

Speech by FS at Opening Ceremony of HKTDC SmartBiz Expo and Asian E-tailing Summit (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Opening Ceremony of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) SmartBiz Expo and Asian E-tailing Summit this morning (December 5):

Margaret (Executive Director of the HKTDC, Ms Margaret Fong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I'm pleased to join you today for the joint opening of the SmartBiz Expo and the Asian E-tailing Summit.

The Expo and the Summit debuted last year. And they're back again for good reason. They bring companies and professionals together. They create connections. And they help keep you informed of the latest e-tailing and business technology developments. In short, the Expo and the Summit help you, and your business, excel.

So does Hong Kong as well. Last year, Hong Kong ranked 16th in the B2C E-commerce Index, designed by the United Nations Conference on Trade Development to track global e-trade environment.

Our telecommunications infrastructure is among the most advanced in the world, with a household broadband penetration rate of about 93 per cent, and our mobile penetration rate is sky high, at almost 250 per cent.

Our strengths as a regional logistics hub and sophisticated ICT centre are supercharged by Hong Kong's free flow of capital, goods and information, and by our unparalleled supply-chain management services.

At the SmartBiz Expo you'll find plenty of examples of innovative Hong Kong technology brought to life by our renowned R&D centres and institutions.

The Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute, working with a Swedish organisation, for example, has developed a Biometric Access Control System. It uses a biometric verification device to capture a person's palm vein and palm print patterns. The fusion technology offers high levels of security for identification and verification in e-tailing.

Then there's our Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech R&D Centre, jointly run by three local universities. The Centre is working to connect our logistics industry with the Zhuhai Electronics Port for import and export trade declarations. That will expedite processing time for such declarations,

while giving companies a more accurate estimation of tax rates.

At the Government level, last December, we released the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong, underscoring the Government's commitment to improving quality of life for the people of Hong Kong, while boosting the effectiveness of city management.

We're going to be a smart city in any number of ways, including the provision of an electronic identity for all Hong Kong residents.

Through electronic identity, citizens will be able to conduct government and commercial transactions online, simply and securely. It will also enable business and consumers to connect, promoting e-commerce, digital trade and online payment.

Our Innovation and Technology Bureau set up TechConnect last year to help Government departments boost their operational efficiency through technology. To date, the programme has supported more than 40 departmental technology projects. They range from enhance customs clearance for cross-boundary vehicles and cargo to strengthening integrated weather monitoring.

We're also setting up a Smart Government Innovation Lab, inviting industry, including e-tailers, to put forward I&T ideas for various public services. And we'll arrange trials and technology testing for suitable proposals. This should boost business opportunities for local start-ups and SMEs.

To encourage SMEs to make wider use of technology, we launched the Technology Voucher Programme in 2016 which subsidises SMEs in using technological services and solutions to improve productivity, or upgrade or transform their business processes. The eligibility of the Programme was relaxed earlier this year to benefit start-ups operating for less than one year and remove the restriction on the number of staff employed.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know you will enjoy today's Asian E-tailing Summit. And with this year's SmartBiz Expo running for three days, you've got good time to check out the Expo's 500-plus exhibitors in different smart thematic zones such as the Techtopia, which is packed with the latest technology; the Boosters, offering SMEs one-stop shopping for business services; and the Hatchery, where tech start-ups can showcase their golden eggs to potential partners.

It's all designed to help you, and your business, connect and excel.

For that, I'm grateful to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, organiser of the Summit and the Expo.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you smart business and a rewarding New Year.

Thank you.

