

Speech by CE at SCMP's 7th Spirit of Hong Kong Awards presentation dinner (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the SCMP's 7th Spirit of Hong Kong Awards presentation dinner today (September 12):

Gary (The Chief Executive Officer of the South China Morning Post, Mr Gary Liu), judges and nominators, awardees, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I'm delighted to be here, once again, for the "Spirit of Hong Kong Awards" ceremony.

Now in its seventh year, the Awards honours those who have made a profound difference for the people and the community of Hong Kong. And the wonder of it is how modestly, yet how resolutely, they do so, day after day, year after year.

This year's Awards recognises creative excellence and peerless dedication in the areas of community, culture, innovation, perseverance and teamwork, as well as the People's Choice award. It also includes a brand new category – the Spirit of Youth Award. It's presented to Hong Kong youth who have embraced their role as a socially responsible citizen or who have shown exceptional community commitment or courage. Such role models, and the community spirit they personify, have never been more vital, never been more needed.

The past few months have been a singularly difficult and challenging time for the people of Hong Kong, young and old. The reasons for this are complex and deeply rooted in our political, economic and social systems.

It's essential that we respond to and resolve, as best we can, these issues and the discontent they have incited. That's why, last week, I announced my Government's "four actions" and our commitment to initiating wide-ranging, direct dialogue with members of the public. The first such dialogue hopefully will be held later this month.

For the moment, however, I know we look forward to hearing from this year's remarkable winners. They were chosen from some 100 nominees, each of them imbued with the incandescent and inextinguishable spirit of Hong Kong.

My thanks to the organiser of the Spirit of Hong Kong Awards, the South China Morning Post, for its inspiring creation and its longstanding community leadership. My thanks, too, to this year's nominators. They come from every sector of our society. I'm grateful also to the Spirit of Hong Kong's esteemed panel of judges and its chairlady, Anna Wu.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know you will enjoy this very special evening. And I count on you to champion the spirit of Hong Kong to all those around you, in this year of opportunity and challenge for all of us. Thank you very much.

