

S for IT visits technology firms in Seattle (with photos)

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, visited technology firms Microsoft and Amazon in Seattle today (September 16, US West Coast time) and updated the US technology sector on the opportunities arising from the latest developments of innovation and technology in Hong Kong.

Mr Yang started the day by visiting the Microsoft campus, where he saw technology demonstrations and innovative new devices and met with Microsoft's senior management on its latest technologies. Mr Yang said he was glad to see the R&D collaboration that Microsoft has been building in Hong Kong with Cyberport, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and local tertiary institutes and hoped Microsoft will continue to work with various sectors of Hong Kong in accelerating digital transformation.

At a business luncheon co-organised by Greater Seattle Partners and the Washington State China Relations Council, Mr Yang gave an update on Hong Kong's vibrant innovation and technology developments, including the fast growing start-up ecosystem. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is very determined in developing innovation and technology, with a commitment of US\$12.8 billion in the past two years. A super tax deduction of up to 300 per cent has been introduced to incentivise private businesses to invest more in R&D. Two key research clusters are being formed, Health@InnoHK and AIR@InnoHK, focusing on healthcare and robotics technologies. With Hong Kong's active participation for developing an international innovation and technology hub in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Mr Yang encouraged more US companies to grasp new business opportunities in Hong Kong.

In the afternoon, Mr Yang called on the Senior Deputy Mayor of Seattle, Mr Michael Fong, and exchanged views on innovative economy and smart city efforts. Noting that Seattle is a thriving technology hub and home to a burgeoning start-up scene, Mr Yang said he looked forward to forging closer collaboration between the two places on the technology front.

This was followed by a meeting with Amazon Web Services' senior executives and a visit to Amazon Spheres and Amazon Go. Mr Yang said he was delighted to see Amazon Web Services launching a cloud region in Hong Kong earlier this year, enhancing Hong Kong's position as an international data hub and promoting wider use of cloud among local small and medium enterprises.

Mr Yang attended a dinner hosted by Microsoft's Executive Vice President, Dr Harry Shum, before concluding his visit to Seattle.

Tomorrow morning (September 17, US West Coast time), Mr Yang will head to San Francisco for the second leg of his technology visit to the US and

Canada.

