

Opening remarks by STL at Opening Ceremony of Hong Kong Maritime Week 2023 cum 3rd World Maritime Merchants Forum (English only)

Following are the opening remarks by the Chairman of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board and Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, at the Opening Ceremony of Hong Kong Maritime Week 2023 cum 3rd World Maritime Merchants Forum today (November 20):

Chief Executive (Chief Executive, Mr John Lee), Honourable Vice-Chairman C Y Leung (Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference), Director Zheng Yanxiong (Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Vice Minister Fu Xuyin (Vice Minister of Transport), Chairman Mr Miao Jianmin (Chairman of the China Merchants Group), distinguished guests, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I am delighted to join the seventh edition of the Hong Kong Maritime Week and the third World Maritime Merchants Forum today. Also, we are delighted to be working side by side with the China Merchants Group and other collaborators to commence not one, but two of the most signature and widely anticipated events in the maritime community and to bring together outstanding thinkers and doers worldwide.

This year, we are also joining hands with 12 support organisations, including three new partners, who collectively represent some of the most prominent organisations at the forefront of the maritime industry. These developments reflect our overall drive to scale up the Hong Kong Maritime Week and enhance Hong Kong as the premier destination for international dialogue, exchange, and co-operation.

While the world of maritime has drifted dramatically over the past several years during the three-year-long pandemic, from changing global supply chains to shifting geopolitical landscapes, our industry has remained strong and steadfast in the headwinds. Tides of new changes also await ahead, from the push to adopt automation and digitalisation for greater efficiency to the search for new generation fuel for the green transition we need to achieve. Just as the old saying goes, "We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust our sails."

Here in Hong Kong, we are already taking on these new challenges. As announced in The Chief Executive's Policy Address last month, by the end of this year, working together with the industry, we will launch a new action plan to set out a comprehensive strategy for our maritime and port development. Take our smart initiatives as an example. Hong Kong has long been known as a "catch-up port" that helps vessels make up for delays in

other ports. To further enhance port efficiency and reduce the time and cost of cargo handling, we are actively promoting the development of smart ports by setting up a digitalised port community system to facilitate the flow of data.

By the same token, we will continue to give full play to Hong Kong's distinctive advantage of being simultaneously connected to both the Mainland and the world. As the "super-connector" and "super value-adder" in the Greater Bay Area, we are working closely with our peers to promote the overall competitiveness of the region. Our collaboration with the China Merchants Group to organise the long-anticipated World Maritime Merchants Forum is a clear illustration of our strength, bringing the very platform for high-level meetings of brilliant minds from global shipping, political, and business spheres.

Without a doubt, the cornerstone of Hong Kong's success as an international maritime centre is our people. Indeed, we have spared no effort in nurturing the new generation of maritime talent. For example, in September this year, we launched the Maritime Services Traineeship Scheme – Legal to support young people aspiring to a career in maritime law. The Maritime Week also presents exceptional opportunities. Today and tomorrow, keep abreast with the industry's cutting-edge developments by hearing directly from pre-eminent experts at the World Maritime Merchants Forum and the Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Conference. At the Captain's Table on Thursday, be inspired by how innovative ideas are translated into new business ventures. And for young friends considering a future in the industry, the Maritime Services Training Institute will be hosting career development sessions alongside an open day. I strongly encourage everyone to get involved in the Hong Kong Maritime Week and tap into the new opportunities on offer in our maritime sector.

On behalf of the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your support of the Hong Kong Maritime Week 2023. I eagerly look forward to the fruitful and thought-provoking conversations that will unfold throughout the week. Thank you.