

Speech by SCS at Education & Careers Expo 2024 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, at the opening ceremony of the Education & Careers Expo 2024 organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre this morning (January 25):

Margaret (Executive Director, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Ms Margaret Fong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great pleasure to join you for the opening of this year's Education & Careers Expo.

This is in fact my second time representing the Civil Service Bureau to officiate at this event. The first time was in 2021, and I can remember vividly that we were all adorned with masks then. Now, as Hong Kong has returned to complete normalcy, and our economy is steadily recuperating, I am absolutely thrilled to be part of this signature event once again.

Hong Kong's treasure lies in its people. Generations of Hong Kong people have toiled to excel in their studies and jobs and progress in their career over the decades. Their efforts have contributed to the success of Hong Kong, a success that has brought us prosperity and high world rankings in many areas. I am grateful to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council for holding the Education & Careers Expo every year to provide students and job seekers with a platform that enables them to access comprehensive and the most updated information about education, training and a vast array of career opportunities, helping them on their way to personal success and helping Hong Kong to strengthen its local talent pool, thereby maintaining our competitiveness.

As the largest employer in Hong Kong, offering over 190 000 full-time jobs in the civil service alone, the Government has a wide range of opportunities for those who are willing and ready to work hard and keep learning to achieve success. In recent years, we have proactively implemented a series of measures to attract people with aspiration to serve the community through joining the civil service. To facilitate job seekers, more departments and grades are now conducting year-round recruitment. We place paramount importance on youth development and have adopted a multifaceted approach to attract more young people to embark on a fulfilling journey with us. Since June 2023, we have expanded the pool of eligible candidates for certain civil service positions to include undergraduate or postgraduate students in their penultimate year of study. In September and October 2023, the Government held the first large-scale Government Career Fair in three local universities, allowing students to gain insights into the work of over 40 civil service grades and departments.

In this year's Education & Careers Expo, the Civil Service Bureau and government departments will together conduct a total of 19 sharing sessions to introduce different job opportunities available within the Government, some of which are less well-known by the public, to students and job-seekers.

In addition to welcoming local students and job seekers, we extend a warm invitation to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including Hong Kong students who are pursuing studies on the Mainland and overseas, as well as those who are working, to join the Government. With our proactive recruitment efforts, we have witnessed a consistent and notable increase in the number of applications for civil service jobs. To name but a few, the number of applications for the post of Inspector of Customs and Excise has increased from 4 000 to 7 600, i.e. an increase of 90 per cent, and for Immigration Officer, the number has increased from 4 500 to 6 300, i.e. an increase of 40 per cent. The Recruitment Centre for the year-round recruitment of Assistant Clerical Officers, Clerical Assistants and Personal Secretaries has received about 16 000 applications after its establishment in October 2023, that is only within three months.

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While there may exist a general perception that civil service work is rigid and conservative, I want to assure you that a career in the civil service is profoundly meaningful and brimming with exciting challenges. You will undoubtedly sense this firsthand while visiting the booths of different government departments, where you will encounter inspiring tales of dedicated civil servants, their unwavering commitment to serving the community and hear real-life examples of how civil servants overcome difficulties to create a caring community and a vibrant economy. We wholeheartedly welcome every talented individual to join the civil service and, together, strive towards building a brighter and better Hong Kong.

There is an education side of this Expo too, with local, Mainland and overseas education opportunities as well as continuing education, lifelong learning and career planning information and programmes ready to be introduced to students and participants of all ages. I had worked in the Education Bureau, and to this day the provision of diverse and quality education opportunities to students and adults who are keen to improve themselves remains a matter very close to my heart. Thank you again to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council for making available this great opportunity for students and others to engage with educational institutions directly.

In closing, may I extend my sincere wish for this year's Education & Careers Expo to be a great success. There is an old saying, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in life." May all participants have a fruitful and rewarding experience at this exhibition, to be followed by the pursuit of an education path or a career that resonates with your passions and brings you lifelong fulfilment. Thank you.