[Speech by STL at First Anniversary Ceremony of Smart Mobility Technology (C-V2X) Alliance (English only) (with photo)](#)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, at the First Anniversary Ceremony of Smart Mobility Technology (C-V2X) Alliance today (April 15):

Sunny (Board Chairman of Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute (ASTRI), Mr Sunny Lee), Denis (Chief Executive Officer of ASTRI, Dr Denis Yip), distinguished guests, friends and speakers, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon everyone. Having witnessed the birth of the Smart Mobility Technology (C-V2X) Alliance last year, it gives me great pleasure to be here again today to celebrate the first anniversary of the Alliance.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to ASTRI for building this platform, which brings together policymakers, industry leaders and stakeholders to discuss the future of Hong Kong's smart mobility landscape.

Since the release of the Smart City Blueprint (Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong) in 2017, as well as the Blueprint 2.0 (Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0) in 2020, the Government has never ceased its efforts in advancing smart city initiatives. We have also made significant progress in the past few years.

Take autonomous vehicle (AV) technology as an example, it not only offers the advantages of eliminating human errors and preventing driving misconduct, but also opens a new window of opportunity for better assimilation of different traffic rules in Hong Kong. The driving systems in Hong Kong and the Mainland differ in terms of left- and right-hand driving, as well as traffic regulations. Without the presence of drivers on board, AVs are no longer bound by some of the restrictions imposed on conventional drivers and can accommodate different driving rules and systems, thereby contributing to the integration of driving modes between the Mainland and Hong Kong, and the traffic plying between the two areas.

I had the privilege of riding on board different AVs in various cities of our motherland since I took up this role in the middle of 2022, including Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Hangzhou. I have always been impressed by their performance.

Today, autonomous driving is still an emerging technology that requires

further study and testing in our city. And public awareness and acceptance are part and parcel to the long-term development of the new technology. Currently, there are already quite a few AV trials taking place in different locations across the territory, for example, university campuses, residential areas, the Science Park, as well as the West Kowloon Cultural District, and ASTRI is one of the key drivers.

I have once said that the focus of autonomous driving in Mainland China is on taxi, and my thinking is very different for Hong Kong. If I apply autonomous driving in Hong Kong, I would like to use it on a minibus. For a double-decker bus without any driver, it may cast doubt because a double-decker bus is quite a big vehicle, but for a minibus that serves about 10 to 20 passengers, probably this is the middle way that we are more comfortable with. From my previous work experience with the MTR, as I work closely with the MTR before, an MTR train without drivers, when first introduced in a decade ago, made people nervous. So at that time, we placed a human being in the driving cabin, but actually that human being does not serve any driving purpose. It is just for public announcement purpose, but people are quite comfortable as long as they see a man or woman standing there.

Despite the efforts from the industry, the Government has paved the way for wider and more flexible trials and application of AVs in Hong Kong by introducing a new regulatory regime for trial and use of AVs last December, and the new framework came into effect just last month.

This marks a key milestone of the Government's continued efforts in promoting smart mobility and demonstrates our great ambition and strong commitment to further application and adoption of autonomous vehicles in Hong Kong.

On top of policy guidance and regulatory framework, the Government has also been providing funding support to R&D (research and development) institutions and the academia, as well as enterprises through the $1 billion Smart Traffic Fund for conducting research and application of innovation and technology, including autonomous driving and related technologies since 2021. So far, there are eight approved projects related to autonomous driving and V2X (vehicle-to-everything) technology. We will continue to provide staunch support to academia and the industry to keep autonomous driving and V2X technologies thriving. And I am very much looking forward that the citizens of Hong Kong will have the opportunity to take a trial ride on one of the test AVs by the end of this year. And this is a promise that I keep on saying, by the end of this year we should be able to offer one of the trial rides for passengers to ride on the bus or the minibus that we are testing.

In addition, the Government has proposed under the ongoing Traffic and Transport Strategy Study to further promote the development of AVs in Hong Kong. Fulfilling this potential will require close collaboration between the Government and various stakeholders ranging from the industry, academia and the research sector — that is, every one of you. I appeal to your active participation and unfailing support in developing and deploying autonomous

driving and V2X technologies in Hong Kong. Your contribution means a lot to us, and this is why a professional network like the Smart Mobility Technology (C-V2X) Alliance is of great value and significance. By bringing together leading experts and industry leaders, the Alliance provides an invaluable platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and problem solving. You are the driving force behind the breakthroughs that will make the future of smart mobility a reality in Hong Kong.

I am also pleased to learn that the findings of the Connected & Autonomous Vehicle Development Study in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area (GBA) will be announced today. Hong Kong and the rest of the GBA are poised to create unstoppable momentum towards a smart and sustainable future, unleashing the true potential of a leading smart city in the world.

Next year, we will be promulgating a long-term strategy blueprint which will outline our vision for Hong Kong's transportation landscape up to 2050. We will continue to keep abreast of the global technological development in respect of AVs and V2X, and I am confident that Hong Kong will remain at the forefront of the global smart mobility transformation.

As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, realising our vision requires the concerted efforts from every one of you. Together, let's keep tapping into the new frontiers of smart mobility while continuously maintaining the excellence of Hong Kong's world-renowned transport system.

Ladies and gentlemen, the HKSAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) Government has promulgated the Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles "港車北上" since last July, and we are mapping the way forward for the Southbound Travel for Guangdong Vehicles "粤車南下". I have a dream. One day, all the two schemes will be extended to autonomous vehicles, which means that integration with our motherland is not only for the people, but will be extended to vehicles as well. I am an engineer by training and I have been practicing engineering for over four decades. I fully appreciate the difficulties and complexity for this kind of task, which involves interoperability across the border. I will count on all the intelligent brains in front of me to get the work done and to turn my dream true, and I believe this should not be long.

Lastly, I wish that all of you will enjoy the event today. Thank you.