

Speech by CE at International Ombudsman Summit 2024 Closing Ceremony and Hong Kong Ombudsman 35th Anniversary Reception (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the International Ombudsman Summit 2024 Closing Ceremony and Hong Kong Ombudsman 35th Anniversary Reception today (December 3):

Deputy Director Liu Guangyuan (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Deputy Commissioner Li Zijun (Deputy Commissioner of the National Public Complaints and Proposals Administration), Director-General Cai Wei (Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation of the National Commission of Supervision), Vice President Mohamed Benalilou (First Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute), President Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi (President of the Asian Ombudsman Association), Mr Jack Chan (Ombudsman of Hong Kong), consuls-general, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I'm delighted to be here today, as we draw this year's illuminating International Ombudsman Summit to a successful close.

A global gathering, the Summit attracted some 140 ombudsmen and senior representatives of ombudsman institutions, as well as dispute resolution organisations, academics and other professionals from around the world. Officials from more than 20 global bodies and local organisations also took part, let me add.

I extend my gratitude to all of you, for sharing your experiences and insights at the Summit, together with representatives of the Hong Kong SAR Government and institutions.

In this buoyant spirit of co-operation and unity, let us move on from the Summit with a renewed sense of purpose, of transparency, integrity and commitment to the economies, communities and peoples we serve.

The theme of this Summit, "Ombudsman in a Changing World: Learning from the Past; Preparing for the Future", is surely a resounding call to reflect, prepare for and adapt to change – locally, regionally and globally.

Thirty-five years ago, the Office of the Hong Kong Ombudsman, then known as the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints, was created with a critical mission: to uphold justice, ensure administrative fairness, and foster a culture of accountability – all of it anchored in the pursuit of excellence.

The Office, I'm pleased to say, has realised that mission. It has worked tirelessly to ensure a fair, efficient and accountable public administration.

I can tell you it has made more than 900 recommendations to the Hong Kong SAR Government over the past five years. In doing so, it has contributed significantly to better public governance in so many ways, prompting more effective regulatory and enforcement measures, streamlining administrative procedures, enhancing interdepartmental collaboration, promoting institutional accountability, and much more.

And now, celebrating its 35th anniversary, Hong Kong's Office of the Ombudsman has embarked on three new strategic directions. I fully support each of them: the wider use of mediation for efficient and amicable resolution of complaints; intensifying interdepartmental collaboration to resolve complex issues; and encouraging a positive culture towards complaints.

I also commend the Office's global presence, including in the International Ombudsman Institute and the Asian Ombudsman Association. I'm pleased, too, with its notable efforts in telling the good stories of Hong Kong under our "one country, two systems" principle.

In just a moment, we will witness the Office's exchange of MOUs with ombudsman institutions from eight countries and regions.

Like today's Summit, the MOUs speak of new and revitalised international ties and the wide-ranging opportunities they will create for us all.

This welcome spirit reflects a shared commitment to the values and principles that resounded throughout today's Summit. Allow me to congratulate each and every one of the signatories.

Allow me, too, to congratulate our Ombudsman's office, and all those who work for the Office, on your landmark 35th anniversary.

A reminder, too, that while the Summit may have concluded, there is much more on offer tonight and tomorrow. I'm talking about the wide range of carefully curated cultural and social programmes, arranged for you by the Office.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong is more than a leading international financial, shipping and trade centre, and international innovation and technology hub. We are equally committed to the business of pleasure – of the arts, culture and entertainment, day and night. We are, in fact, fast rising as the world's East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. And if it's world-class hiking, water activities, or the thrill of horseracing you want, we've also got it. I know you will enjoy it all, every Hong Kong moment.

I'm grateful to each and every one of you for your invaluable contributions to the success of this inspiring Summit. And I wish you the best of business, health and happiness in the coming year.

Thank you.

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in New Zealand and US suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 3) that in view of notifications from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H7N6 avian influenza in Waitaki District in New Zealand, and outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Meeker County of the State of Minnesota, Pinal County of the State of Arizona, Missoula County of the State of Montana and Sacramento County of the State of California in the United States (US) respectively, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 130 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 830 000 poultry eggs from New Zealand, and about 63 470 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 17.2 million poultry eggs from the US in the first nine months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the New Zealand and American authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the WOAH and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Meteorological Training Centre for Belt and Road Countries established today (with photos)

The Meteorological Training Centre for Belt and Road Countries was established today (December 3), marking a significant milestone in enhancing the capabilities of meteorological professionals in the Belt and Road (B&R)

regions and promoting future meteorological co-operation and development.

The establishment ceremony of the Training Centre was held this afternoon at the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). Officiating guests included the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan; Deputy Administrator of the China Meteorological Administration (CMA) Mr Xiong Shaoyuan; the Commissioner for Belt and Road, Mr Nicholas Ho; the Director of Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Mr Ben Churchill; the Advisor of the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology of Cambodia, Dr Seth Vannareth; the Director of Fiji Meteorological Service, Mr Misaeli Mavoia Funaki; the Director of Jordan Meteorological Department, Mr Ra'ed Ahmad Subhi Rafid; the Director of the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, Mr Leong Weng-kun; the Director General of Maldives Meteorological Service, Mr Abdulla Wahid; Deputy Director-General of the Thai Meteorological Department Mr Thanasith Iamananchai; and the Director of the HKO, Dr Chan Pak-wai.

At the ceremony, Mr Tse announced the establishment of the Training Centre. Mr Tse remarked that the Training Centre aims to strengthen climate resilience in the regions through capacity building and knowledge transfer. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attaches great importance to regional co-operation in meteorological services. The Training Centre will cultivate a network of weather and climate experts to work together to prepare for high-impact and extreme weather.

Mr Xiong congratulated the establishment of the Training Centre and praised the HKO's contributions to various fields in meteorology. He emphasised that the Training Centre will enhance the capabilities of more meteorological organisations along the B&R regions, supporting the WMO's Early Warnings for All initiative. The CMA is willing to strengthen co-operation with the HKO, complement each other's strengths, and fully support the operation of the Training Centre.

Mr Churchill expressed that the establishment of the Training Centre marked a significant step forward in enhancing the resilience of several countries against hazardous weather and aligning with the mission of the Early Warnings for All initiative. He thanked the HKO for its contributions to the WMO over the years and hoped that the Training Centre would provide more information and insights on the latest meteorological developments. He also emphasised the WMO's strong support for the Training Centre.

In addition to the guests present at the ceremony, the President of the WMO, Dr Abdulla Al Mandous, and the heads of more than 10 meteorological agencies from B&R regions extended their congratulations via video on the establishment of the Training Centre. Dr Al Mandous highlighted that the establishment of this Training Centre is a significant milestone in advancing meteorological science and capacity building in the region. The Training Centre aligns with the WMO's mission to promote international co-operation in meteorology, hydrology and related geophysical sciences, contributing to the improvement of weather forecasting and disaster risk reduction.

Dr Chan stated at the ceremony, "The HKO has been involved in providing training to meteorological personnel from around the world for many years. The establishment of the Training Centre will help us strengthen the ability of meteorological professionals over the B&R regions, and promote future meteorological co-operation and technology exchange. Initially, the Training Centre will offer online meteorological training through virtual means and will seek opportunities to provide in-person training for limited number of participants."

The plan of establishing the Training Centre was outlined in the "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" of the HKSAR. The Training Centre will help enhance the capabilities of meteorological personnel over the B&R regions in responding to adverse weather and resisting natural disasters. Through collaboration with other international organisations, such as the WMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), in co-organising training courses, the trainings will also be extended to countries outside the B&R regions.

The first activity of the Training Centre will take place from December 3 to 6 with the theme of aviation meteorological science and service development. Over 90 participants from more than 45 WMO members and ICAO Asia Pacific States will attend the workshop either online or in person. Invited experts will share their professional knowledge and experiences at the workshops.



[Briefings and public education activities on Building Management \(Amendment\) Ordinance 2024 \(with photos\)](#)

â€‹The Home Affairs Department (HAD) held a briefing today (December 3) on the Building Management (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 for District Council (DC) members to introduce to them the main amendments in the Amendment Ordinance. The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, attended

the briefing and delivered the opening remarks, calling on DC members to take the initiative to explain the contents of the Amendment Ordinance to owners' corporations (OCs) and property owners in their respective districts.

Miss Mak said in her remarks that DC members were an integral part of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's initiative in improving district governance, and had the responsibility to proactively assist owners and residents in need to deal with building management issues as part of their district works. While the HAD will continue to make use of various publicity channels to remind the public of the implementation of the Amendment Ordinance, DC members should also help promote good building management in the district to enhance the efficacy of district governance.

The Amendment Ordinance was published in the Gazette on July 12, 2024, and will come into effect on July 13, 2025. The major amendments in the Amendment Ordinance include requiring owners to participate in major procurement decisions; adjusting the threshold for auditing financial statements; and criminalising the failure to keep certain documents concerning building management.

The HAD is launching a series of publicity and public education work initiatives to assist OCs, property owners and property management (PM) companies to understand and comply with the requirements of the Amendment Ordinance, including production of publicity materials such as brochures and posters; organisation of briefings for DC members, OCs and property owners, and PM industry practitioners, etc; producing and broadcasting a TV Announcement in the Public Interest (API) and a radio API; and updating a series of guidelines and booklets including the Code of Practice, Best Practices in Building Management and Checklist on Procedural Propriety on Building Management to help property owners, OCs and PM companies better understand the contents of the amendments.

For the contents of the Amendment Ordinance, please refer to HAD's dedicated webpage (www.buildingmgt.gov.hk/en/Policy_and_Legislation/2_10.html).



Update on cluster of Candida auris cases in Kowloon Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Candida auris carrier cases, the spokesperson for Kowloon Hospital gave the following update today (December 3):

Following a contact tracing investigation, one more male patient, aged 74, in the respiratory medicine ward, was identified as a carrier of Candida auris while not having signs of infection. The patient was discharged earlier.

The hospital will continue the contact tracing investigation of close contacts of the patients in accordance with the prevailing guidelines. A series of enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted to prevent the spread of Candida auris:

1. thorough cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned;
2. enhanced admission screening for patients and environmental screening procedures; and
3. application of stringent contact precautions and enhance hand hygiene of staff and patients.

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