

# Speech by CS at Asian Family Summit Gala Dinner (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the Asian Family Summit Gala Dinner today (August 21):

Ms Bas (Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, United Nations, Ms Daniela Bas), Mrs Chu (Co-Chairperson of the Asian Family Summit and Chairperson of the Consortium of Institutes on Families in the Asian Region, Mrs Patricia Chu), Professor Shek (Co-Chairperson of the Asian Family Summit and Chairman of the Family Council, Professor Daniel Shek), Professor Tse (Co-Chairperson of the Asian Family Summit and Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, the University of Hong Kong, Professor Samson Tse), Dr Lee (President of Wofoo Social Enterprises, Dr Joseph Lee), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am most honoured to join you all here tonight at the Gala Dinner of the Asian Family Summit and Award Presentation Ceremony of the Wofoo 3A Project.

The word "family" represents love, warmth and unity. As an acronym, "FAMILY" can be the short form of "Father and Mother, I love you".

This year, the Summit has chosen the theme of "Sustainable Development and Family Well-being: Agenda for Action in Asia". I must thank the Organising Committee for bringing together such an impressive line-up of academics, professionals and practitioners from a wide range of economies to Hong Kong on a subject close to the heart of everybody here. Your presence makes this Summit a precious occasion for knowledge exchange and experience relating to family well-being.

Earlier today, the Convenor of the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education of the Family Council, Mr Lee Luen-fai, spoke on the Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme and shared his insights on promoting a family-friendly work culture in Hong Kong. Echoing his presentation, let me hasten to add that the Government attaches great importance to creating a more pro-family work environment.

We do not have to look far for examples, like the introduction of statutory paternity leave in February 2015. Currently, a prospective father can enjoy three days of paternity leave. To help male employees better discharge their family responsibilities around the time of their children's birth, we propose to extend the leave to five days and introduced an amendment bill into the Legislative Council two days ahead of the last Father's Day. We hope that the bill will be passed before the end of this year.

As for mothers of newborns, we are conducting a review on the 10-week statutory maternity leave to explore room for further extension. Indeed, statutory requirements are only the basic entitlements and benefits of employees.

To call upon greater support as champions of a more family-friendly corporate environment, we have been encouraging employers to, having regard to their unique business nature and operational needs, offer their employees more flexible and favourable arrangements that best fit their family needs. To this end, the Family Council organises the Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme biennially to recognise corporations and organisations which have adopted and demonstrated commitment in the implementation of impressive family-friendly employment practices.

In parallel, the Labour Department has been acting as a facilitator to encourage employers to adopt employee-oriented good human resource management practices, such as flexible working hours, five-day work, work from home, counselling service on stress or emotional management, recreational activities for employees and their family members, and more. These family-friendly measures are conducive to fostering employees' sense of belonging to enterprises, thereby enhancing productivity and creating a win-win-win situation for employers, employees and their families.

Without doubt, development of a pro-family society cannot be the sole domain of the Government but the result of the concerted efforts of the whole community. To this end, non-governmental organisations are always our close partners in the provision of instrumental support. First launched in 2010, the Wofoo 3A project is one of the most stunning initiatives put up by the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) with sponsorship from Wofoo Social Enterprises. It gives recognition to outstanding and innovative projects with a view to bringing forth pioneering and effective strategies for early detection, prevention and intervention on family problems. Through sharing and exchange, professionals do not need to reinvent the wheel but achieve better results by replicating or adapting the successful model.

This year, eight entries from the Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia have made it to the final round and presented their proposals earlier this afternoon. Their projects span from enhancing family relationships and supporting aggrieved families to rendering support to kids and the elderly. I am sure that the adjudicators must have had a hard time picking the top-winner. Awards and recognition aside, I must commend all of you as the forerunners in the business of promoting family well-being.

On this encouraging note, I must extend my warmest appreciation to the CIFA, the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, as well as the Family Council and the Social Welfare Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, for staging this visionary Summit. As we approach the third day of the Summit, I look forward to more new thoughts and perspectives on family-related issues that affect us all. I hope you all enjoy the rest of the Summit and have a most stimulating and fruitful experience. To our guests

from the Mainland and overseas, have an unforgettable stay in Hong Kong.  
Thank you.