

Speech by SITI at InnoTech Forum 2024 (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, at the InnoTech Forum 2024 today (October 18):

Alpha (Director-General of Investment Promotion, Ms Alpha Lau), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great pleasure to join you all today at the InnoTech Forum 2024 organised by InvestHK. Themed "Pioneering in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and New Energy Era", this full-day forum brings together experts from diverse fields to explore how Hong Kong can establish itself as a global leader in innovation and technology (I&T).

Technological empowerment is the cornerstone of achieving high-quality economic development. It accelerates the emergence of new quality productive forces and enables industries to adapt and thrive in the increasingly competitive local, regional and global arenas. As we navigate in this new era, we must harness technology not just for individual success or lucrative business, but for collective growth that benefits our society.

Just two days ago, our Chief Executive unveiled a range of initiatives in his third Policy Address, reinforcing Hong Kong's commitment to becoming an international I&T centre. This year's theme, "Reform for Enhancing Development and Building Our Future Together", emphasises the importance of collective growth. That means your success is our success, and together we can scale new heights and build a brighter future for Hong Kong.

AI, as this year's forum highlights, remains a key driver of I&T and business development. To support enterprises like yours in leveraging AI technologies, the Government has invested billions of dollars in cultivating an all-round AI ecosystem here in Hong Kong. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the exciting developments that are under way.

Talking about AI development, computation facility is pivotal. Cyberport will soon put into operation its AI Supercomputing Centre (AISC) to support the strong computing demand from universities, research institutes and the industry. With its first-phase facility capable of providing at least 300 petaFLOPS and in a year or so, the computing power will be augmented to a level of 3 000 petaFLOPS; the AISC will offer top-notch, high-performance computing facilities and serve as a collaborative platform to foster AI-driven research and innovation. Apart from Cyberport, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation has officially launched the High-Performance Computing service last month, which is expected to support the growth of around 300 companies working on AI and data technology in Science Park's ecosystem.

To support the commissioning of the AISC, the Government has allocated \$3 billion to launch a three-year AI Subsidy Scheme. This significant sum is aimed at subsidising eligible users of the AISC to leverage the computing power, by offering a subsidy of up to 70 per cent of the list price of the computing power or 90 per cent in exceptional cases. Cyberport has also been tasked to promote the AI ecosystem and enable AI enterprises and talent to land in Hong Kong through the scheme. I encourage you to tap into our latest technology infrastructure at Cyberport, where we hope to see even more scientific breakthroughs.

AI has taken the world by storm, revolutionising not only industries but also the Government. The provision of public services must harness this powerful technology. The Policy Address announced that the Government will pilot the use of a generative AI document processing copilot application, developed on the basis of a locally trained large language model, within the Government to assist staff in writing, translating and summarising documents. This trial run will also lend support to Hong Kong's exploration in generative AI technologies and enrich the use cases for better, accurate and localised outcomes.

In fact, a number of the hundred digital government and smart city initiatives that the Government presses ahead for rollout this year and next will make use of AI technology. For instance, we have expanded the AI chatbot service for the 1823 enquiry service, making it much more adept at handling the public's frequently asked questions within its scope of service. This improves user experience and allows our staff to focus on other complex tasks, thereby lifting the overall service quality. The judicious application of AI in the Government will advance our digital government and smart city development, benefitting both the people and businesses of Hong Kong, and bringing them closer to the fruition of I&T development.

Ladies and gentleman, Hong Kong stands on the cusp of making ground-breaking strides by capitalising on the vast potential of AI and other cutting-edge technologies. We are partners in this journey to seize the opportunities that lie ahead. So let's invest in technology, invest in innovation, and invest in Hong Kong. Together, we can push the boundaries of what is possible to make Hong Kong a truly international I&T centre.

In closing, I would like to thank InvestHK for making this happen, and I hope you would leave this forum with mind-blowing takeaways. Thank you.

