

First International Ombudsman Summit in Hong Kong officially opens to foster meaningful discussions, closer international co-operation and exchange of insights at global level (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The inaugural International Ombudsman Summit 2024 hosted by the Office of The Ombudsman of Hong Kong in the Hong Kong Palace Museum, West Kowloon Cultural District officially opened this morning (December 3).

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki; the Director-General of International Cooperation Department, National Commission of Supervision, Mr Cai Wei; Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Fang Jianming; and the Ombudsman of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China, Mr Jack Chan, officiated at the Summit Opening Ceremony.

In his opening remarks at the ceremony, Mr Chan Kwok-ki said, "Hong Kong has much to offer the world, East and West. Our judiciary is independent, we practice the rule of law, believe in efficient government and a simple and low tax system. We are blessed with modern infrastructure, a world-class financial and professional services sector, and, yes, an internationally respected Office of the Ombudsman."

Mr Cai provided three suggestions in his keynote speech to further enhance exchanges and co-operation within the ombudsman community, firstly, to respect equality and inclusiveness; secondly, to focus on practical co-operation; and thirdly, to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning. Mr Cai's suggestions reiterate the objectives of the Summit.

The Summit has received an overwhelming response from ombudsmen and institutions worldwide and representatives from international bodies. Around 140 overseas and Mainland participants from about 40 countries and regions across six continents, including the First Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute, Mr Mohamed Benalilou, the President of the Asian Ombudsman Association, Mr Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, a multitude of ombudsmen, over 30 consuls, and senior personnel from more than 20 international bodies and local organisations, attended the Summit. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Office of European Union to Hong Kong and Macao, the Badan Arbitrase Nasional Indonesia Arbitration Centre and the Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of

Morocco are among those international bodies. The Office has also arranged live streaming to facilitate global counterparts' participation in the Summit, attracting a large number of online participants. This reflects that the Summit has served its purpose of promoting knowledge exchanges at the global level.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr Jack Chan noted, "The Summit offers the best occasion for bringing together ombudsmen and institutions from around the world, local, the Mainland and international professionals and academia. It also provides the best opportunity for Hong Kong to demonstrate our distinctive advantage of having strong support from the motherland and close connection with the world under 'one country, two systems'.

"The Summit, with the theme 'Ombudsman in a Changing World: Learning from the Past; Preparing for the Future', provides a platform for ombudsmen of different jurisdictions and systems, dispute resolution organisations, professionals and academics from all around the globe to exchange insights and share experiences and best practices. It also enables meaningful discussions about the evolving challenges faced by ombudsman systems and institutions as well as in-depth deliberations on future developments in the field. The Summit features three panel sessions: the first two sessions, namely 'Learning from the Past' and 'Preparing for the Future', finished this morning, while the third session, 'Promoting Mediation and Multi-agencies Collaboration in Handling Public Complaints', will take place in the afternoon."

Following the afternoon panel session, the Closing Ceremony of the Summit and the 35th Anniversary Reception Ceremony will be held in the evening. The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, will officiate at the closing and anniversary ceremonies and witness at the Exchange Ceremony of Memoranda of Understanding on Bilateral Cooperation. Overseas guests, Members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, senior government officials, chairpersons of chambers of commerce, and local professionals and academics will join the reception to celebrate the Office's achievements of the past 35 years.

For more information on the Summit and the anniversary celebration, please visit the Summit website: www.ios2024.ombudsman.hk



[Remarks by CE at media session before ExCo \(with video\)](#)

Following are the remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (December 3):

Reporter: I would like to ask about the enterprise agreement for the Northern Metropolis last Friday. What level of commitments does the Government seek from these businesses, and how can the Government ensure that the partnership is profitable for the property developers?

Chief Executive: One question about the Northern Metropolis – We are very confident in the development of the Northern Metropolis. We have organised visits and also discussions over the development plan of the Northern Metropolis. Particularly, we have been introducing and explaining to enterprises and investors the concept of three big pockets of land for development, in which case the investors will be given more flexibility and

freedom to develop it according to their own timetable and overall plan. A bigger piece of land allows more flexibility and also allows development to be taken as a whole, so that the overall value of development can be enhanced.

This month, we will be rolling out measures to invite intention from interested investors and enterprises. In fact, I think the media knows that there was a signing ceremony last week involving over 80 enterprises and investors, who indicated their confidence in the development of the Northern Metropolis. What it means is that the Northern Metropolis is a development plan, which takes long periods of time; some straddle over 10, 15, or even up to 20 years. There are big opportunities there, because Hong Kong is being developed into different centres of excellence, and all these centres of excellence would mean industrialisation, new value creation, and also composite consideration for the overall development of Hong Kong, and these are all opportunities for investors and enterprises. Looking at the level of support that was shown last week, we are very confident that the Northern Metropolis development plan will invite and attract a lot of interest. In fact, if you look at the Northern Metropolis, we will be developing, first of all, the Loop (the Lok Ma Chau Loop) as an I&T (innovation and technology) model of success. We will be also developing the San Tin Technopole. There will also be a university town at different pockets of land. All these will add together to create extra value for Hong Kong, and all these projects will bring good return on investment. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the remarks.)

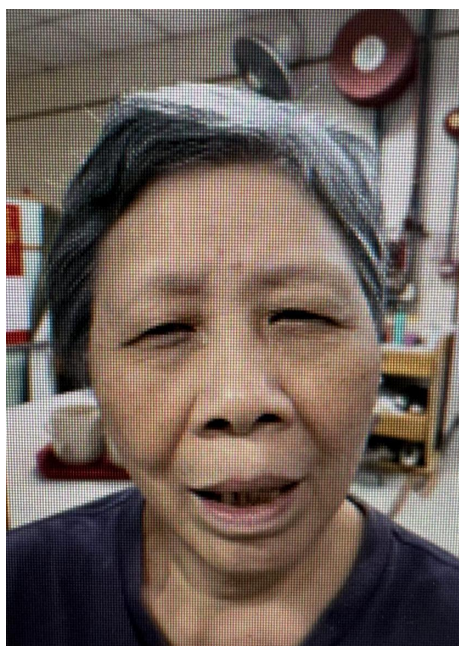
[Appeal for information on missing woman in Kwai Chung \(with photos\)](#)

Police today (December 3) appealed to the public for information on a woman who went missing in Kwai Chung.

Police received a report saying that Yuen Chu, aged 63, went missing after she left her residence on Tai Loong Street in the small hours today.

She is about 1.7 metres tall, 56 kilograms in weight and of medium build. She has a round face with yellow complexion and short grey and white hair. She was last seen wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt, black trousers and blue slippers.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Persons Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1173 or 9450 2374 or email to rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[Speech by CS at International Ombudsman Summit 2024 \(English only\) \(with photos/video\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the International Ombudsman Summit 2024 today (December 3):

Director-General Cai (Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation of the National Commission of Supervision of the People's Republic of China, Mr Cai Wei), Deputy Commissioner Fang (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Mr Fang Jianming), President Benalilou (First Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute, Mr Mohamed Benalilou), President Qureshi (President of the Asian Ombudsman Association, Mr Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi), Mr Chan (Ombudsman of Hong Kong, Mr Jack Chan), Consuls-General, ladies and gentlemen,

â€‹Good morning. I am delighted to welcome you to Hong Kong and the International Ombudsman Summit, which brings together some 140 ombudsmen and other senior players from ombudsman offices around the world.

You are here, in Hong Kong, because you are committed to the principles of fairness, accountability and transparency. Because you are eager to hear from high-profile speakers and your international colleagues about the latest

developments and best practices in this critical area of public administration.

You are here, too, I am pleased to add, to help us celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Hong Kong Office of The Ombudsman.

Hong Kong is proud to host this global gathering – to welcome you and the invaluable experience you bring to this Summit. We have long acknowledged the importance of the Office of The Ombudsman and its essential role in Hong Kong's administration, our economy and our community.

The "one country, two systems" principle is the foundation of Hong Kong's governance and approach to the world. "One country, two systems" creates singular opportunities with our country, China, and enables us to do business and build connections and people-to-people ties with the world at large.

Hong Kong has much to offer the world, East and West. Our judiciary is independent, we practise the rule of law, believe in efficient government and a simple and low tax system. We are blessed with modern infrastructure, a world-class financial and professional services sector, and, yes, an internationally respected Office of The Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman serves as a bridge between the people of Hong Kong and the Government. It demands that we learn from history and that we anticipate the challenges ahead.

Those challenges have expanded, hand in hand – or should I say screen in hand – with the rapid advances of technology, the complexities of global interdependence, and the ever-evolving expectations of our citizens, who look to today's ombudsmen as custodians of the past, guardians of the present and architects of the future.

It is a demanding remit, but I am pleased to say that the Office of The Ombudsman in Hong Kong is committed to realising that responsibility. More than half of the Office's 120 employees are investigators, let me add.

And, as Chief Secretary for Administration, it is my responsibility to submit responses to the Ombudsman's recommendations – on behalf of the Government – to our Legislative Council.

Last year, the Office handled some 4 400 complaint cases. Through 95 full investigations and 10 completed direct investigation operations, the Office made 186 recommendations to various government bureaux and departments.

I welcome them, each and every one of them. They were made to improve the quality and the standards of public administration in Hong Kong. And to ensure the public that we are committed to accountability through independent, objective and impartial investigations.

We are also very much open to celebrations here in Hong Kong. As mentioned, this year is the 35th anniversary of the Office of The Ombudsman in Hong Kong. Since its establishment, the Office has been steadfast in driving a fair, efficient and accountable public administration, identifying areas that the Administration can improve in with sound recommendations.

I am pleased to congratulate the Office of The Ombudsman for 35 years of dedicated work and painstaking efforts on behalf of Hong Kong.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a rewarding Summit, and the best of health, and business, in the coming year. And I know you will enjoy all that Hong Kong, Asia's world city, has to offer you.

Thank you.



[WSD urges public to be alert to fraudulent SMS messages](#)

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) today (December 3) alerted the public to fraudulent SMS messages purportedly issued by the department.

The WSD recently received enquiries from members of the public concerning SMS messages purportedly issued by the department. These messages requested that recipients settle outstanding payments and click the following links, which are not WSD's website addresses. The department has reported the case to the Police.

1. [https\[://wsd-gov\[.\]com](https://wsd-gov[.]com)
2. [https\[://wsd-gov.pisdjdi\[.\]xyz](https://wsd-gov.pisdjdi[.]xyz)
3. [https\[://wsd-gov\[.\]pmsij\[.\]life](https://wsd-gov[.]pmsij[.]life)
4. [https\[://wsd-gov-tisdj/](https://wsd-gov-tisdj/)
5. [https\[://psdogi\[.\]shop/](https://psdogi[.]shop/)

6. [https\[://wsd-gov\[.\]pdgol\[.\]sbs](https://wsd-gov[.]pdgol[.]sbs)

The WSD clarified that it did not send the SMS messages in question and will not direct customers to other websites with hyperlinks embedded in an SMS message. The WSD reminded that the department is registered in SMS Sender Registration Scheme by the Office of the Communications Authority. All SMS messages issued by the department will include the prefix "#" in the SMS Sender ID for easy identification by the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned should contact the Police. For enquiries, please call the WSD's customer enquiry hotline at 2824 5000.