

Speech by CS at opening ceremony of Jockey Club Online Youth Emotional Support Programme (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the opening ceremony of Jockey Club Online Youth Emotional Support Programme today (October 7):

Allow me to say a few words in English. I just want to pay a warm tribute, first of all, to Hong Kong Jockey Club. I also applaud to the University of Hong Kong and Paul's very reliable, efficient and highly respected research and suicide prevention centre. You've got a very good track record of the year. And also the other three NGOs: Caritas Hong Kong, Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong as well as Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups.

This is the most formidable alliance in the world in providing support for vulnerable children facing suicidal risks. And also this is a reflection of tripartite cooperation between academia, Hong Kong Jockey Club which represents both the private and charity businesses, the philanthropy sector as well as NGOs. So this is a very strong alliance with the Government of course playing a co-ordinating role behind the scene.

But the whole idea of this project emerged several years ago because of the spate of youth suicides. Cheung Leong was sitting next to me at an event one day and said, "Matthew, what are we going to do, we can't let it continue." And I said, "If the Government is prepared to co-ordinate and match-make you with other relevant parties, would you prepare to disperse funds?" So here we are, HK\$59.21 million support from the Hong Kong Jockey Club is a substantial amount. And that really provides the fuel for whole project to take off.

The Government also attaches great importance to the well-being of young people. We rank youth development very high on our policy agenda. I am responsible for a series of new outfits especially tasked to promote the well-being of young people.

I look after Hong Kong's first ever Children's Commission for those from 0 to 18 years old. I also chair the elevated, formerly known as the Commission on Youth, now called Youth Development Commission for youth from 19 to 35 years old. I also chair a steering committee for ethnic minorities because they are a very important component to the whole community. I have a meeting yesterday with 45 of them just before the Policy Address coming out this Wednesday. I also look after a new outfit called Human Resources Commission. The whole idea is to make sure that we're fostering upward mobility for young people as well as matters related to their future career and more. A lot of problems could emerge from pressure and frustration during career development and related challenges.

But cut a long story short. We need to work close together, join hands to stop every single youth suicide since every youth counts in Hong Kong. So on that, I thank the University of Hong Kong. I thank Hong Kong Jockey Club and I thank everybody, the three NGOs, and thank you for joining this important event and lending us your support. Let's keep suicide away from young people, and from now on zero tolerance towards youth suicide. Thank you very much.

