

Hong Kong Remains World's Freest Economy

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 20, 2011 -- **Cato Institute Releases 15th Report on Global Economic Freedom**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Hong Kong remains the world's freest economy according to the findings of the *Economic Freedom of the World: 2011 Annual Report* released today by the Cato Institute and published by Canada's Fraser Institute. This marks the 15th consecutive year Hong Kong has topped the ranking.

Speaking at a gala dinner co-hosted by the Fraser Institute and the Lion Rock Institute in Hong Kong, Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, welcomed Hong Kong's ranking and emphasized that it was important for an externally-oriented economy such as Hong Kong to remain true to free and open markets.

"That means strong fiscal discipline, low taxes, open markets, free flow of information, goods and capital, clean government and a level playing field for business," Mr. Tsang said. "The fact that we have held true to these beliefs for decades is no doubt one reason why Hong Kong has consistently ranked so highly in the league tables of economic freedom."

According to the report, Hong Kong offers the highest level of economic freedom, with a score of 9.01 out of 10, followed by Singapore with a rating of 8.68. The United States is the tenth freest economy in the world with a rating of 7.60.

Hong Kong Commissioner to the United States, Donald Tong, welcomed the findings of the report, saying: "With lingering uncertainty in the global economy, I am pleased to learn that the Cato Institute, in conjunction with other prominent research institutions around the world, acknowledges Hong Kong's commitment to a free-market philosophy.

"Our adherence to an open market and the rule of law has facilitated our evolution to an international financial, business and logistics center."

The *Economic Freedom of the World* report uses 42 different measures to create an index ranking economies around the world based on policies that encourage economic freedom. Economic freedom is measured in five different areas: (1) size of government; (2) legal structure and security of property rights; (3) access to sound money; (4) freedom to trade internationally; and (5) regulation of credit, labor and business.

The 2011 report ranks 141 economies using data from 2009, the most recent year for which comprehensive data was available.

The first *Economic Freedom of the World* report, published in 1996, was the result of a decade of research by a team which included several Nobel Laureates and over 60 other leading scholars in a broad range of fields, from economics to political science, and from law to philosophy.

The annual report is published in conjunction with the Economic Freedom Network, a group of independent research and educational institutes in 85 countries worldwide.

For more information on the Economic Freedom Network, data sets, and previous *Economic Freedom of the World* reports, please visit www.freetheworld.com/.

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