

# Speech by Secretary for Health at signing ceremony of MoU for establishment of Hong Kong Jockey Club Global Health Institute (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, at the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Global Health Institute (HKJCGHI) today (November 15):

Dr David Li (Pro-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong (HKU)), Ms Priscilla Wong (Chairman of the HKU Council), Professor Zhang Xiang (President and Vice-Chancellor of the HKU), Mr Michael Lee (Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC)), Mr Engelbrecht-Bresges (Chief Executive Officer of the HKJC, Mr Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges), Professor Gabriel Leung (Executive Director, Charities and Community of the HKJC, Dr Gabriel Leung), Mr Bickerstaff (Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the International Vaccine Institute, Mr George Bickerstaff), Professor Maxwell (Regius Professor of Physic and Head of the School of Clinical Medicine at the University of Cambridge, Professor Patrick Maxwell), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I stand before you today as the Secretary for Health to express my immense gratitude and appreciation for a momentous occasion that brings together four esteemed institutions: the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the International Vaccine Institute, the University of Hong Kong and the Cambridge University towards the establishment of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Global Health Institute.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the HKJC for their exemplary philanthropy. As the world emerges and recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, and moves to the post-COVID-19 era, we must remain on our guard and be prepared for the next one. We must respond swiftly to future public health threats. As announced in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address", the HKJC will make a donation of HK\$3 billion to support the Government to strengthen epidemic preparedness in Hong Kong. These measures include surveillance, early warning and infection control mechanisms; joint disease prevention and control work with Mainland authorities; as well as international collaboration in vaccine development. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated graphically and comprehensively the critical importance of vaccine innovation and development as well as global health co-operation. The establishment of the HKJCGHI marks an important milestone in this mission.

This new Institute will facilitate international collaboration in

vaccine research and create a unique amalgamation of expertise and resources. It will foster multidisciplinary research, enabling scientists, immunologists, virologists and public health experts to work together seamlessly. Together, they will pave the way for groundbreaking discoveries, cutting-edge innovations and novel approaches in vaccine development, and will bolster regional and international vaccine industry development to translate research into clinical practice. Through this partnership, the development of innovative and effective vaccines that benefit not just our regional community but also the global population can be expedited. The HKJCGHI will act as a central hub for research, development and translation, ensuring that equitable distribution for life-saving vaccines will reach every corner of the globe, particularly those in underserved and marginalised communities.

Investing in research and development (R&D) is not just about addressing the immediate crisis at hand, but rather, it is an investment in our future. The Global Health Institute will play a crucial role in strengthening our preparedness for future pandemics and outbreaks, giving us the capacity to respond swiftly and effectively. It will also serve as a training ground for the next generation of scientists and healthcare professionals. By nurturing young minds and providing them with state-of-the-art facilities and mentorship, we will empower them to become future leaders in the field of global health.

Lastly, I want to emphasise the importance of collaboration in this Institute. The fight against pandemics and infectious diseases requires a united front, where governments, academia, private sector, and civil society work hand in hand. The HKJC, the International Vaccine Institute, the HKU and the Cambridge University are leading by example, demonstrating the power of collaboration and collective actions.

By the same token, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is also determined to leverage our medical strengths to develop Hong Kong into a health and medical innovation hub, and enable more pharmaceutical and medical device enterprises to conduct R&D and clinical trials in Hong Kong. As stated in the 2023 Policy Address, Hong Kong will enhance our medical product regulatory system and establish the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute (GBAICTI) in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone.

The GBAICTI will provide a one-stop clinical trial support platform for medical research institutions, and facilitate co-operation with the clinical trial networks on the Mainland, in particular in the GBA. It could make good use of Hong Kong's strengths in clinical research and international experience, and capitalise on Shenzhen's biomedical clusters and huge clinical volume in the GBA to enhance the cross-boundary ecosystem for clinical trials, thereby accelerating R&D and the availability of quality medical products to benefit the people, and promoting biomedical industry development. I am sure that there would be scope for collaboration between the GBAICTI and the HKJCGHI in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to again express my deep gratitude to the

HKJC for their extraordinary donation towards the establishment of this Global Health Institute. This contribution will not only save lives but will also serve as a shining example of what can be achieved when we unite under a common cause. Let us all come together, embrace the spirit of collaboration, and work towards a healthier and more resilient future for the world. Thank you.

