

Opening remarks by S for IT at Grand Challenges for Engineering Symposium (English only) (with photo)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, at the Grand Challenges for Engineering Symposium today (August 16):

Professor Zhang (President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), Professor Xiang Zhang), Tim (President of the Hong Kong Academy of Engineering Sciences and President of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Professor Timothy Tong), Professor Grubbs (2005 Chemistry Nobel Laureate and Victor and Elizabeth Atkins Professor of Chemistry at California Institute of Technology, Professor Robert Grubbs), distinguished guests and speakers, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. First of all, on behalf of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our overseas guests.

I am honoured to attend the Grand Challenges for Engineering Symposium today and address such a distinguished group of engineers and scholars.

I would like to thank the University of Hong Kong and the US National Academy of Engineering for bringing this remarkable Symposium to Hong Kong. The Grand Challenges for Engineering Symposium is not only connecting academic leaders from around the world, but also inspiring and developing the next generation of talent to tackle the biggest challenges in engineering, while advancing the well-being of society and mankind. Today's Symposium resonates well with the HKSAR Government's innovation and technology agenda, that is, to pool together global and local talent to establish Hong Kong as a hub in using innovation and technology to address social challenges.

During the past two years, we have accelerated ahead with new programmes and invested an unprecedented HK\$78 billion to support our innovation and technology development. These include infrastructure improvements such as provision of free electronic identity or eID to all our residents in two years' time, and mega projects such as development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park located right at the boundary of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. We are also providing and facilitating more funding support to researchers and the industry, incubation for start-ups, training and re-tooling of talent and incentives for attracting overseas R&D institutions to set up research bases in Hong Kong. We have also broken new ground by providing the first ever super tax deduction to companies of up to 300 per cent for R&D expenditures, and we are rolling out new talent schemes to facilitate admission of sought-after technology talent from the Mainland and overseas.

A grand engineering challenge is not just about achieving academic excellence or overcoming technical challenges, but utilising knowledge and innovation to improve the well-being of the society as a whole. That hinges on the availability of inquisitive talent. Our local universities excel in research excellence as well as knowledge transfer. HKU has long been considered a wellspring of ideas and fertile ground for creative talent. I would like to highlight two projects originating from the young engineers of the Faculty of Engineering of HKU. The first project developed smart and environmental friendly Passive LED Power Driver Lighting Technology which was awarded the Gold Medal with Special Recognition at the 46th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva in April 2018, and it is undergoing trial on the streets of Hong Kong. Another project is the fabrication of strong and ductile multi-phase Super Steel which won the TechConnect Global Innovation Award at the World Innovation Conference & Expo in May 2018. These are very encouraging achievements indeed.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to the University of Hong Kong's continuing efforts in nurturing our next generation of engineers and innovators. I am most grateful to all the speakers and panelists of the Symposium for sharing your invaluable knowledge, experience and insights to inspire our young minds. Have a great and enjoyable conference today!

Thank you very much.

