

Speech by CS at 4th Hong Kong Public Relations Awards (2018) Awards Presentation Ceremony cum Gala Dinner (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the 4th Hong Kong Public Relations Awards (2018) Awards Presentation Ceremony cum Gala Dinner today (May 17):

Dr John Chan (Chairperson of the Organising Committee of the 4th Hong Kong Public Relations Awards (2018)), Professor Anthony Wu (Vice-chairperson of the Organising Committee of the 4th Hong Kong Public Relations Awards (2018)), distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great honour to join you all tonight to witness the remarkable achievements of the winners of this year's Hong Kong Public Relations Awards. First of all, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association for another successful launch of this important presentation ceremony.

As one of the most prestigious and anticipated events in the industry, the Awards Presentation Ceremony recognises outstanding achievements and high standards of public relations professionals in the industry.

As an old saying goes, "Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing". No one does that more effectively and more persuasively than public relations professionals who build, maintain and manage the reputation of clients from both the private and public sectors including the government.

In fact, effective communication is the key to success for any organisations, business and government. As its name signifies, public relation is about building rapport with the public. It is about winning the hearts and minds of the people, the customers and the wider audience. This is not just about image building or "spinning" but also building trusts, understanding and customer loyalty. Of course, we must remember that, in the real world, perception is reality. Thus forms and substance must go together if we are to succeed.

Tonight, we honour this year's highest attainments in the industry, in three separate categories, namely, public relations campaign awards, special awards covering the Grand Award of Excellence and the Creative Campaign Award, as well as two individual awards recognising young professionals and distinguished professionals of the sector.

I am most honoured to present, in just a few minutes, the Young

Professional of the Year Awards to two young professionals. The Association's efforts to nurture young practitioners for the industry echoes well with the current-term Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's policy aim to provide support and create room for young people of Hong Kong so that they can fully realise their potential. Apart from the glitz and glamour, a career in public relations offers young change-makers and creative geniuses of today different exciting and challenging roles and exposure, thereby widening their horizon and opportunities for upward mobility.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am thrilled to note that the Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association has introduced a brand-new category – the Cross-boundary Communications Award for a very timely reason. The Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area), announced just three months ago, heralds a new era of development in the region and across all sectors for the 11 cities, including Hong Kong and Macao SARs and nine other Guangdong cities, coming together for a cluster city development.

The Greater Bay Area represents a collective GDP worth more than US\$1.6 trillion which is comparable to Australia or the Republic of Korea, and a population of over 71 million consumers in one of Mainland China's most prosperous regions. In other words, the Greater Bay Area will be the engine to propel the region's development, offering immense opportunities across all sectors including the public relations industry.

The HKSAR Government spares no effort in joining hands with the other 10 cities to develop the Greater Bay Area into one of the world's economic and innovation powerhouse, allowing free flow of capital, goods and people. With the commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the new land boundary control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai, a one-hour living circle encompassing Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao is basically formed.

Since this term of Government took office in 2017, the Central Government has introduced a series of measures to provide facilitation for Hong Kong people living, working and studying on the Mainland, in particular the measures introduced by the State Council in August last year to allow Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan residents to apply for residence permits, which has substantially enriched this living circle. I strongly encourage our public relations professionals to seize these mammoth opportunities in front of us.

On this exciting note, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to the 12 prominent members of the judging panel, headed by Professor Paul Lee, and to the Nomination Committee for the Distinguished Professional of the Year Award. Allow me also to acknowledge the generosity of the many companies and organisations involved in this year's Awards as sponsors, supporting organisations and media partners.

I wish the Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association continuous success in promoting quality public relations experts in Hong Kong

and the region, all of you a joyful evening. Thank you.

