

Speech by FS at Hong Kong Construction Materials Association Annual Dinner (English only)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Hong Kong Construction Materials Association Annual Dinner today (November 13):

Joseph (Chairman of the Hong Kong Construction Materials Association (HKCMA), Mr Joseph Chee), Ambrose (Chief Executive of the HKCMA, Mr Ambrose Linn), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

I am delighted to be here with you tonight for the inaugural annual dinner of the Hong Kong Construction Materials Association.

In fact, I am no stranger to the Association. Two years ago, as the then Secretary for Development, I joined you for your anniversary cocktail reception.

I keep coming back for good reason. We all know what "materials" mean to you and your industry. And there's another dictionary definition of "material", which is, "having real importance or great consequences". Your association, comprising industry players who provide the materials for the construction industry, is indeed critically important to the future of Hong Kong.

The numbers certainly underline that. The construction industry contributes more than 5 per cent to Hong Kong's GDP, while employing about 9 per cent of our workforce.

The results are visible, and visibly impressive. The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, now the world's longest sea crossing, was commissioned only last month. The previous month, the Express Rail Link, connecting Hong Kong to the national high speed railway network, opened for business – and pleasure as well. Next year, the Liangtang/ Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Crossing Facility will be up and running.

From a regional perspective, these links enhance our overall connectivity with the Mainland. In particular, they deepen our integration with the Greater Bay Area, while strengthening our singular position as Asia's world city.

During the construction stage, these infrastructure projects expand employment opportunities. And, upon completion, they boost economic prospects and improve our overall living environment.

It's not surprising, then, that the Government's annual infrastructural investment has soared from about HK\$20 billion to more than HK\$80 billion over the past decade. In the coming five years, the contract value of public and private construction works in Hong Kong altogether is estimated to reach HK\$250 billion to HK\$300 billion per year.

One of the upcoming major infrastructure projects we have in our plan is of course the Lantau Tomorrow Vision.

The plan will see artificial islands developed in stages. These could provide about 260 000 to 400 000 housing units, with about 70 per cent as public housing, accommodating a population ranging from about 700 000 to as much as 1.1 million.

We will also build Hong Kong's third core business district on the artificial islands, creating some 340 000 employment opportunities.

We therefore need your help, to be sure. A stable supply of quality construction materials is essential for the upcoming reclamation projects – and for the many other infrastructure projects in the planning stage or on the horizon that will give shape and substance to Hong Kong in this 21st century.

The future must be built on productivity, on quality, safety and environmental performance. This demands innovation – from you, and from the construction industry as a whole.

That's why the Government now advocates "Construction 2.0", smart movement towards automation, industrialisation and digitalisation.

I'm pleased to hear that your industry has been developing, and promoting, the use of environmental and sustainable construction materials.

The adoption of manufactured sand to replace natural sand in cement plastering and reclamation work is a good case in point. M-sand, a by-product of aggregate production, is an environmentally friendly material in comparison with natural sand.

Since last month, the Development Bureau mandated the use of M-sand for plastering, rendering and screeding in new public works contracts. Working with the materials industry, the Government is exploring a wider application of M-sand and other green materials, including recycled glass and bitumen, in Hong Kong construction.

I understand that your Association, working with a Rebar Processing Solution Committee, is promoting the use of off-site steel prefabrication. That's a step in the right direction. And the recently launched HK\$1 billion Construction Innovation and Technology Fund will support the wider application of innovative construction methods and technology. Indeed, the use of prefabricated steel products is a designated item under the Fund.

Ladies and gentlemen, I value very much our partnership with the Hong Kong Construction Materials Association and with you all. I look forward to a stable supply of quality materials for the benefit of the Hong Kong construction industry, and the continuing prosperity of Hong Kong. Together, we will excel.

I know you will enjoy this very special evening. And I wish you the best of business in the coming year.

Thank you.

Yau Sang Galvanizing (Hot-Dip) Company Limited fined \$50,000 for illegal wastewater discharge again

The factory of Yau Sang Galvanizing (Hot-Dip) Company Limited at Yuen Long Industrial Estate was again prosecuted for illegal discharge of industrial wastewater into the communal sewer. It was fined \$50,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (November 13) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO) for the third time. The factory committed the same offence this June and August and was convicted and fined a total of \$55,000.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff conducted an inspection this June and found that the factory concerned did not operate its sewage treatment facility properly, resulting in the discharge of industrial wastewater into the communal sewer. The EPD staff then collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentrations of iron and zinc were both 93 milligrams/litre, which exceeded the upper limits of the WPCO licence by three and 18 times respectively. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the company. Following a series of law enforcement actions, no illegal discharge of excessive wastewater by the factory was found at present. The EPD will continue to seriously follow up on the repeated illegal discharge of the factory. The department will also step up inspections and strengthen enforcement actions, in order to combat persistent violations.

An EPD spokesman said that members of the industry should properly collect and treat industrial wastewater to ensure that the effluent discharge meets the standards as set out in the WPCO licence before being discharged into communal sewers. Discharging industrial wastewater with high heavy metal concentration will affect the operation of the Government's sewage treatment works. Under the WPCO, anyone who discharges commercial or industrial

wastewater without proper treatment commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. A maximum fine of \$400,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on subsequent convictions.

[CHP investigates suspected food poisoning outbreak](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 13) investigating a suspected outbreak of food poisoning affecting 10 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The patients, comprising seven men and three women aged 30 to 53, developed abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and fever about nine to 13 hours after having a dinner banquet at a food premises in Kowloon Bay on November 9.

Six of them sought medical attention. Among them, one required hospitalisation but has been discharged. All affected persons are in a stable condition.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

[Update on cluster of Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae cases at Queen Elizabeth Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients confirmed to have Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) in a mixed surgical ward, the spokesperson for Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) gave the following update today (November 13):

One more male patient, aged 29, has been confirmed to have CPE without clinical symptoms.

Infection control measures have been stepped up according to the established guidelines in the concerned wards. All other patients in the wards are under close surveillance.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for follow-up.

[Suspected MERS case reported](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 13) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	37
Affected area involved	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Prince of Wales Hospital
Condition	Stable

MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative
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"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).