

# Speech by FS at opening reception of Centrestage Elites 2019 (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the opening reception of Centrestage Elites 2019 today (September 4):

Lawrence (Chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council Garment Advisory Committee, Mr Lawrence Leung), Margaret (Executive Director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Ms Margaret Fong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am very pleased to join you all today for this fourth edition of Centrestage.

The name speaks for itself: Centrestage puts talented designers from Hong Kong and around the world in the international fashion spotlight. It is an effective platform for them to launch and promote their collections right here in the heart of Asia. This year, Centrestage gathers some 240 fashion brands from over 20 countries and regions. We especially welcome first-time participants from Cambodia, Colombia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria and Turkey, further reinforcing Centrestage's reputation as a premier international fashion event.

As always, Centrestage promises to be a spectacular fashion extravaganza. This four-day gala covers a wide range of fashion happenings, including the Hong Kong Young Fashion Designers' Contest; the two-day Fashion Summit, bringing together fashion gurus to discuss latest sustainable trends; and the Hong Kong in Fashion programme, which comprises citywide fashion parades, a photo exhibition and workshops.

An annual highlight is, of course, Centrestage Elites. I am delighted that this year's "Elites" include acclaimed local designer Anais Mak, whose brand made its runway debut in the prestigious Paris Fashion Week last year. We are also pleased to welcome US designer Joseph Altuzarra, who has come all the way from New York to present his latest collection.

Hong Kong is never short of fashion talent. And we are determined to provide them with more opportunities to shine. We have funded the Redress Design Award, which advocates sustainable fashion. Its final runway show and alumni showcase is part of the Centrestage programme.

The Hong Kong SAR Government places strong emphasis on nurturing local design talent. We started the Fashion Incubation Programme two years ago and have already supported 15 emerging fashion designer brands. The programme will soon enter its Phase II next year.

We will also invest in the Sham Shui Po Design and Fashion Project,

situated in a district with a long and fascinating history as a base for the garment and apparel trades. The project, expected to be completed in 2023-24, will provide another platform to inspire and nurture our fashion designers.

Finally, I would like to thank members of our fashion design industry for their unfailing support of Centrestage and of our thriving fashion industry as a whole. I also thank the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and many other parties for organising this Centrestage and its concurrent events. I wish Centrestage 2019 a resounding success, and all of you an enjoyable and memorable evening.

Thank you.

