

Speech by CS at South China Morning Post Spirit of Hong Kong Awards Ceremony (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the South China Morning Post Spirit of Hong Kong Awards Ceremony today (September 21):

Gary (Chief Executive Officer of the South China Morning Post, Mr Gary Liu), Sir David (Spirit of Hong Kong Awards Patron, Sir David Akers-Jones), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my honour to join you all for this year's "Spirit of Hong Kong Awards" ceremony. The Awards has reached its sixth anniversary, putting a luminous spotlight on Hong Kong and bringing a fresh breeze of warmth and hope to this vibrant, pluralistic and international city.

Hong Kong is a compassionate society. The current-term Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is determined to build on that unwavering goodwill to create a caring and inclusive society. The Government's recurrent expenditure on social welfare in this financial year is projected to reach a peak of \$79.8 billion, equivalent to 19.6 per cent of total government recurrent expenditure. This amounts to a significant increase of 86 per cent over the 2012-13 level. But, despite our resolve, policies, programmes and services in place and in the works, there remain some cracks and gaps here and there.

A responsible government, however compassionate, must allocate its resources with an awareness of their limits. Government therefore cannot do it alone. We believe that Hong Kong works best in tripartite co-operation with the community at large and our business sector. With a growing sense and awareness of corporate social responsibility, companies and institutions are prepared to give back to the community and extend their helping hands to the disadvantaged in the community.

This evening, we honour five men and women and two corporate citizens for the spirit of Hong Kong that burns so brilliantly. Within them, day after day and night after night, they are our torch bearers, our role models.

I would like to express my warmest gratitude to this year's winners, whom you will soon meet and learn about their remarkable and fascinating stories. Of course, they are not alone. Rather, they were chosen from nearly 100 nominees. Many, many more are out there and in here this evening as well, working with courage and conviction for Hong Kong.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the enduring spirit of Hong Kong.

I would like to express my gratitude to the organiser and creator of the Spirit of Hong Kong Awards, the South China Morning Post. My most sincere appreciation also goes to this year's judges – now 14 in number and infinite in the value they bring to these awards.

On this note, ladies and gentlemen, I wish the Hong Kong spirit to continue to flourish and strengthen in the year ahead and all of you an enjoyable and special evening. Thank you.