

Speech by S for IT at opening ceremony of International Conference on Computational Thinking Education 2018 cum Coding Fair (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, at the opening ceremony of the International Conference on Computational Thinking Education 2018 cum Coding Fair today (June 14):

Stephen (President of the Education University of Hong Kong, Professor Stephen Cheung), Margie (Chairperson of the Steering Committee of CoolThink@JC, Ms Marjorie Yang), Leong (Executive Director, Charities and Community, the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Cheung Leong), Horace (Vice-President (Student Affairs) of the City University of Hong Kong, Professor Horace Ip), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all first. I am really pleased to be here today, joining you at the International Conference on Computational Thinking Education 2018 cum Coding Fair. Today is the second edition of this conference, which serves as an excellent platform to attract hundreds of pioneers in computational thinking education from all over the world, including internationally recognised academics, front-line education practitioners, and most importantly innovation and technology (I&T) professionals.

Thanks to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. This event will not be possible without its generous support for CoolThink@JC. And I am personally a staunch supporter of CoolThink. In fact, I have attended several CoolThink events and visited some primary schools joining CoolThink. I firmly believe learning coding skills and computational thinking from an early age can prepare our youth to tackle challenges in their daily lives. CoolThink brings together the Education University of Hong Kong, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the City University of Hong Kong. Through a train-the-trainer programme, CoolThink offers some 16 000 primary students at 32 schools early exposure to coding and computational thinking. I believe such skill building will inspire our very young students' creativity and problem-solving.

To ensure Hong Kong catches up with other economies in the global innovation and technology race, the Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address last October that the Government will promote I&T development in eight major areas. These include talent development and strengthening popular science education. The Education Bureau has updated the curricula of the STEM Education Key Learning Areas, and published the draft supplementary document on "Computational Thinking – Coding Education" for use by all our schools, providing opportunities for students to learn and apply

computational thinking and coding skills.

Computational thinking is becoming more important in many different professions. It is not only for better understanding and making optimal use of technology. It is also a means to create new technology and new innovation.

I am delighted to see events like the Coding Fair today organised and embraced by our tertiary education sector. This helps our younger generation to equip themselves with an innovative mindset and the skills set for the digital era, via computational thinking and coding.

Before I close, let me express my gratitude to the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the Education University of Hong Kong, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the City University of Hong Kong for the great effort in promoting computational thinking in Hong Kong. Have fun with the Coding Fair!

Thank you very much.