

# Speech by CE at International Ombudsman Summit 2024 Closing Ceremony and Hong Kong Ombudsman 35th Anniversary Reception (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the International Ombudsman Summit 2024 Closing Ceremony and Hong Kong Ombudsman 35th Anniversary Reception today (December 3):

Deputy Director Liu Guangyuan (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Deputy Commissioner Li Zijun (Deputy Commissioner of the National Public Complaints and Proposals Administration), Director-General Cai Wei (Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation of the National Commission of Supervision), Vice President Mohamed Benalilou (First Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute), President Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi (President of the Asian Ombudsman Association), Mr Jack Chan (Ombudsman of Hong Kong), consuls-general, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I'm delighted to be here today, as we draw this year's illuminating International Ombudsman Summit to a successful close.

A global gathering, the Summit attracted some 140 ombudsmen and senior representatives of ombudsman institutions, as well as dispute resolution organisations, academics and other professionals from around the world. Officials from more than 20 global bodies and local organisations also took part, let me add.

I extend my gratitude to all of you, for sharing your experiences and insights at the Summit, together with representatives of the Hong Kong SAR Government and institutions.

In this buoyant spirit of co-operation and unity, let us move on from the Summit with a renewed sense of purpose, of transparency, integrity and commitment to the economies, communities and peoples we serve.

The theme of this Summit, "Ombudsman in a Changing World: Learning from the Past; Preparing for the Future", is surely a resounding call to reflect, prepare for and adapt to change – locally, regionally and globally.

Thirty-five years ago, the Office of the Hong Kong Ombudsman, then known as the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints, was created with a critical mission: to uphold justice, ensure administrative fairness, and foster a culture of accountability – all of it anchored in the pursuit of excellence.

The Office, I'm pleased to say, has realised that mission. It has worked tirelessly to ensure a fair, efficient and accountable public administration.

I can tell you it has made more than 900 recommendations to the Hong Kong SAR Government over the past five years. In doing so, it has contributed significantly to better public governance in so many ways, prompting more effective regulatory and enforcement measures, streamlining administrative procedures, enhancing interdepartmental collaboration, promoting institutional accountability, and much more.

And now, celebrating its 35th anniversary, Hong Kong's Office of the Ombudsman has embarked on three new strategic directions. I fully support each of them: the wider use of mediation for efficient and amicable resolution of complaints; intensifying interdepartmental collaboration to resolve complex issues; and encouraging a positive culture towards complaints.

I also commend the Office's global presence, including in the International Ombudsman Institute and the Asian Ombudsman Association. I'm pleased, too, with its notable efforts in telling the good stories of Hong Kong under our "one country, two systems" principle.

In just a moment, we will witness the Office's exchange of MOUs with ombudsman institutions from eight countries and regions.

Like today's Summit, the MOUs speak of new and revitalised international ties and the wide-ranging opportunities they will create for us all.

This welcome spirit reflects a shared commitment to the values and principles that resounded throughout today's Summit. Allow me to congratulate each and every one of the signatories.

Allow me, too, to congratulate our Ombudsman's office, and all those who work for the Office, on your landmark 35th anniversary.

A reminder, too, that while the Summit may have concluded, there is much more on offer tonight and tomorrow. I'm talking about the wide range of carefully curated cultural and social programmes, arranged for you by the Office.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong is more than a leading international financial, shipping and trade centre, and international innovation and technology hub. We are equally committed to the business of pleasure – of the arts, culture and entertainment, day and night. We are, in fact, fast rising as the world's East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. And if it's world-class hiking, water activities, or the thrill of horseracing you want, we've also got it. I know you will enjoy it all, every Hong Kong moment.

I'm grateful to each and every one of you for your invaluable contributions to the success of this inspiring Summit. And I wish you the best of business, health and happiness in the coming year.

Thank you.