

Speech by CE at ICAC 50th Anniversary Reception and Establishment Ceremony of Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the ICAC (Independent Commission Against Corruption) 50th Anniversary Reception and Establishment Ceremony of Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption today (February 21):

Deputy Director Luo Yonggang (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR), Director Deng Jianwei (Director of the liaison office of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR), Deputy Political Commissar Wang Zhaobing (Deputy Political Commissar of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison), Commissioner Danny Woo Ying-ming (Commissioner of the ICAC), Consuls-general, anti-corruption professionals from around the world, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all. It is a great pleasure to be here with you, on this landmark occasion. Today, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Hong Kong's ICAC – the Independent Commission Against Corruption. It is a proud day, a remarkable milestone, for the ICAC, and for Hong Kong.

The ICAC's journey began half a century ago. Its clear and compelling mission is to ensure that Hong Kong remains fair, just, stable and prosperous, then as now.

Over the past five decades, the ICAC has become an integral part of governance, partnering with our community, and indeed every sector in the community, to uphold the principles of integrity, accountability and transparency.

Thanks to the ICAC and its formidable anti-corruption regime, the people of Hong Kong have long enjoyed equal opportunities to pursue their aspirations, whatever they may be.

That legacy, established some 50 years ago, carries on today, under the auspices of the unique "one country, two systems" principle. We take heart, and pride, in our city's long-standing rule of law, clean public service, level playing field for doing business, and community-wide embrace of integrity, mutual respect and fairness.

Hong Kong is widely recognised as one of the world's cleanest cities. In the IMD (International Institute for Management Development)'s latest World Competitiveness Yearbook, Hong Kong was ranked the world's second best in "government efficiency". This remarkable result was contributed, in no small part, by our high ranking in anti-corruption. Under the criterion called "bribery and corruption do not exist", Hong Kong was No. 1 throughout Asia, and No. 10 in the world, among over 60 places surveyed.

The World Justice Project, which put Hong Kong in the 23rd place globally in the rule of law, also rated us the world's No. 9 in "absence of corruption", out of over 140 places.

These compelling results have placed Hong Kong in a strong position, both within Asia and globally, in maintaining clean governance and social integrity. They are clear testimony to the ICAC's solid efforts in eradicating corruption in the past five decades.

Integrity is pivotal to ensuring the continuing prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and realising our essential contributions to national development. The ICAC supports the country's anti-corruption drive and policy. It also works closely with like-minded agencies around the world, to advance anti-corruption initiatives.

Indeed, the ICAC currently holds the presidency of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities, committed to promoting the effective implementation of the UN (United Nations) Convention against Corruption.

The Hong Kong SAR Government is dedicated to working with every part of our society, as well as our counterparts around the world, in fostering a culture sustained by probity.

In this regard, I am delighted to welcome the establishment of the Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption. This new institution has been created to help in the global struggle against corruption.

The Academy will offer anti-corruption training courses for graft fighters in Hong Kong and around the world. The Academy will also serve as an international research and exchange centre for anti-corruption experts from different parts of the globe.

The Academy's initiatives will, I'm confident, boost Hong Kong's status as an anti-corruption centre, while promoting our clean society, social stability and the value we place on integrity and the rule of law.

It is an ambitious undertaking – one fully in keeping with the ICAC's historic anniversary and its renowned prowess in the fight against corruption – and I, for one, can't wait for the new Academy to get going.

As we mark the ICAC's milestone, let us also recognise, and commend, the collective efforts of the ICAC's dedicated staff, past and present.

I applaud, as well, every individual who has contributed to Hong Kong's long-standing success against corruption and its incessant threats. Their commitment and pursuit of justice have ensured Hong Kong's success, while inspiring jurisdictions around the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, here in Hong Kong, we are celebrating not only the ICAC's golden jubilee, but also the Lunar New Year. I have every confidence that this bright new year promises strength, wisdom and leadership – qualities that you and the ICAC possess in blessed abundance. That can only mean a very good year for Hong Kong. And each and every one of you.

Happy birthday, ICAC. I have every confidence that you will continue to inspire Hong Kong, and the world, over the next 50 years and beyond. Thank you.