

Opening remarks by SLW at opening ceremony of Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit 2020 (English only) (with photos)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, at the opening ceremony of the Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit 2020 jointly hosted by the Government and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) this morning (November 19):

Bernard (Chairperson of HKCSS, Mr Bernard Chan), Dr Sunny Chai (Chairman of Board of Directors of Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation), Mr Cheung Leong (Executive Director, Charities and Community, Hong Kong Jockey Club), Mr Wang Cuijun (Director of China Merchants Group Limited), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to join you all again at the Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit. First and foremost, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all participants, especially guests who are now watching online.

Following the success of the Expo's inaugural in 2017, it has become the most important annual event in gerontechnology in Hong Kong where stakeholders from all sectors gather and exchange the latest developments and ideas. The Summit this year was held online. It featured a keynote session and plenary sessions on the application and future of gerontechnology, where local and international experts have shared their views on ageing and technology with audiences from different parts of the world through webinars. On the other hand, the Expo this year continues its physical form with over 150 exhibitors to showcase about 500 inventions and products from 30 countries. Despite the travel restrictions, I am both pleased and very grateful that many overseas manufacturers have joined us here in Hong Kong by showcasing their products through local distributors.

The wide range of state-of-the-art technologies, creative yet pragmatic real-life applications, and the almost unlimited potentials and possibilities that they bring never cease to amaze me. I understand that some of the products that we are seeing today are brought to Hong Kong for the first time, such as special featured rollators that can be easily converted from a walking aid to a wheelchair and IoT (Internet of Things) care robots. There are also some locally developed products like a tailor-made smart management system and telemedicine system. I trust you are all looking forward to visiting the exhibitors to experience first-hand these innovations. For those who are unable to visit us physically, you will still be able to experience the wonderful gadgets in our virtual tour and see them in action.

As the old Chinese saying goes, "An elderly person is a treasure at

home" ("å®¶ä, è€¼å, ää, åä, åä"). Hong Kong has the longest life expectancy in the world. We are fortunate to be able to benefit from advances in medical and health technologies, as well as an ever improving social environment; but the rapidly ageing population presents a great challenge to the community as a whole, in terms of the make-up of society, health and welfare infrastructure, as well as the economy. Meanwhile, the silver hair will bring new opportunities especially in the elderly service sector and gerontechnology.

To help the elderly service sector adopt better technologies and other advanced solutions, we launched a \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care (I&T Fund) in December 2018, which aims at subsidising elderly and rehabilitation service units to procure or rent technology products in order to improve the quality of life of service users, and reduce pressure and burden on care staff. I am glad to know that the I&T Fund has already approved over \$200 million to subsidise about 970 elderly and rehabilitation service units for procuring or renting over 4 200 technology products.

To drive the adoption of gerontechnology, promotion and partnership are of paramount importance. Our Expo today is an important platform connecting various stakeholders. This major event offers great opportunities linking up academics, researchers, service providers, both NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and the private sector, and suppliers. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my sincere wish that you all find the Expo beneficial to your organisation, your clients or the stakeholders of your field. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is committed to the welfare of our elderly people. You can rest assured that our support for elderly services and gerontechnology will continue to strengthen.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Hong Kong Council of Social Service for organising the Expo again this year. My gratitude also goes to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the China Merchants Foundation and the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation for their generous sponsorships and support which make this Expo possible.

Lastly, may I wish the Expo a great success and all participants a most fruitful experience. I look forward to hearing more inspiring stories on how gerontechnology makes the life of Hong Kong's "treasures" even better. Thank you.

