

Speech by SLW at 1st OSH Innovation and Technology Award Presentation Ceremony (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, at the 1st OSH (occupational safety and health) Innovation and Technology (I&T) Award Presentation Ceremony organised by the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) this afternoon (March 8):

Cindy (Chair of OSH Innovation and Information Technology Committee of OSHC, Mrs Cindy Chow), David (Chairman of the OSHC, Dr David Mong), May (Commissioner for Labour, Ms May Chan), friends and distinguished guests, both locally and from all over the world,

I am really thrilled to be back to this venue. You have been very kind to give me a round-trip ticket – I was here for the opening ceremony yesterday, and I also had the privilege of having a quick tour around this hall and try some of the new gadgets and innovations in improving occupational safety. I am really impressed.

I am back here for the closing ceremony and I know I got a very important job to take – to give you a few remarks about the first ever OSH I&T Award. I am sure this is the child of the OSHC. This award ceremony cannot be held successfully without the support of the Labour Department (LD), Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks, Cyberport, I&T organisations and trade associations. Thank you so much for your assistance and help to make this possible.

I am very glad to see a lot of young faces here. For this very first I&T award, we have received nearly 130 entries, including 78 under the Secondary School Category, which is very important. We see a bright future from the enthusiastic participation from secondary school students. Around 50 entries are from the Open Category, which are more sophisticated and equally creative. This competition signifies Hong Kong's drive and determination in promoting the use of I&T to raise the OSH standard in Hong Kong, as we can see from the amazing winning projects from the public and secondary school students exhibited here today. I think many of you have visited the booths and tried out their inventions.

As Cindy said, their look might be rudimentary; what's more important is the idea and the thinking behind. With a little bit help from the professionals, I am sure some of the products might eventually become products that can be commercialised and make some money. I really look forward to it one day.

As we all know, technology – in particular modern technology – can save you money and time. When it comes to OSH, it can also save your life, which is really important. Very sadly, recently there have been a couple of

accidents happening inside confined spaces. We truly believe by making use of modern technology, there are various practical ways for us to improve the safety environment in confined spaces.

One example is the use of Light Detection and Ranging system and sensors to allow the operation of the cage drone in enclosed and GPS-denied areas, such as boilers, to carry out safety inspections as well as maintenance. The use of such technology will allow us to inspect confined spaces in a safer, more controllable and comprehensive manner. Apart from saving lives, it will also save us the time and cost of erecting scaffolding, which is a win-win solution. I encourage all of you to consider it. Moreover, the video recording by a cage drone helps workers analyse the condition and defects of facilities in fine detail so that maintenance can be carried out at the right moment to prevent deterioration of equipment.

To go alongside the advancement in technology, the LD is updating the Code of Practice – Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces (CoP). We will be issuing the revised CoP very soon – in the coming couple of weeks. The revised CoP will put in place some new requirements for works in confined spaces, such as installing cameras at the entrances and exits of confined spaces during works to improve monitoring and supervision. By using cameras and making it known to everybody that the camera is on, we believe this will enhance worker's compliance with safety measures. We hope by publishing the revised CoP, we are going to see a significant improvement in the safety operation for those working in confined spaces.

The Government is well aware of the advantages of applying technology in works projects to enhance site safety. Since last year, the Development Bureau has introduced the new requirement of using the Smart Site Safety System (SSSS) in public works with a contract sum exceeding \$30 million. In addition, a fund has been set up in the Construction Industry Council to encourage private sectors to use the SSSS at their worksites. The SSSS is featured with a centralised management platform which provides a one-stop hub for alerts generation. It can be used to provide timely alerts to site management staff if abnormalities are detected, for example an exceptional long stay of a staff member in a confined space, unauthorised entry into dangerous areas, or improper movement of construction equipment.

Ladies and gentlemen, in this century of I&T, it is ever more important for us to harness and be creative in the use of technology. I am sure the increased application of I&T in OSH will save lives and reduce injuries, which in turn will enhance the well-being of workers and our citizens. I am fully grateful to the work of the OSHC, my dear colleagues at the LD and co-organisers for your unfailing efforts on this front. Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to all the winners today. I hope you could convert your innovative ideas into daily use, to enhance the occupational safety and health in Hong Kong.

Thank you very much.