

# CS speaks at Fashion Summit (HK) 2018 opening ceremony (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the opening ceremony of the Fashion Summit (HK) 2018 this morning (September 6):

Felix (Chairman of the Fashion Summit Steering Committee, Mr Felix Chung), Harry (Chairman of the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel, Dr Harry Lee), Mr Yeung Fan (Chairman of the Clothing Industry Training Authority), 馮國強 (Vice-chairman of the China National Textile and Apparel Council, Mr Sun Huaibin), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am honoured to join you all again at the opening ceremony of the Fashion Summit (HK). I would like to first extend my warmest welcome to our overseas participants who have travelled from afar – Welcome to this Asia's world city!

I still vividly recall the opening ceremony that I attended last year to celebrate the launch of the inaugural edition of the Fashion Summit (HK), with the theme of promoting sustainable fashion. The first Fashion Summit was a tremendous success, bringing together over 1 500 leading academics, key industry players, NGOs, as well as experts and professionals from relevant disciplines across the globe to exchange views and share experience in sustainable fashion trends, technologies, best practices, solutions and opportunities.

The Fashion Summit is no average fashion week. This year, the theme of the Fashion Summit is "Circular Economy". It is an innovative model that represents a systemic shift that builds long-term resilience, generates business and economic opportunities and provides environmental and societal benefits, promoting closer collaboration at all levels – for large and small businesses, for organisations and individuals, globally and locally.

The fashion world is home to some of the most creative and pioneering talents. They are most receptive to new ideas and are keen to take the lead in changing the existing system for the betterment of the industry and the wider economy and society as a whole. I am most pleased to see that the fashion world is one of the pioneers of the modern and sustainable concept of circular economy, with a view to improving the economic, environmental and social outcomes, while capturing opportunities missed by the current linear textiles system.

Indeed, given globalisation and cheap labour, it has become a mainstay for mega retailers to produce mass inventory inexpensively and quickly. Coupled with the epidemic of consumerism, the "fast fashion" movement in

recent years has become synonymous with disposable fashion and textile waste causing over-production, over-consumption and excessive refuse and as a result irreversible damages to our environment.

The growing social consciousness of consumers nowadays has led brands and manufacturers to put more effort in developing sustainable products that minimise environmental impacts, improve employees' working conditions and increase transparency across their supply chain. It is therefore high time for us to rethink how we can transform the fashion industry from the linear conventional model or what we call the take-make-dispose model of production into a circular economy where products are made to last and the wastage generated can be recycled and reused.

Nevertheless, this is not an easy task. A survey published by the Fashion Summit last month reveals that close to 80 per cent of respondents in Hong Kong said that they were concerned about the environment, but only eight per cent of them would be willing to pay a higher price for sustainable fashion products. Similar trends are observed in other cities. To encourage the community to walk the talk, it will require concerted efforts of all parties including the fabric makers, manufacturers, brands and individual consumers globally and locally.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is committed to promoting sustainable fashion development and has all along supported eco-labels certification schemes and development of new technologies to facilitate green making and marketing of fashion products. My colleague Edward, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, will fill you with more details in his keynote speech later this morning.

However, to promote sustainable fashion, Government's efforts alone are never enough. We need the fashion industry players like you all to join us in achieving this goal. In the next two days, renowned speakers and participants from different parts of the world will share with us their insight and foresight on how we may transform today's fashion industry into a circular economy tomorrow.

I am pleased to note that the Fashion Summit has introduced the Fashion Future Challenge Award to provide a platform for our young talents to offer creative ideas on tackling future challenges faced by the fashion industry. It further adds impetus to the campaign to raise understanding and awareness on the role of the Hong Kong fashion industry in leading the charge for revolutionary change, and the critical role Hong Kong can play in driving sustainability. I would like to express my warmest congratulations to the winners of the Award and wish you every success in the pursuit of a positive and sustainable fashion industry in Hong Kong and beyond.

On this encouraging note, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to Felix and the Fashion Summit Steering Committee for staging this wonderful and meaningful significant event. I wish the Fashion Summit every success and all of you a fruitful experience, and to our guests from afar, a pleasant stay in Hong Kong.

Thank you.

