

Speech by CE at Hong Kong Laureate Forum 2023 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Hong Kong Laureate Forum 2023 today (November 13):

Professor Timothy Tong (Chairman of the Council of the Hong Kong Laureate Forum), esteemed Shaw laureates, young scientists, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon to you all. It is my great pleasure to be here with you today for the opening ceremony of the inaugural Hong Kong Laureate Forum.

I am especially delighted to welcome over 20 Shaw laureates and some 200 young scientists from all over the world here at Hong Kong Science Park. This Park is an I&T landmark of our city.

Last evening at the Shaw Prize ceremony, I said that Hong Kong takes pride in being home to this prestigious international award. Indeed, the distinguished achievements of the Shaw laureates have helped to bring about this eminent science forum. Your presence enriches our scientific community. It is also testimony to the importance of international collaboration. For knowledge advancement, for solving worldwide problems, and for the wellbeing of humankind.

Under the auspices of the "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong is bestowed with the unparalleled advantage of having the strong support of national strategies and global connectivity.

We are a key conduit between Mainland China and the rest of the world. With the support of the National 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong is determined to develop into an international I&T centre.

The development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) will bring our I&T scenes immense opportunities. The GBA brings together Hong Kong, Macao and nine cities in southern China.

With a combined GDP equivalent to that of the world's tenth largest economy, the cluster city development converges our complementary strengths in research and development, advanced manufacturing, and business and trade.

In my Policy Address last month, I announced a raft of new initiatives targeting our I&T sector. The key areas range from pressing ahead with new industrialisation and AI development, to promoting cross-boundary data flow and digitising government services. We will provide new land supply for I&T use. We will also synergise with our Mainland counterpart in developing the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone.

The message is clear: we are sparing no efforts and resources in

boosting I&T. And we are confident the targeted measures will further enhance our I&T ecosystem and create strong impetus for the growth of this sector.

A sustainable pool of talents is essential to the success of I&T development. Hong Kong is the only Asian city with as many as five universities in the world's top 100. In 2023, our performance in "graduates in science" ranked first, globally, in the World Talent Ranking of the International Institute for Management Development. The University of Hong Kong was recently ranked by QS as Asia's no. 2.

To maintain our competitive edge, the Government endeavours to enlarge the I&T talent pool by nurturing, attracting and retaining talents.

We strive to promote science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, or STEAM education in schools. We are introducing Science as a subject in primary schools, launching support programmes for the Mathematics curriculum, and helping schools to identify and nurture local STEAM elites at the school level.

At the same time, various other initiatives, including the STEM Internship Scheme and Research Talent Hub, will continue to cultivate talents at different learning stages.

Notably, under our Global STEM Professorship Scheme, over 50 top-notch scholars from around the world have taken up their new research and teaching roles in Hong Kong, and a few dozen more will arrive gradually.

As we continue to trawl for talents, we also take heart in the encouraging results from our regime to attract top enterprises.

In the past year, we have already secured 30 key enterprises' expansion or establishment in Hong Kong. They all come from the strategic industries of life science, AI, Fintech, advanced manufacturing and new-energy technology. These companies alone will invest nearly US\$4 billion here, and create 10 000 jobs in the coming years.

This development, ladies and gentlemen, is set to revolutionise our industry structure and firmly establish I&T as a key driver of the economy. This, in turn, will form a sustainable science and innovation ecosystem for our next generation.

Hong Kong will continue to be a world-class collaboration hub for inspirational minds. We warmly welcome more prominent events and conferences such as the Laureate Forum to take place in Hong Kong.

We also encourage our guests from all over the globe, to seize this opportunity to experience our thriving I&T scene and beyond.

While you are here, do take the time to enjoy our world-class arts and culture facilities, bustling nightlife and dining scenes, as well as the city's mesmerising landscapes and natural wonders. When you return home, bring with you your very exciting Hong Kong stories for sharing with your family, friends and communities.

On that note, I wish all of you an insightful week, here in Asia's world city. Thank you very much.