

Speech by STL at Cathay Pacific Cadet Pilot Programme graduation ceremony (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, at the Cathay Pacific Cadet Pilot Programme graduation ceremony today (June 27):

Lavinia (Chief Customer and Commercial Officer of Cathay Pacific, Ms Lavinia Lau), Rebecca (Chief Financial Officer of Cathay Pacific Group, Ms Rebecca Sharpe), Chris (Director Flight Operations of Cathay Pacific, Mr Chris Kempis), Patricia (Director People of Cathay Pacific, Ms Patricia Hwang), Clara (Assistant Director-General of Civil Aviation (Flight Standards), Miss Clara Wong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I'm honoured to be here today to celebrate with you the graduation of Cathay Pacific's (CX) Cadet Pilot Programme.

This event today is a particularly meaningful and momentous occasion. For the first time in three years, we are finally able to gather here to celebrate the achievements of the Cadet Pilot Programme graduates.

Talents are the backbone of the development of the local aviation industry. We firmly believe that there is huge potential for Hong Kong to become not only an international aviation hub, but also a leading centre for aviation training in the world. The National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Greater Bay Area outline development plan have also reaffirmed the Central Government's unwavering support for Hong Kong in enhancing our position as an international aviation hub.

Against such a backdrop, it has all along been the Government's policy to promote localisation by encouraging local airlines to invest resources in training local cadet pilots. We firmly believe that in the long run, only by enlarging the pool of local aviation talents can we sustain the development of Hong Kong's aviation industry. In this regard, we very much appreciate CX's continuous efforts in promoting manpower training, especially in nurturing local aviation talents. The well-established CX Cadet Pilot Programme, renowned for its well-structured curriculum and top-notch teaching, has trained more than 1 000 cadet pilots for Hong Kong, making a significant contribution to the local aviation industry. We are also glad to learn that last year, CX signed an agreement with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to collaborate on a new local integrated course for CX's cadet pilot training programme.

Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic in the past few years, I am delighted to witness today the graduation of 19 cadet pilots. I understand that this is the largest graduating class to date under CX's

cadet training programme which began more than 30 years ago. With the pandemic now behind us and the aviation industry continuing to make great strides in its recovery, I am convinced that the opportunities ahead of our graduates are endless.

Looking ahead, a number of major airport development programmes are underway. The Government and the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) are working full steam at taking forward projects including the Three-Runway System and the transformation of our airport into an "Airport City". Following the completion of these developments, I'm sure that there will be a higher volume of air traffic which entails greater demand for aviation talents.

The Government is fully aware of the manpower challenges faced by the industry, so please rest assured that we are adopting a multi-pronged approach to address the issue. Not only have we and the AAHK helped to step up local recruitment efforts by organising numerous large-scale job fairs, but the AAHK has also taken various measures to relieve pressure on frontline staff and improve the airport's working conditions. Some of the more notable changes on this front are the deployment of automation technologies at the airport to save manpower, a staff pooling scheme to provide hired hands at busy hours and the opening of the HKIA Community Building, as well as the catering, leisure and nursery facilities in which I am sure some of you have also enjoyed as airport staff.

As a quick relief, apart from supporting continual training and skill upgrading through the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund and the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy, we are also rolling out a sector-specific scheme for labour importation for the aviation industry, which we hope, together with continual local recruitment efforts, will provide the industry with sufficient people to help us consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub.

On this special occasion, I'd like to congratulate all of our graduates on completing the cadet training programme successfully and with flying colours. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours. Thank you.