

Speech by CE at Business of Intellectual Property Asia Forum (English only) (with video)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Business of Intellectual Property Asia Forum (BIP Asia Forum) held online this morning (December 3):

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the 2020 Business of Intellectual Property Asia Forum – the 10th anniversary edition.

For the first time, the Forum is being held virtually. But wherever in the world you're watching from, whatever the time of day, this year's Forum, as always, offers a wealth of intellectual property sessions, trends and intelligence led by some of the world's most prominent IP professionals.

This year's theme is "Open Innovation: Driving Collaboration in Times of Change." Change – in the grim face of the COVID-19 pandemic – has driven every aspect of our lives this year, and in a manner unprecedented in peacetime. It has swept up families and communities, institutions, economies and nations. Every corner of our world has had to confront and contend with its distressing consequences.

As we adjust to the new normal under the grip of the pandemic, we must also look for the opportunity that change, whether good, bad or indifferent, always creates. That's when innovation comes into play. The "open innovation" of the Forum's theme is essentially about looking to external and internal sources for ideas, as well as opportunities to co-operate and collaborate. Open innovation can yield faster, better and more marketable solutions.

Hong Kong has long prided itself on its ability to adapt. That surpassing skill, honed over the years, has allowed us to capitalise on open innovation to power new areas of growth and development. A case in point is IPHatch Hong Kong, an open-innovation competition organised by the Trade Development Council and the IP investment bank Piece Future. The competition was launched at the BIP Asia Forum in 2018. The annual challenge invites start-ups and entrepreneurs to bring business concepts to fruition through the creative use of existing IP and technology.

To cite an example, Mood Aware Environment – or M.A.E. – a local start-up, was among the winners of IPHatch Hong Kong 2019. M.A.E. worked with a patented tracking technology, turning it into a smart wearable device that collects biodata to analyse emotions. The innovative new offering has expanded the scope of emotion-detection devices to cover a large group of people at mass events. And that has opened up new business opportunities.

M.A.E.'s product innovation is now under development for commercial launch in Hong Kong and Japan.

This year's IPHatch Hong Kong is on this afternoon. You'll want to take part, to find out more about today's collaborations and tomorrow's new innovations.

Hong Kong knows that a robust IP regime is pivotal to innovation and creativity. And my Government is committed to maintaining an IP regime in line with international standards, one that continually responds to changing needs. Following last year's Forum, we launched the original grant patent system in Hong Kong. Applicants can now apply directly for a standard patent in Hong Kong without having to first register their patents outside. In June this year, we enacted the Trade Marks (Amendment) Ordinance 2020. It provides the legal basis for applying the Madrid Protocol to Hong Kong. Also in June, the Copyright (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 came into effect. It enhances statutory copyright exceptions for people with a print disability, allowing them to meet the relevant Marrakesh Treaty. More than ensuring that Hong Kong's IP regime remains on par with international arrangements and practices, it boosts our competitiveness, strengthening Hong Kong's position as an innovation and IP trading hub.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, now emerging, will give Hong Kong far-reaching opportunities in myriad sectors and areas. And that certainly includes the IP front. For the moment, however, we need to get past the pandemic and this terribly troubling year. Innovation and co-operation will, I'm confident, help get us there. And we will arrive stronger, more resilient and grateful for our good fortune.

I wish the Business of Intellectual Property Asia Forum every success. I also wish you all a rewarding day, and a happy and healthy New Year. Thank you.