

Speech by CE at Quality Building Award 2020 Award Presentation Ceremony (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Quality Building Award 2020 Award Presentation Ceremony today (June 2):

Ir Peter Mok (Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Quality Building Award 2020), distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to join you for the presentation ceremony of the Quality Building Award 2020.

As some of you may recall, I was a frequent attendee in these biennial events.

The pandemic, as you know, put an unfortunate pause on last year's ceremony. So I'm delighted that we are able to come together today to honour the 2020 winners of the Quality Building Award in this biennial presentation's 10th anniversary edition.

"Transforming Communities, Build with Heart and Care", is the theme of the 2020 Award. While it may have been devised before the pandemic, it is a resounding reminder to all of us about the critical importance of building Hong Kong into a better city for all of us, and for the generations to follow us.

"Building with heart" demands that you fulfil the wide-ranging needs of our community. In our continuing fight against the pandemic, those needs focus on healthcare. In this regard, I'm heartened and grateful at the speed with which the building industry responded to the emergency needs for quarantine and medical facilities. Applying modular integrated construction (MiC) technology, the first purpose-built quarantine facility with about 350 units was completed within two months at Lei Yue Mun Park. The speedy completion of the quarantine centre has been acclaimed by the Institution of Civil Engineers of the United Kingdom. Then came the sizeable North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, featuring six ward blocks and a medical centre, which was completed in just four months. And since January 2020, more than 4 000 quarantine facility units, many of which in Penny's Bay, have been built, also through MiC. I visited those projects during their construction to thank the staff involved and was much impressed by their care and dedication.

The "building with heart" philosophy goes also to the transitional housing units, many of which are also using the MiC method. As you all know, for years, Hong Kong has been haunted by the acute shortage of housing and we are now faced with a deterioration in the average waiting times for public

rental housing. While my government has adopted a multi-pronged approach in finding land for housing, many of our efforts were hitherto frustrated by opposition at the planning and legislative process, let alone some organised localism activities aiming to obstruct our city's progress. In order to provide relief to families living in poor conditions, we have expanded and accelerated the provision of transitional housing with a pledge of 15 000 units in three years' time. I am pleased to say that sufficient temporary land has been identified for this purpose. The Transport and Housing Bureau's latest initiative to launch a pilot programme to support NGOs renting hotels and guesthouses to increase supply will also enable some early provision.

"Build with care" calls for caring for the environment as well as for the people. In 2017, more than 60 per cent of our carbon emissions came from generating electricity for our buildings. There is enormous potential to reduce our carbon footprint and, in doing so, contribute to the Government's climate pledge, that is to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. In this, I am encouraged to note that many of the finalist projects for the Quality Building Award adopted energy-efficient design and green construction methods and materials.

Whether you are "building with heart" or "building with care", you could be assisted by innovation and the application of technology. That is why the Development Bureau has been taking forward with the support of the industry various initiatives to implement "Construction 2.0". For this purpose, the HK\$1 billion Construction Innovation and Technology Fund was set up in 2018 to support projects promoting technology innovation and talent development. So far, about 1 800 applications have been approved and more than 8 500 technology-training places subsidised.

Considered design and management can enable the integration of new buildings with existing ones, as well as the communities that surround them. Our finalist projects have set a high benchmark for others to follow: in providing open space for users and the neighbourhood; in ensuring good relations with local residents; and, where applicable, in conserving heritage. As former Secretary for Development, I embrace such an approach and I am thrilled these days whenever I read positive news about our harbourfront and the tiny public play areas that we have created in co-operation with our talented designers. These projects have shown that installation of creative street furniture, the stylish use of space, the removal of certain conventional restrictions, and finally the trust placed in the users are offering smart leisure areas for activities across generations and create a sense of belonging among the residents in the community.

In our highly compact city, where land resources are precious, embracing a multiple-use concept and ensuring versatility in designing buildings and public space are particularly relevant. In this regard, my Government supports a creative use of government sites. This includes the concept of "one site, multiple uses" as well as enabling NGOs to make use of unallocated land with no immediate use or rehabilitated landfills.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware, we have recently enacted local

legislation to implement an improved electoral system in accordance with the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law approved by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The improved electoral system will ensure the faithful implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" and "patriots administering Hong Kong", effectively putting an end to the political chaos which impeded Hong Kong's progress in recent years. It will provide an environment for all of us to build Hong Kong's future, and I do mean it literally. The Government will spend at least HK\$100 billion annually in capital works projects in the coming years. Together with the private sector, we forecast that the annual construction output in Hong Kong will total around \$300 billion, generating over 300 000 employment opportunities. Our building and construction sector, and the wide-ranging industries and companies that drive it, can look forward to a future filled with opportunities. Judging by the Award entries, I'm confident that you will fill those opportunities with professionalism, care and passion.

Allow me now to offer my gratitude to the record-high 49 submissions received for the 2020 Quality Building Award and the 25 shortlisted finalists. And my congratulations to the winners in the six award categories, as well as the overall winner to be announced in just a moment.

My thanks to the Award's distinguished jurors and the organising committee for their long hard work, amid the daunting face of the pandemic, to make this gala event possible. My thanks, too, to the organisers, including the nine institutions which are essential to the success of Hong Kong's building and construction sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all an enjoyable evening, and a year ahead filled with health, vitality and the best of business. Thank you.

