

# Speech by CE at YASHK Inauguration Ceremony cum Science and Technology Forum (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences (YASHK) Inauguration Ceremony cum Science and Technology Forum today (June 9):

Professor Tsui (Founding President of the Hong Kong Academy of Sciences, Professor Tsui Lap-chee), Professor Law (President of YASHK, Professor Vic Law), members of the Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I am delighted to join you this afternoon for the inauguration ceremony of the Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences, created for today's young scientists, designed to inspire tomorrow's scientists.

We've come a long, good way in a few short years. The Hong Kong Academy of Sciences was established just three and a half years ago, making today a milestone for both the Academy and its promising new chapter, the Young Academy.

Under the leadership of Professor Tsui, the Hong Kong Academy of Sciences has made significant contributions to the advancement of science and technology in Hong Kong, such as hosting the "Science and Technology Innovation Summit", organising the well-received "Distinguished Master, Accomplished Students Mentorship Programme" and the "Science, the way to my future" exhibition, as well as releasing a research report on Science, Technology and Mathematics Education.

And now there is the Young Academy, with its 31 brilliant and ambitious young men and women. They come from six of our universities, and from a great wealth of disciplines and research areas: the biological and life sciences, public health, physics and chemistry, mathematics and engineering, textiles and clothing, just to name a few. Thanks to the solid foundation established by the Academy of Sciences, I am confident that the Young Academy will blaze a trail of science and technology to capture the imagination of our primary- and secondary-school children.

I'm delighted to hear of the Young Academy's involvement in the Distinguished Master, Accomplished Students Mentorship Programme as a co-organiser. The Academy of Sciences created this Programme so that scientists and engineers could serve as mentors for promising senior secondary students, offering advice and direction for up to two years. I have attended the launching ceremonies for both the first and second cohorts of the

programme and am much impressed by what this mentorship could offer in terms of inspiration and encouragement.

I see opportunity, too, between the Young Academy and the Government in promoting the development of science and technology. Innovation and technology, after all, is among the top policy priorities of my Government. In the past two years, we have invested more than HK\$100 billion in I&T programmes and initiatives. These include the Innovation and Technology Fund which supports applied R&D projects that encourage scientific exploration and its commercialisation as well as additional research funding to universities.

My Government has also introduced tax deductions of up to 300 per cent for local R&D work undertaken by private companies. Subject to Legislative Council approval, a \$3 billion matching grant will be available to match private donations to universities in R&D. And we've launched a variety of programmes to attract, develop and retain I&T talents.

On the infrastructure front, stage one of the Science Park expansion, as well as an on-site InnoCell and a Data Technology Hub and Advanced Manufacturing Centre at Tseung Kwan O will all be completed before 2022. In addition, there's Cyberport 5, which will accommodate more technology companies and start-ups, while a Microelectronics Centre is being planned to house smart production lines in support of Industrialisation 4.0. Looking ahead, a brand new technology park will emerge at the Lok Ma Chau Loop. We have, as well, set aside HK\$16 billion to enhance or refurbish university campus facilities and provide additional facilities essential for R&D activities. Our goal is to create an optimal teaching and research environment for university students and career R&D specialists.

We are also establishing two research clusters here at the Science Park, one focusing on healthcare technologies, the other on artificial intelligence and robotics. To date, we have received nearly 50 proposals from notable international universities eager to collaborate with our local post-secondary institutions. They include such top institutions as MIT, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial College London and Institut Pasteur, just to name a few. We expect the first batch of research institutions to set up labs in the two new clusters at the Science Park before the end of this year.

My Government also shares the Young Academy's goal of advancing the teaching of science and technology in Hong Kong. To that end, we have injected additional recurrent funds of at least HK\$8.3 billion into the education sector since I assumed office in 2017. A substantial portion of that was allocated to improve basic education, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM in short, both in our primary and secondary schools. On top, we will inject another HK\$500 million for the establishment of IT Innovation Labs and related activities in all publicly funded secondary schools. We hope to motivate student interest in science and technology in their early years, encouraging them to pursue a career in I&T.

Like the Young Academy, my Government is equally determined to educate the public on science and technology issues. In this regard, I'm grateful that the Academy of Sciences and other like-minded institutions organise awards competitions and exhibitions, as well as I&T seminars and workshops. Later this year, the Government will present InnoFest, a series of events showcasing our latest I&T achievements while promoting I&T in Hong Kong. Highlights of the InnoFest will include the first "City I&T Grand Challenge," in which various sectors will be invited to tackle livelihood issues through I&T. Promising solutions will be tested in public organisations.

The Young Academy and my Government also share a determination to see Hong Kong rise as a centre of scientific excellence. The founding, last month, of the Hong Kong Laureate Forum, which connects Shaw laureates to a youth-centred, science-driven, Hong Kong-based programme, certainly demonstrates our commitment to promoting Hong Kong as an international I&T hub. As you all know, Shaw laureates are top scientists who have made outstanding international contributions in astronomy, life science and medicine, and the mathematical sciences. Of the nearly 80 Shaw laureates since the first awards in 2004, 12 are Nobel Prize winners, five are Fields Medalists and two are Abel Prize recipients. I am delighted that the majority of these outstanding laureates have already responded to my invitation and indicated their interest in participating in the first Hong Kong Laureate Forum scheduled for November 2021. It will certainly be a valuable opportunity for our brilliant youth and students to be enlightened and inspired.

Talking about our brilliant students, let me say how pleased I am to learn that students of St Paul's Primary Catholic School, under the guidance of a University of Hong Kong research team from the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, won a silver award at the 47th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva. The students' award-winning innovation focused on a "SmartEat" education app. Other Hong Kong university research teams also fared well in Geneva, and a ceremony is being arranged to celebrate their achievements.

We are working to ensure that our young scientists continue to get what they need to succeed. To that end, my Government has doubled funding support for State Key Laboratories, Hong Kong Branches of Chinese National Engineering Research Centres, Technology Transfer Offices of designated local universities and the Technology Start-up Support Scheme for Universities.

I am confident, too, that our participation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will generate a continuing flow of career opportunities for Hong Kong's young scientists and technology specialists. The Greater Bay Area, with its vast and affluent population of 71 million, presents an outsized and readily available market for the innovative products and services that our young scientists will bring to this world. In this connection, the Youth Development Commission rolled out two new funding schemes in March this year to help our young people set up

their business at the innovation and entrepreneurial bases in the Greater Bay Area. Likewise, the Guangdong provincial government will extend the eligibility for subsidies and support measures which are available to Guangdong youths to young entrepreneurs from Hong Kong in the Greater Bay Area.

In short, ladies and gentlemen, the future could not look more promising for Hong Kong scientists, including the members of the Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences and the many young people to be inspired by this Young Academy. My Government looks forward to working with the Young Academy, and my best wishes for the Young Academy, particularly in their essential work of inspiring, in our youth, an irrepressible passion for innovation.

I wish you all a memorable occasion and a very fruitful forum this afternoon. Thank you very much.

