

Speech by CE at Inauguration Ceremony of International Alliance of Academicians and International Academicians Hong Kong Forum (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Inauguration Ceremony of the International Alliance of Academicians (IAA) and the International Academicians Hong Kong Forum today (March 21):

Professor Nancy Ip (Chair of IAA), Professor Pierre-Louis Lions (Co-Chair of IAA), Professor George Smoot (Co-Chair of IAA), Professor Xiang Zhang (Co-Chair of IAA), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am very pleased to join you today for the inauguration ceremony of the International Alliance of Academicians and the International Academicians Hong Kong Forum.

It gives me great pleasure and pride, to congratulate the Alliance on its establishment, to know that this is a Hong Kong-based international organisation, uniting more than 100 renowned academics from all over the world. And you've taken on the essential mission of enhancing global co-operation among scientists and academics, working toward the sustainable development of innovation and technology.

The Alliance is a testament to the power of collective wisdom, a commitment to the open exchange of ideas, and a celebration of humanity's boundless innovation.

Hong Kong is committed to becoming an international I&T (innovation and technology) centre, as well as a global hub for high-end talent. So it is both welcome, and fitting, that Hong Kong serves as the Alliance's home.

In an era endlessly defined, and redefined, by technological advancement, evolving global dynamics and unprecedented challenges, the role of scholars and scientists has never been more critical.

Knowledge knows no borders, our shared challenges require shared solutions.

The Government is committed to cultivating a dynamic environment, one that champions innovation and technology, in every sector and industry, every institution and corner of our community.

We will soon launch a Frontier Technology Research Support Scheme, worth

3 billion Hong Kong dollars, or nearly 400 million US dollars. It will help fund ground-breaking basic research driven by world-class researchers and academics.

Given the central role that AI (artificial intelligence) will play in research and industry transformation, we will also establish the Hong Kong Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Institute. It will promote upstream research and development, as well as the transformation of mid-stream and downstream AI outcomes, and explore application scenarios.

These initiatives expand our far-reaching I&T development, led by two InnoHK research clusters – one focused on healthcare technologies, the other on AI and robotics. Together, they have attracted more than 2 500 scientists and researchers, from Hong Kong and all over the world.

We are now setting up a third InnoHK research cluster. It will focus on sustainable development, energy and advanced manufacturing and materials. It's now open for admission proposals, and I welcome prominent international universities and institutions to join us on the exciting journey of innovation.

With the support of our country, we are determined to draw together the diverse expertise of Hong Kong's international pool of talent, and the innovation and manufacturing prowess of the Mainland.

The Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park, situated in the Loop – an area that straddles our boundary with Shenzhen – will create the infrastructure for our synergised development with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. I am pleased to tell you all that we will be celebrating the completion of the first three buildings in the Hong Kong Park later today.

With the Hong Kong Park and a wide range of I&T infrastructure as our hardware, and the "soft power" presented by your Alliance and other key players in our I&T ecosystem, Hong Kong is committed, and well-equipped, to promoting international co-operation, and the boundless opportunities it can create for us all.

My congratulations, once again, on the inauguration of the International Alliance of Academicians. I know you will enjoy the International Academicians Hong Kong Forum, beginning later today.

And I welcome you to make time for Hong Kong, a rising East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. Catch one of the many exhibitions in our West Kowloon Cultural District. Next week, the world-renowned Art Basel returns to Hong Kong, showcasing over 240 galleries from some 40 countries and regions.

And there will be plenty of art in rugby, on show, beginning next Friday, at Kai Tak Sports Park, the brand-new, state-of-the-art home of the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens. All these, during Hong Kong Super March – a month-

long series of eclectic events filled with creativity, culture and excitement. Just like this forum.

Enjoy your time in Hong Kong! Thank you.