

Speech by CS at Inauguration Ceremony of WCO Regional Dog Training Centre (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the Inauguration Ceremony of WCO (World Customs Organization) Regional Dog Training Centre today (March 6):

Mr Das (Director for Compliance and Facilitation, World Customs Organization, Mr Pranab Kumar Das), Louise (Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon on this Day Two of the World Customs Organization Global Canine Forum.

I am delighted that Mr Das, Director for Compliance and Facilitation at the WCO, and many customs officials from Mainland China and various overseas countries, are here today. Together, we are celebrating the inauguration of the WCO Regional Dog Training Centre in Hong Kong.

And my congratulations to Hong Kong Customs for its accreditation by the WCO as one of now five Regional Dog Training Centres in the Asia-Pacific region. This status strengthens Hong Kong Customs' collaboration with neighbouring Customs administrations.

I am proud to add that this affirms the Department's international standing in canine training.

As a WCO member since 1987, Hong Kong Customs has long participated in WCO activities and events and helped promote co-operation among Asia-Pacific region members.

Indeed, it was some 20 years ago that Hong Kong Customs established a regional training centre.

Last year, Customs was elected the Asia-Pacific region's next WCO Vice-Chairperson for the term of 2024 to 2026. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the second time the Department has taken on this important role. It speaks clearly of Hong Kong Customs' endeavours to work with its Asia-Pacific members – and the WCO at large.

Today, we mark another important initiative from Hong Kong Customs – the setting up of a WCO Regional Dog Training Centre. This new milestone, once again, demonstrates Hong Kong Customs' commitment to the WCO's canine programme.

The Dog Training Centre is located at the Hong Kong Port of the Hong

Kong-Zhuhai-Macao-Bridge, on an artificial island which is about a 15-minute drive from here.

The 55-kilometre Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge is the longest bridge-and-tunnel sea crossing in the world. No less important, it is a strategic development that connects Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macao.

Now, it is also home to the WCO Regional Dog Training Centre. I think we can say it "bridges" – brings together – Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, and the rest of the world.

Hong Kong Customs first opened the Hong Kong Regional Dog Training Centre in 2018. Under its own breeding programme, the Centre has nurtured 28 puppies in four litters, and trained 27 dogs and their handlers, so far.

In 2021, the Centre's Drugs Detector Dog Handling Training Programme was accredited with Qualifications Framework Level 4 by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications.

A year later, the Centre pioneered the development and application of smart collars on canines, enhancing their operational and enforcement effectiveness.

And now, with the WCO Regional Dog Training Centre, Hong Kong Customs will take up greater responsibility for canine enforcement and professionalism in the Asia-Pacific region.

Taking on a leading role in the sharing of good practices and experiences, and in expanding collaboration with our regional counterparts, we look forward to safeguarding security in Hong Kong and throughout the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, the fun begins in just a minute, with our smartly trained dogs showcasing their expertise in a variety of on-the-job airport detection scenarios.

And then it is on to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and its dog base. There, you will see first-hand the latest WCO Regional Dog Training Centre.

I know you will enjoy the rest of this afternoon and the last day, tomorrow, of the 6th WCO Global Canine Forum. Thank you very much.

