macao is blessed with the opportunities and abilities to soar higher and reach further to achieve greater success. To this end, I wish to share with you my three expectations of Macao.

First, I hope Macao will embrace a broader vision. The region should keep in mind China's strategic imperative of national rejuvenation and the ongoing global transformation not seen in a century. You must keep pace with the trends of the times, and further calibrate Macao's position. Macao needs to adopt a scientific approach in its future development planning, and proactively align itself with national development strategies such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and it could also seek to play a bigger role on the international stage.

Second, I hope Macao will embrace diversity and inclusiveness. You should uphold the underlying values of love for the Chinese nation and love for Macao while embracing greater openness, inclusiveness and solidarity. You must work to attract the best minds to join you in building a better Macao. Whoever supports One Country, Two Systems and loves Macao as his home is a native "having drunk from Lilau" and a positive force contributing to Macao's development.

Third, I hope Macao will continue to forge ahead with resolve. An old Chinese poem has this line, "Macao is the most prosperous of all ports in Canton." People of Macao are never short on the can-do spirit. That said, one should never be complacent when life is prosperous, or ignore potential risks when the going is good. Macao needs to demonstrate stronger resolve and greater courage in reform and innovation. You could leverage your institutional strength under One Country, Two Systems to break new ground in the region's development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Thanks to the relentless efforts of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, China has changed enormously and remarkably. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is now on an irreversible historical course. In the 25 years since its return to the motherland, Macao has come a long way in all its undertakings. There is no better time than now to pursue Macao's further development. I have full confidence that with the strong backing of the great motherland and through solid and hard work, the Macao Special Administrative Region will build on its achievements to make a new leap and create new splendors.

Now, please join me in a toast:

To the prosperity of our great motherland;

To a better tomorrow of Macao; and

To the health and happiness of all of you and your families.  
Cheers!