

Speech by DCS at Opening Ceremony of 42nd Asian and Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators (English only) (With photo)

Following is the speech by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing, at the Opening Ceremony of the 42nd Asian and Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators (APCCA) today (November 18):

Deputy Director General Cheng Wei (Deputy Director General of the Bureau of Prison Administration, the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China), Secretary Tang Ping-keung (Secretary for Security), Commissioner Wong Kwok-hing (Commissioner of Correctional Services), Emeritus Professor Neil Morgan (APCCA Rapporteur), Mrs Irene Morgan (APCCA Rapporteur), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great honour to, on behalf of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, welcome you all to the 42nd Asian and Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators (APCCA). It is exceedingly good to see more than 140 professionals of prison and correctional administrations joining this year's five-day conference. We warmly welcome delegations from 29 jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region, including 16 Belt and Road countries, to come to our city. Hong Kong is privileged and proud to be the host of APCCA for the fourth time. The presence of so many heads and deputy heads of correctional institutions at this conference speaks volumes for the status and importance of APCCA.

The theme of this year's conference is "Collaboration for Sustainable and High-quality Development", which highlights our keen determination to advance and deepen multilateral co-operation among the correctional authorities in the Asia-Pacific region to achieve sustainable and high-quality development in the realm of corrections.

The Hong Kong Correctional Services Department (HKCSD) is a linchpin of Hong Kong's social stability. With the Department's strenuous efforts in ensuring a safe and secure custodial environment, providing diversified rehabilitation programmes and extending its reach beyond the prison walls through promoting crime prevention education in the community, Hong Kong's recidivism rate has recorded a significant decrease from 39.9 per cent in 2000 to 21.7 per cent in 2021, making Hong Kong one of the safest cities in the world. This outstanding achievement did not come easily.

Over the years, the HKCSD has put a strong focus on applying innovation and technology to raise its management efficiency, the level of security of correctional institutions and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes. The HKCSD launched the Smart Prison protocol in 2018. Since then, technology

projects covering different areas of prison administration have been introduced in its institutions. For four consecutive years from 2021 to 2024, the HKCSD was awarded silver medals for its innovative projects by the International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva, the largest global exhibition devoted exclusively to inventions.

The HKCSD has also been making use of technology to provide e-services for the convenience of the public. For example, a Social Visit e-Booking Service was launched last year for members of the public to schedule visits to persons in custody online. This e-booking service project and another smart prison project, the Integrated Custodial and Rehabilitation Management System, won the Hong Kong Smart City Initiative of the Year at the GovMedia Awards 2024, which gives recognition to outstanding government initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region to honour organisations that exemplify leadership, creativity and impactful results in public services. The HKCSD would be sharing its experience in launching these initiatives later during the conference.

Apart from its core duties, the HKCSD also endeavours to strengthen professional exchanges and collaboration with counterparts at regional and international levels. For example, the HKCSD has participated in international conferences and functions such as APCCA and the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) Conference. In September this year, HKCSD's Project JET rehabilitation project was awarded the 2024 Community Corrections Award, an award presented by the ICPA for remarkable results achieved in the corrections profession. These achievements are not only conducive to closer cooperation with our counterparts and a wider network of correctional systems, but also help Hong Kong's integration into the overall national development and telling our story worldwide.

Following this APCCA conference, the HKCSD will next host the first Greater Bay Area Correctional Tactical Skills Competition early next year, which aims to foster an exchange of experiences in crisis management and reinforce the rapport between the HKCSD and other correctional authorities in the Greater Bay Area. If you do not already know, ladies and gentlemen, the Greater Bay Area comprises 11 cities in the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao area with a combined population of 86 million. The competition will be another precious opportunity for strengthening regional collaboration on handling correctional emergencies.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have no doubt that you have a packed programme in the next few days. But if at all possible, please find time to go around the city which has quite a lot to offer in terms of food and beverage, local characteristic, transport efficiency, arts and culture and so on. I assure you that you would find the time spent worthwhile.

Lastly, I want to thank the HKCSD for organising this important regional gathering. I wish the conference great success, and all of you a good and fulfilling time in the week ahead. Thank you very much.

