

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

Following is 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 this morning (November 21):

Bernard (Chairperson of Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Mr Bernard Chan), Dr Sunny Chai (Chairperson of Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation), Dr Rosanna Wong (Steward of Hong Kong Jockey Club), Ms Ivy Deng (Senior Project Officer of China Merchants Charitable Foundation), 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 and exhibitors from different parts of the world.

Following the success of the Expo's inaugural in 2017 and again in 2018, it has become the most important annual event in gerontechnology in Hong Kong where stakeholders from all sectors gather and exchange latest developments and ideas. The exhibition this year grows even bigger than the previous years with some 10 000 square metres of floor space and 142 local and international exhibitors showcasing the latest products and services.

The wide range of state-of-the-art technologies, creative yet pragmatic real-life applications, and the almost unlimited potential and possibilities that they bring never cease to amaze me. I understand that some of the products showcased here are brought to Hong Kong for the first time. I trust our guests all look forward to visiting the exhibitions to experience first-hand the wonderful inventions.

Judging from the fact that our Government Budget in the current year and the one last year have a double-digit growth rate, this Government is committed to increasing our supply of community and residential care services to meet the growing demand and existing service shortage. I expect that this double-digit growth will continue year after year in the remaining term of this Government.

To help the elderly service sector adopt better and advanced technologies, we launched a \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care (I&T Fund) last year, subsidising elderly and rehabilitation service units to procure or rent technology products 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 disbursed over \$37 million to more than 210 elderly and rehabilitation service units for over 870 technology products. I do encourage

more eligible organisations to apply for the I&T Fund, especially after visiting this Expo!

To drive the adoption of gerontechnology, promotion and partnership are of paramount importance. The Government has commissioned the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, our long-term partner as well as the capable organiser of this Expo, to promote the use and application of innovative technologies. In addition, a Gerontechnology Platform will be set up under the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund, which aims at linking up the supply side of technological products with the demand side by way of engagement, cross-sectoral partnership and collaboration. We hope the Platform will further enhance the development and application of gerontechnology in Hong Kong.

Let us not forget that our Expo today is also an important platform connecting various stakeholders. This mega event offers great opportunities linking up academics, researchers, service providers, both 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.

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, as well as for the Council's continued and dedicated commitment to serve those in need in Hong Kong. My gratitude also goes to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the China Merchants Charitable 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 very fruitful experience. I look forward to hearing more inspiring stories on how gerontechnology makes the life of Hong Kong's seniors even better. Thank you.