

Speech by CS at Fire Asia 2024 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at Fire Asia 2024 today (July 10):

Secretary-General Wang Songmiao (Secretary-General of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Deputy Director-General Luo Yongqiang (Deputy Director General of National Fire and Rescue Administration of People's Republic of China), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR), Deputy President Wu Lizhi (Deputy President, China People's Police University), Deputy Director Xie Zhixiang (Deputy Director of the Bureau of Liaison of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. Welcome to Fire Asia 2024 and to Hong Kong! I am delighted to see so many experts in fire and emergency management gathered here from around the globe.

Indeed, some 600 professionals, including fire engineering experts, emergency responders, paramedics and other medical specialists, are joining this year's three-day conference.

They also include, let me add, delegations from a number of Belt and Road and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. Your presence underlines our shared commitment to making the world a safer place for us all.

The past few years have presented us with overwhelming challenges, including the pandemic, climate change, and the increasing complexity of emergency response.

Yet, in the face of adversity, we have witnessed the remarkable resilience, and innovative spirit, of many economies worldwide. Through this year's three-day conference, we have a golden opportunity to build on this good momentum.

Emergency preparedness is essential to protecting an economy and its people from the impact of wide-ranging disasters, crises and other emergencies. An effective emergency management system helps mitigate disruptions to essential services, economic stability and social order.

In today's interconnected world, the threats of emergencies and disasters could be cross-border by nature. Regional and international teamwork plays an important role in reducing risks and enhancing resilience.

To that end, just last month, the Hong Kong SAR Government, together with the governments of Guangdong Province and Macao SAR, signed the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Emergency Management Co-operation and Greater Bay Area Emergency Response Operation Co-operation Framework Agreement.

Under this framework, we are setting up a government-led co-operation mechanism for emergency response, enhancing our ability to cope with accidents, natural disasters and other crises that affect Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

At the same time, we are establishing a task force later this year. It will review our co-operation experience to develop a long-term emergency-management plan for the Greater Bay Area as a whole.

No less important, the Belt and Road and ASEAN also present ample opportunities for regional and global collaboration.

The Belt and Road's extensive infrastructure networks – from roads and railways to ports and much more – can enable the rapid deployment of emergency response personnel and resources across borders during crises.

And the institutional mechanisms within ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Co-ordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, allow member states to share information and co-ordinate responses.

Through all these and other regional initiatives, economies enhance their collective ability to respond effectively to emergencies that cross national boundaries.

Our speakers from Belt and Road and ASEAN countries will, for sure, broaden our perspectives on effective emergency management strategies across regions.

I have every confidence that, drawing on the collective expertise of all our high-profile speakers, we will move on from this conference safer, better prepared, and better protected, for whatever comes our way.

During your stay in Hong Kong, I urge you, as well, to find time for leisure. Our city, as the mega-events capital of Asia, is hosting more than 200 events this year – one every two days in the second half of the year.

Our city is also blessed with a wide variety of Michelin star restaurants, world-class coastal walks, beautiful country parks, and all sorts of arts, culture and entertainment you can easily find.

Hong Kong, after all, is rising as the world's East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. In short, enjoy yourself!

My thanks to the organisers of this year's Fire Asia, namely the Institution of Fire Engineers (Hong Kong Branch), the Hong Kong Institution

of Engineers (Building Services Division and Fire Division), the China Hong Kong Ambulance Service Institute, and the China Hong Kong Fire Protection Association.

I am grateful, as well, to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for its generous support.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a rewarding conference and a memorable stay in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.