

Opening remarks by S for IT at Information Security Summit 2021 (English only) (with photo)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, at the Information Security Summit 2021 today (March 9):

Willy (Chairman of the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC), Mr Willy Lin), Victor (Government Chief Information Officer, Mr Victor Lam), Mohamed (Executive Director of the HKPC, Mr Mohamed Butt), Mr Johnstone (Chairman of the Information Security Summit 2021 Organising Committee, Mr Dale Johnstone), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am very glad to join you here today at the Information Security Summit 2021. Thanks to technology advancement, both virtual and physical participation in this year's summit has widened our engagement with stakeholders both locally and from places outside Hong Kong. I would like to express my gratitude to the HKPC for organising this summit, which gives us a valuable opportunity to connect with information experts from around the world, as well as to share experiences and insights.

Innovation and technology (I&T) has been playing a prominent role in driving economic growth, and in improving people's quality of life. It is particularly evident in the midst of the COVID-19 epidemic that I&T helps us fight the epidemic more effectively. The HKSAR Government has rolled out a number of electronic systems to help support the fight against COVID-19 along the way, from supporting compulsory quarantine, contact tracing to testing and vaccination.

For business, a new normal has emerged, many organisations have swiftly adopted digital technologies to continue business operation and some of them even have expanded their businesses. New technologies, such as 5G, IoT, AI and machine learning, are increasingly deployed. Nevertheless, one must not lose sight of the cyber risks that come along. It is all the more important for all of us to stay vigilant and to continuously improve the defence and response capability of the whole society.

The Government attaches great importance to cyber security and is tackling the challenges with a multi-pronged strategy. Let me serve you some of the important aspects of our strategy.

First, support to the community. To enable the building of a secured and reliable cyber environment for the community, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), led by Victor, works closely with the Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team (HKCERT), run by the HKPC, to provide appropriate support. Such support activities include the dissemination of

updated information on cyber security incidents and security advisories to the business sector and the general public, and organising seminars and competitions to raise public awareness of cyber security.

In addition, the Government provides financial support to the business sector to strengthen their information security level. Our Technology Voucher Programme subsidises local non-listed companies, including small and medium enterprises, to strengthen their businesses operation and increase their competitiveness. Companies can make good use of subsidies to acquire such solutions or services that help strengthen the defence against cyber attacks and improve operational recovery.

Collaboration among stakeholders is also essential and the Government is determined to cultivate a co-operative culture in the society to combat cyber security threats. On this, OGCI0 has been spearheading the cross-sector Partnership Programme for Cyber Security Information Sharing since 2018. With HKCERT as a key contributor, the Partnership Programme helps to enhance Hong Kong's overall defence capability and resilience against cyber attacks. Currently, about 370 public and private organisations have joined the Programme, covering a wide range of sectors including finance and insurance, public utilities, transport, healthcare, telecommunications, I&T, information security and tertiary education institutions. At present, some 120 banks have also joined the platform.

The second aspect is talent. Human capital is one of the key success factors in enhancing cyber security. We have been encouraging our local tertiary institutions to introduce more information security courses in different disciplines in order to nurture more cyber security talent. In the area of professional training, we work with professional bodies to promote accreditation of IT professionals in the field. With the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, we are happy to see the promising growth in the number of personnel engaging in information security and related duties in Hong Kong, from 4 200 in 2019 to an estimated 5 500 in 2020, representing an over 30 per cent increase.

Apart from nurturing local talent, we also strive to attract talent from around the globe. We have enhanced the Technology Talent Admission Scheme, and expanded its coverage to all companies in Hong Kong conducting R&D activities in designated technology areas, including cyber security. The expanded scope and streamlined procedures benefit more enterprises and expedite the admission of cyber security experts from different parts of the world.

Last but not least, international co-operation. Both OGCI0 and HKCERT actively participate in computer emergency incident response organisations, and closely connect with the cyber security organisations in the Mainland and the Asia-Pacific region. It enables us to acquire cyber security intelligence swiftly and prevent cyber attacks in a more timely manner.

I am sure you will all agree that cyber security is one of the most important areas in this Internet-driven era. The Government will continue to

work closely with all relevant stakeholders to build a secure and reliable cyber environment for Hong Kong. I look forward to the fruitful exchanges between the security experts here today and the summit participants on updated topics in cyber security management. May I wish you all a fruitful, enjoyable and inspiring summit. Thank you very much.

