

Speech by CE at 11th Spirit of Hong Kong Awards 2023 (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the 11th Spirit of Hong Kong Awards 2023 today (December 1):

Ms Catherine So (Chief Executive Officer of the South China Morning Post), Mr Daryl Ng (Deputy Chairman of Sino Group), Mr Paulo Pong (Chairperson of the Spirit of Hong Kong Awards Judging Panel), Spirit of Hong Kong Awards judges and nominators, awardees and finalists, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I'm delighted to be here, in celebration of this year's Spirit of Hong Kong Awards.

It has been a challenging few years for Hong Kong, especially since 2019. But throughout, the people of Hong Kong have persevered. Throughout, the spirit of Hong Kong has prevailed.

A quick glance at this year's 21 finalists in seven categories – including the new Spirit of Sustainability Award – makes that brilliantly and abundantly clear.

They come from every sector and socioeconomic stratum, in our pluralistic and vibrant society. They are young and old, healthy and physically challenged. They have different cultural backgrounds, different upbringing, and very different stories to tell.

But they all have something in common. They are creative and supremely steadfast in their work, their beliefs and the difference they can make. And, in areas ranging from technology, medicine and education, to culture, sports, community service and more. They make a profound difference. For the people of Hong Kong. For everyone of us.

They are ordinary people. They are also heroes. Each in their own shining and singular way, they represent the spirit of Hong Kong.

We are blessed to have them, grateful to be inspired by them.

And the good news: they are but a fraction of that unbeatable Hong Kong spirit – of a community that has come together once again.

As I stated in my recent Policy Address, "the spirit to strive, and to triumph, is in our blood". Let me add that the spirit to serve, to help those in need, is no less part of who we are, both as a community and as part of our country.

And, ladies and gentlemen, I want you to remember that. I want you to always remember, and take pride in, the treasured spirit of Hong Kong. When you meet your friends and family, your business partners, and everyone from around the world, tell them all about the remarkable achievements of our people, and of our city.

I'm grateful to the organisers of the Spirit of Hong Kong Awards, the South China Morning Post and the Sino Group, and to this year's prestigious judging panel, for your sterling efforts. You, too, are an essential part of the spirit of Hong Kong.

My congratulations, once again, to the winners, soon to be announced, and to the finalists, of the 2023 Spirit of Hong Kong Awards. My thanks, too, to the Hong Kong public, which cast their votes for this year's Lion Rock People's Choice Award.

Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. There is one more important vote I would invite you to cast. The upcoming District Council election which will take place on December 10th, that is next Sunday. I encourage all of you to cast your vote on that day. It takes the effort of each and every one of us to build a better community for all, which is representative here. You are the heroes and we want to make Hong Kong the place for heroes to show their strengths, and for the people to find Hong Kong as the place they want to come. Thanks to all the work that you have done.

I am sure you will enjoy this very special occasion. Have a great and memorable evening. You all deserve it. Thank you very much.

