

Opening remarks by S for IT at CUHK Innovation Day 2021 (English only) (with photos)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, at the CUHK Innovation Day 2021 today (September 23):

Rocky (Vice-Chancellor and President of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Professor Rocky Tuan), Alan (Provost of CUHK, Professor Alan Chan), Mai-har (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President of CUHK, Professor Sham Mai-har), Benny (Director of the Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services of CUHK, Professor Benny Zee), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am so delighted to join you all at today's CUHK Innovation Day, which showcases CUHK's research and innovation achievements in many different areas and some of the start-up projects.

CUHK has been widely recognised as one of the most innovative universities in Hong Kong and the region, and has been a pioneer of knowledge and technological advancements across many disciplines and different industries. I am so happy to note that CUHK is ranked among the world's top 50 in the recently announced Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022.

Over the years, CUHK has put in tremendous effort to translate research results into innovative projects that bring about positive socio-economic impact. In this March, CUHK attained outstanding achievements at the International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva 2021 by winning nine medals, including the highest honour, the Gold Medal with Congratulations of the Jury, which went to the project themed "A Novel Virus-Free Anticancer Gene Therapy", a virus-free gene therapy that brings a safer remedy for cancer, bringing new hope for many cancer patients. Invention like this will demonstrate the strengths and huge potential of Hong Kong research and innovation.

CUHK, among other universities in Hong Kong, has been playing a pivotal role in our plan to develop Hong Kong into an international I&T (innovation and technology) hub. This term of Government is committed to promoting the development of I&T with a view to injecting a new impetus into the economy, improving people's quality of life, and creating quality jobs for our young people. Over the past four years, we have invested over \$110 billion to spearhead the local development of I&T among eight major areas.

Research and development (R&D) is always the foundation of I&T, and we have invested heavily in encouraging and supporting the local R&D works.

Apart from supporting R&D activities through various schemes, the Government has also been fostering technology transfer and realisation of R&D results. One of the good examples is to foster the development of local technology start-ups from our universities by launching the Technology Start-up Support Scheme for Universities under the Innovation and Technology Fund to support teams from our local universities, including CUHK, in starting technology businesses and commercialising their R&D results. Annual funding provided to each university has been increased up to \$8 million, and each start-up may receive up to \$1.5 million per year for a maximum of three years. Since its inception, the Support Scheme has provided funding support to 334 start-ups with a total amount of \$250 million.

Quality infrastructure and facilities for R&D are also indispensable for promoting I&T. We have set up two InnoHK research clusters focusing on two major areas, namely healthcare technologies and artificial intelligence as well as robotics technologies. We aim to pool in top-notch researchers all over the world via this initiative to consolidate Hong Kong's leading position as the hub for global research collaboration. The first batch of some 20 R&D laboratories including world-renowned universities and research institutes, as well as our local universities, have begun operation in the Science Park. I am so grateful for the support and participation of CUHK in this InnoHK initiative. Last month, the Chief Executive has visited the Microbiota I-Center, MagIC, and I am particularly impressed by the research team's vision to have a new pharmaceutical and healthcare frontier in Hong Kong and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Outstanding institutes and excellent researchers in Hong Kong will definitely have bigger roles to play on the road of building Hong Kong into an international I&T hub, leveraging the vast opportunities brought about by the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the GBA development. I sincerely hope that CUHK and the academia can seize every opportunity ahead and embrace the country's support, thereby bringing more impetus to the research and innovation sector in Hong Kong.

Before I close, may I wish today's event every success and all of you an enjoyable and fruitful day. Thank you very much.

