

Speech by CS at ISS Hong Kong's 60th Anniversary presents: Guinness World Records Attempt: Most Nationalities in Tai Chi Class (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch's 60th Anniversary presents: Guinness World Records Attempt: Most Nationalities in a Tai Chi Class today (November 18):

Mr C P Ho (Chairman of International Social Service Hong Kong Branch), Mr Stephen Yau (Chief Executive of International Social Service Hong Kong Branch), Mr Ian Fok (President of Hong Kong Wushu Union), Mr Stephen Ng (Chairman of Wan Chai District Council), Ms Yolanda Ng (elected member of Wan Chai District Council), members of the diplomatic corp, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I have been many functions in Hong Kong. This is the first ever that I come across 60 nationalities gathered in Wan Chai. This means Hong Kong is truly a cosmopolitan. We are an open society, welcoming any nationality. We believe equalities for everybody, regardless of race, nationality or religion. Hong Kong is truly a great place, a very liveable place for us all.

I must first of all congratulate the International Social Service Hong Kong (ISS Hong Kong) for organising this event which is truly unique. I am sure that it will make a Guinness World Record today, no question about it. This is also a very auspicious occasion to mark the 60th anniversary of ISS Hong Kong. And today as you all know is Senior Citizen Day, so it is doubly auspicious. We got the Senior Citizen Day in Hong Kong and Tai Chi is very much a pastime of senior citizen when they retired. And today we got 60 nationalities young and old and various spectrum of community, it is truly inclusive and truly meaningful.

Established in 1958, ISS Hong Kong has all along been a valued partner of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in providing support services to generations of new immigrants and ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. I must say that in the last 20 years, I worked very closely with ISS Hong Kong. They are truly my bona fide partner in providing welfare support for the under-privileged and disadvantaged in Hong Kong. It also help enable the diffusion of ethnic minorities and new immigrants merge into the Hong Kong landscape. In addition to serving migrants, it also provides an array of services for families, children, youths and the elderly.

Currently, the HKSAR Government has commissioned ISS Hong Kong to

operate a number of programmes for new arrivals from the Mainland and ethnic minorities. For example, the Home Affairs Department has commissioned ISS Hong Kong to operate a support service centre for ethnic minorities, a mobile information service team at the airport and ambassador schemes for ethnic minority families and youths, as well as an expectation management programmes for prospective migrants from the Mainland. We thank ISS for being a long-standing staunch supporter of the Government in this respect and provide services to over 40 000 new arrivals from the Mainland and 160 000 ethnic minorities each year.

â€‹Hong Kong is a multi-cultural city where people from all over the world are welcomed with open arms. Vibrant ethnic minority communities form an integral part of the Hong Kong community. While we may be of different ethnicity, speak different languages or have different traditions, we all call Hong Kong home and work tirelessly to make it a better place to live, work and nurture our future generations.

â€‹Given the diverse needs of our ethnic minority communities, the HKSAR Government has set up a Steering Committee on Ethnic Minorities Affairs, chaired by myself as the Chief Secretary, to enhance cross-bureau collaboration and announced a series of new measures to strengthen support for ethnic minorities. To help our ethnic minority groups to integrate into the society, breaking the language barrier is the key to success. To this end, the Education Bureau will provide more funding to schools admitting non-Chinese speaking students to support their learning, particularly the Chinese language. The Labour Department will enhance support for ethnic minority job seekers through a case management approach to help them move up the social ladder. The Social Welfare Department will commission non-governmental organisations like ISS to proactively reach out to the needy and connect them to mainstream welfare services. The Home Affairs Department will enhance the services of its support service centres, including interpretation and translation services, and organise more district-based activities to encourage interaction and exchange between the ethnic minorities and local communities.

â€‹I have cited all these examples in order to demonstrate the Government's determination and commitment in creating an equal and caring society in Hong Kong. We also count on the support of District Councils and non-governmental organisations to connect the stakeholders and maintain momentum in the community.

â€‹Once again, I would like to thank most warmly the ISS Hong Kong, Hong Kong Wushu Union and Wan Chai District Council for organising today's event. I very much like the idea of this event. Tai Chi emphasise the harmony and balance of yin and yang. Practising Tai Chi helps you de-stress your mind and body. You can feel the peace in mind and free flowing of Qi (energy) in your body. People interaction in a city also shares the same concept. We believe that people of different races and background living in harmony and balance in a city can create an ideal state for healthy and harmonious development.

â€‹On this note, I wish all of you an enjoyable day and your families a healthy, happy and harmonious year ahead.

