

Speech by DCS at Make-A-Wish Hong Kong 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing, at the Make-A-Wish Hong Kong (MAW HK) 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner tonight (March 3):

Ms Anita Lai (Chairperson of MAW HK), Professor Rosie Young (Honorary Advisor of MAW HK), Dr Kevin Lau (Honorary Advisor of MAW HK), Ms Linda Choy (Honorary Advisor of MAW HK), Professor Philip Chiu (Dean of Medicine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong), Professor Ivan Hung (Professor of the Department of Medicine of the University of Hong Kong), Dr Lee Tsz-leung (Hospital Chief Executive of Hong Kong Children's Hospital), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great pleasure to join you at this gala dinner to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Make-A-Wish Hong Kong.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Make-A-Wish Hong Kong for its unswerving support and dedicated commitment to children in need over the past 25 years. Since its establishment in 1998, Make-A-Wish Hong Kong has made great success in fulfilling the wishes of over 2 200 three to 17-year-old children in Hong Kong and Macao with critical illnesses. Make-A-Wish Hong Kong aims to bring hope, strength and joy to these children and their families during their most difficult time by making their wishes come true. Such a tendering and philanthropic cause well deserves the full support of everyone.

The current-term Government attaches great importance to the promotion of tripartite collaboration among the Government, the community and the business sector to direct resources to those that are most in need. To take the lead, the Government has introduced various cross-sectoral programmes in collaboration with different sectors, including Make-A-Wish Hong Kong, to respond to the needs of the underprivileged.

In 2008, the Government set up the Child Development Fund (CDF) to promote the longer-term development of children from disadvantaged background. So far, over \$1,080 million has been injected into the Fund to support more than 310 projects operated by schools and NGOs, benefitting over 26 000 underprivileged children. The Fund actively promotes collaborative efforts among the private sector, the community and the Government. While the Government supports schools and NGOs to implement projects through the Fund, the private sector contributes matching funds to the saving plans of the participating students and volunteers from the community who serve as mentors to provide guidance to the young participants in mapping out personal development plans and applying savings to implement their plans.

Considering the time required for the development of children, participating schools and NGOs provide three-year projects comprising key training and capacity building programmes to encourage children to plan for their future, build up a savings habit and accumulate intangible assets such as a positive attitude, personal resilience, social network and more that are all essential attributes for their long-term development.

The Fund will launch the next batch of projects in the first quarter of 2024. Let me take this opportunity to make an appeal to interested primary schools and NGOs to join hands with the Government to extend the reach of CDF projects to more underprivileged children. Of course, any donations from individuals and enterprises to support the saving plans of the participating children will be hugely appreciated!

The Government endeavours to enable our next generation to strive together with determination to achieve their goals and pursue their dreams. We trust Make-A-Wish Hong Kong will continue to partner with us in creating an enabling environment for the betterment of our young ones. On this note, I would like to extend my warmest wishes on the Silver Jubilee of Make-A-Wish Hong Kong, and my deep gratitude for its generous support for children over the past 25 years. I wish Make-A-Wish Hong Kong continuous success and every one of you an enjoyable and memorable evening.

Thank you.

