

Opening remarks by SFST at United Nations Pre-Summit of the Future Dialogue (English only) (with photo)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, at the United Nations Pre-Summit of the Future Dialogue today (August 22):

Siddharth (United Nations Resident Coordinator in China, Mr Siddharth Chatterjee), His Excellency Mr Lim (Vice Minister of the Ministry of Commerce, Royal Government of Cambodia, Mr Lim Lork Piseth), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

On behalf of the Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region) Government, a very warm welcome to all of you from around the world to Hong Kong, a vibrant city and an international metropolitan. I am very honoured to join you all here at the United Nations Pre-Summit of the Future Dialogue held in Hong Kong today. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations in China in co-organising the Pre-Summit with our bureau (Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau), bringing a platform here for dynamic exchanges of expertise, ideas and global collaboration.

The theme of today's discussion is very important, which is about "the Future". Everybody is working very hard to create a better future for our next generation. We, the HKSAR Government, are also working on various fronts to shape our future in three key directions, namely (i) greener and more sustainable future; (ii) more inclusive of innovation; and (iii) more development opportunities for our youth.

Greener and more sustainable future

Talking about a greener and more sustainable future, we all note that there is immense demand for green finance. Statistics show that global climate finance flows reached around US\$1.3 trillion in 2021/22, and it is estimated that annual climate investments would reach US\$9 trillion by 2030 and US\$10 trillion by 2050. As the world's leading international fundraising hub, Hong Kong plays a crucial role in channelling capital to sustainable projects. We have been striving to attract enterprises of different scales and with development potentials, including green tech and green finance companies, from different places of the globe to list and raise funds in Hong Kong. Notably, our stock exchange (Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited) introduced a new listing mechanism for specialist technology companies last year to facilitate advanced technology enterprises from such industries as next-generation information technology, new energy and environmental protection, new food and agricultural technologies, etc, to list on the Main Board through a new eligibility test. In addition to expanding the local

capital market and broadening the diversity of investment choices for investors, the new listing regime is conducive to facilitating technology companies' access to international capital and expansion of their businesses, driving forward the development of innovative technology industries and the real economy.

Hong Kong is also Asia's primary asset and wealth management hub for international investors. As of end-2023, the asset and wealth management business of Hong Kong amounted to nearly HK\$31.2 trillion (around US\$4 trillion) with net fund inflow having soared 3.4 times year-on-year to HK\$389 billion (around US\$50 billion), reflecting the vote of confidence cast by international investors. A research published earlier this year also estimated that there are more than 2 700 single family offices in Hong Kong. We will continue to enhance Hong Kong's status as a premier asset and wealth management hub, and help the industry seize new business opportunities.

To promote sustainable financing, international organisations such as the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) and the International Organization of Securities Commission as well as government agencies have increasingly attached importance to the disclosure of accurate sustainability information. In this regard, Hong Kong is making proactive efforts to align with international sustainability reporting standards. Specifically, we published in March this year a vision statement to set out the vision and approach of the HKSAR Government and financial regulators in developing a comprehensive ecosystem for sustainability disclosure in Hong Kong. Our aim is to be among the first jurisdictions to align with the international standards, in particular the ISSB Standards, and to launch a roadmap of doing so within this year. We are confident that the roadmap will provide a transparent and well-defined pathway on sustainability reporting for businesses in Hong Kong.

More inclusive of innovation

Now turning to our second direction – more inclusive of innovation. Technology is another indispensable element of the future. As a global financial hub, with the advantages of our international network and preferential access to the market of Mainland China, Hong Kong is an ideal place for fintech business. The 14th Five-Year Plan of our country supports Hong Kong to enhance its international financial centre status, develop into an international information and technology hub, as well as deepen and widen the connections between the financial markets of the Hong Kong and the Mainland. To capitalise on the opportunities as well as the continued economic development of and integration between the two places, particularly in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), financial innovation plays a key facilitating role. Over years of development, Hong Kong has developed a dynamic fintech ecosystem, with around 1 000 fintech companies and start-ups, providing an array of services in mobile payment, cross-boundary wealth management, artificial intelligent financial consultancy, wealth and investment management, regulatory technology, etc, here.

More development opportunities for our youth

And here comes the third dimension – talents. Talents are of paramount significance to our future. To nurture more fintech talents, our bureau launched the "GBA Fintech Two-way Internship Scheme for Post-secondary Students" in October last year to facilitate students to acquire practical work experience in fintech companies in Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of the GBA. The Scheme provides more than 150 internship positions in Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of the GBA, covering over 30 fintech companies of different segments. So far, around 60 students have joined the internship scheme.

Closing

Today's event covers a very rich agenda, spanning from climate change, public health, artificial intelligence, to green finance, family office, philanthropy and more. As a forward looking league, let's collectively leverage our full capability to make a real difference and forge sustainable practices. I wish you a fruitful and inspiring Pre-Summit. Thank you.

