

Speech by CE at Global Talent Summit Â· Hong Kong (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Global Talent Summit · Hong Kong today (May 7):

Honourable Minister Wang Xiaoping of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, Director-General Chen Liwen of the Guangdong Provincial Government, Director-General Du Minqi of the Guangdong Provincial Government, Secretary-General Chao Chong-hang of the Talent Development Committee of the Macao SAR Government, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Hong Kong! And welcome to the inaugural Global Talent Summit organised by the Hong Kong SAR Government.

And what an inaugural Summit this is, with three high-powered, talent-driven events over these next two days: today's International Talent Forum, tomorrow's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area High-quality Talent Development Conference and, running both days, a CareerConnect Expo featuring nearly 100 exhibitors.

Then there's you, the most important element of all. Each and every one of you. Some 1 000 participants from around the world are here for the Summit. More than 2 500 others have registered for online participation. And Hong Kong is at the very heart of it all.

The Central Government has always been the strongest supporter of Hong Kong. As of yesterday, I'm pleased to note, the Mainland has expanded the talent exit endorsement. That means Mainland professionals in scientific research, education, healthcare, legal practice and other areas from Beijing, Shanghai, and nine Greater Bay Area cities can travel to and from Hong Kong multiple times within the validity period of their exit endorsement.

The new policy will make it more convenient for Mainland professionals to travel to Hong Kong. It will also promote professional exchanges and reinforce Hong Kong's role as the country's international talent hub and gateway for Greater Bay Area professionals.

My thanks to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security for its continuing support. My thanks to Minister Wang Xiaoping for leading a delegation to the Global Talent Summit.

Why is talent significant to economic growth?

Talent is the prime resource and driving force that boosts economic development and competitiveness. Strategic professionals generate the

innovative ideas that lead to new and improved products, services and technologies.

Talent is often driven by a hunger for personal growth, to excel in their fields and push the boundaries of their abilities.

These elements are key factors in success, not just for professionals and their industries, but more important, the success of the overall economy.

With much of the world working to revive economic growth in the post-pandemic global economy, and amid rising geo-political tensions, the search for talent has become a global phenomenon and a continuous challenge.

Why Hong Kong?

Why Hong Kong? Why relocate here? Because Hong Kong is where talent gets to thrive and grow in a world-class economy, in Asia's world city.

Thanks to our "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong is bestowed with prime business prospects and far-reaching promise. Hong Kong is the only place in the world where the global advantage and China advantage come together in a single city.

We have the foundation well in place to succeed. Hong Kong's institutional strengths include a world-class business environment, a simple and low tax system, a highly open and internationalised market, and the free flow of information, capital, goods and people.

These strengths are buttressed by the rule of law and the longstanding common law system, which is similar to that practiced in many major international financial centres around the world.

Alongside our international financial and trade prowess, we are emerging as an innovation and technology hub and cultural metropolis.

Hong Kong was ranked first in Asia, second globally, among the world's top 100 emerging start-up ecosystems, according to the latest Global Startup Ecosystem Report.

Hong Kong, let me add, is much more than a city of businesses and skyscrapers. We have long been one of Asia's most liveable cities.

For newcomers, communication is never a problem. We have always been a bilingual community, a city where English and Chinese are official languages. It will only become even more multilingual as Hong Kong continues to thrive as an East-meets-West centre for cultural exchange.

Hong Kong is a splendid and diverse mix of Eastern and Western cultures, home to world-class arts and sports events.

Hong Kong is also blessed with natural beauty. Some 40 per cent of our

territory is given over to country parks, with endless hiking trails, stunning beaches and even a UNESCO Global Geopark.

And our location, at the heart of Asia, means you can get anywhere in good time. It helps, too, that we are an international aviation hub.

Our healthcare services are world-class, in quality, efficiency and reliability.

Hong Kong is also among the world's safest cities.

In Hong Kong you don't just get world-class work opportunities – you get a satisfying life, too! Yes, choosing to relocate to Hong Kong, on your own or with your loved ones, is a big decision. But I'm here to tell you that this is the place where you can work hard, play hard and enjoy hard.

Nurturing and trawling for talent

The Hong Kong SAR Government invests heavily in attracting, developing and retaining talent.

Hong Kong is the only Asian city with as many as five universities in the world's top 100. And, let me add, Hong Kong's universities are home to some of the world's top 10 schools, covering such disciplines as dentistry, nursing, education, data science and AI (artificial intelligence), according to the latest QS World University Rankings.

No less important, our doors, and our arms, are wide open to talent from all over the world.

Since launching a series of talent admission programmes at the end of 2022, we have welcomed more than 120 000 talents from around the world, talents who have settled into Hong Kong. Many more will follow; of that I am confident.

Cross-sector Collaboration

While the Government is taking the lead to attract companies and talented individuals to Hong Kong, the private sector has an important role to play in strengthening our talent base.

In this regard, I wish to invite you all to pay tribute to the late Professor Tang Xiaoou.

Professor Tang was a distinguished leader in our business community, and was a member of my Council of Advisors. He had tendered valuable advice to me in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship, and his untimely passing was indeed a loss for Hong Kong.

A computer scientist and a pioneer in the field of AI, he was among the first few in promoting the commercialisation of R&D (research and

development) outcomes in Hong Kong. Some of his outstanding achievements include the founding of the Chinese University of Hong Kong's MMLab and, of course, the founding of Hong Kong's first home-grown unicorn to be listed on our very own stock exchange.

No less vital was his vision and dedication in working with youth and grooming young talent. He mentored numerous outstanding AI talent here in Hong Kong and on the Mainland. Professor Tang's vision, determination and leadership will continue to inspire us all.

For the business leaders and educators among us today, we need you. If we are to nurture, attract and inspire talent, if we are to take full advantage of the flourishing future there for Hong Kong and for everyone, we need your full support.

Supporting talent

Hong Kong Talent Engage, an office set up under our Labour and Welfare Bureau, is dedicated to creating targeted recruitment and publicity for strategic international and Mainland talent.

Talent Engage also provides a wide range of support services for incoming professionals, from job hunting, apartment and school searches, to banking services and networking. That includes, of course, the hosting of this inspiring Summit just a few months after its own good launch.

I'm pleased to note that Talent Engage is working closely with like-minded partners in supporting talent. These partners include the Hong Kong Top Talent Services Association, the Hong Kong Quality and Talent Migrants Association, the Bay Area Economic and Trade Association and, the latest addition to the list, the Hong Kong New Quality Entrepreneur Union established just yesterday.

My thanks to the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province, as well as the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of Guangdong Province, and the Talent Development Committee of the Macao SAR Government. They are with us today, and also the organisers of tomorrow's Greater Bay Area Conference, the second edition following last year's inaugural event in Guangzhou.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all the best of business at the Global Talent Summit. And do take full advantage of your stay with us in Hong Kong. Embrace our wide range of museums, galleries, hiking trails and beaches. Then, indulge in our internationally celebrated wine-and-dine scene. This is how you can play hard after working hard at the conferences.

And spend hard in this gourmet city and shoppers' paradise.

Enjoy the Summit and all that's on offer in Hong Kong! Thank you.

