

Speech by CE at Business of Design Week opening ceremony (English only) (with video)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Business of Design Week (BODW) opening ceremony this morning (December 3):

Victor (Chairman of the BODW Steering Committee of the Hong Kong Design Centre, Mr Victor Lo), Eric (Chairman of the Hong Kong Design Centre, Professor Eric Yim), Margaret (Executive Director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Ms Margaret Fong), ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is a pleasure to welcome you to this year's Business of Design Week.

For industry professionals in Hong Kong, Mainland China, throughout Asia and around the world, the annual Business of Design Week (or BODW as it is now readily recognised) is all about design intelligence, inspiration and innovation. This year, that innovation extends to its delivery.

COVID-19 has inflicted severe limitations on every aspect of our lives and our work, even our business calendar and its highlight events, BODW included. But rather than surrendering to the pandemic, the organisers – the Hong Kong Design Centre and the Trade Development Council – have made it a virtual conference. Taking advantage of digital technology, they are live streaming the BODW Summit, today through Saturday, on social media. Live TV broadcasting of select sessions is also on offer. That ensures that the show goes on, while bringing all the business and innovation of BODW to the general public as well.

This year's Summit presents more than 100 high-profile speakers, including over 20 from the United Kingdom, Design Week's 2020 strategic partner. Its theme, "VISION 20/21", is about finding clarity in uncertainty, calling upon collaborative creativity to enable fresh possibilities.

The post-pandemic world will make significant demands on architects and designers, as well as governments. Health and safety, and considerations such as ventilation and touchless features in public areas, are already taking on heightened importance in light of COVID-19. The Summit responds to that pandemic-borne urgency. Indeed, the session following our opening ceremony gets right to the point with its focus, "What is next for design". In all, enjoy nearly 50 sessions over the Summit's three days. They tackle such design-related issues as connected health, immersive tech, creative leadership, safe travels and community and wellbeing.

I hope by now, our overseas design partners will agree that the Hong

Kong SAR Government attaches importance to innovative design – for business and for the wellbeing of the people of Hong Kong. Over the past two years, the CreateSmart Initiative has received some 200 applications, granting funding of more than US\$100 million to our creative industries. In my annual Policy Address delivered last week, despite fiscal stringency, an additional US\$130 million has been earmarked for the CreateSmart Initiative to support further promotion of the creative industries in Hong Kong. My Policy Address also focused on measures to further Hong Kong as a liveable city. Whether in environmental projects, beautifying the harbourfront, revitalising old districts, or continuing to take forward the West Kowloon Cultural District, there's a lot of opportunities for the design industry.

And such opportunities go beyond Hong Kong. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, an economic region of 72 million population and US\$1.7 trillion GDP, has huge potential to offer in a great variety of sectors – design, architecture and the creative industries very much included. The promise of the Greater Bay Area is far-reaching, and it's there for Hong Kong, and for the companies that work with Hong Kong. And we will join hands with our neighbouring city of Shenzhen to grow not only the innovation and technology industry but also design.

Ladies and gentlemen, BODW is the centrepiece in Innovation & IP Week, with a smart variety of international events and activities going on through next week. They include Fashion Asia Hong Kong's "Fashion Challenges Digital Forum", which is continuing today, and DesignInspire and the Business of IP Asia Forum, both of which open today. And there's plenty of design gatherings and festivals taking place right across Hong Kong, as well. That's thanks to the Hong Kong Design Centre and its more than 100 creative partners. It all adds up to innovative and inspiring design, which brings sheer and sustaining gratification to every aspect of our lives.

I wish you all the best of business and design at this year's BODW. And a happy and healthy New Year. Thank you.