

# LCQ12: Motorcycle parking spaces in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing districts

Following is a question by the Hon Joephy Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

Some residents in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing districts have relayed that there are quite a number of hillside housing estates in the two districts, and travelling by motorcycle is more convenient for them. However, motorcycle parking spaces in the two districts have long been in shortage, and the emergence of the food delivery and courier industries in recent years has aggravated the situation. Besides, in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on February 28 this year, the Government indicated that there were a total of 1 355 on-street motorcycle parking spaces in the two districts last year, with their utilisation rates reaching 100 per cent in all of the past three years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of summonses issued by the Police for illegal parking of motorcycles in each of the two districts in each of the past three years;
- (2) of the current numbers and fees of motorcycle parking spaces in various car parks in the public housing estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority in the two districts (including car parks managed by private organisations such as Link Real Estate Investment Trust);
- (3) whether the Transport Department will show in the "HKeMobility" mobile application the remaining number of motorcycle parking spaces available in public and private car parks, so that drivers can choose suitable locations for parking;
- (4) as it is learnt that there is a greater demand for motorcycle parking spaces in hillside housing estates in the two districts (e.g. Cheung Shan Estate, Shek Wai Kok Estate, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tai Wo Hau Estate, Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Shing East Estate, Cheung Ching Estate and Cheung Hong Estate), whether the authorities will provide additional motorcycle parking spaces in the aforesaid housing estates and increase the proportion of motorcycle parking spaces in future development projects; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (5) whether the authorities will consider opening up car parks in government properties during night-time and/or non-office hours for motorcycle parking; if so, of the timetable and number of parking spaces to be made available; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (6) as there are views that the prolonged occupation of quite a number of

motorcycle parking spaces by "dead vehicles" (i.e. unclaimed vehicles) has forestalled their use by drivers with genuine need, of the measures put in place by the Police and other government departments to step up efforts to tackle the situation?

Reply:

President,

It is the Government's transport policy to centre on public transport with railway as the backbone. Hong Kong enjoys a well-developed public transport network, and the Government encourages the public to make good use of the public transport services as far as possible, so as to prevent too many private cars (PCs) and motorcycles, which have a smaller passenger carrying capacity, from aggravating the burden on road traffic. Nevertheless, the Government understands that some members of the public choose to commute by PCs or motorcycles for various reasons. Hence, the Government has been actively pursuing a host of short-term and medium-to-long-term measures to suitably increase the supply of parking spaces where circumstances permit, which include the following measures for motorcycles:

- (a) Utilising the spaces underneath flyovers for designation as motorcycle parking spaces;
- (b) Opening up more motorcycle parking spaces at government buildings for public use during non-office hours;
- (c) Continuing to provide additional on-street parking spaces for motorcycles at suitable locations while ensuring that traffic flow, road safety and the loading/unloading activities of vehicles would not be compromised;
- (d) Providing more motorcycle parking spaces for public use in suitable "Government, Institution or Community" facilities and public open space projects in accordance with the principle of "single site, multiple use"; and
- (e) Providing motorcycle parking spaces in development projects in accordance with the parking standards under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG).

As regards the Member's question, having consulted the Housing Bureau (HB), Transport Department (TD), Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) and Government Property Agency (GPA), a consolidated reply is provided as follows:

(1) The numbers of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued by the Police against illegal parking of motorcycles under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) over the past three years are tabulated below:

Year	2021	2022	2023
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Numbers of FPNs issued against illegal parking of motorcycles	171 633	199 734	191 817
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The Police does not maintain the above traffic enforcement statistics on a district basis.

(2) As at end March 2024, there are 22 car parks in the estates/courts/shopping centres/factory estates under the Housing Authority in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing districts, providing a total of about 820 motorcycle parking spaces. Among them, the monthly charges of open and covered motorcycle parking spaces are \$480 and \$630 respectively, while a flat rate of \$5 per hour is charged for hourly parking. A breakdown of number of motorcycle parking spaces by car parks is provided in Annex.

(3) Currently, drivers can use the "HKeMobility" mobile application to check the real-time parking vacancy information for various types of vehicles provided by participating operators of car parks (including public and private car parks). Users can select motorcycles in the types of vehicles under the layer icon to display the relevant information on the map.

(4) Roads at hillside housing estates in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing districts are mostly dual two-lane carriageways and sidewalks are also generally narrower, making the provision of additional on-street parking spaces more difficult. Nevertheless, the TD has been proactively identifying suitable locations in these two districts for the provision of additional on-street motorcycle parking spaces. For example, in recent years, 15 additional parking spaces have been provided on Lei Shu Road near Fung Shue House of Lei Muk Shue Estate while five parking spaces have been provided at Kwai Shing Circuit near Luen Yuet House of Kwai Luen Estate. In the coming year, the TD will also provide additional on-street motorcycle parking spaces in various places, including on Kwai Hau Street near Shing Kwok House of Kwai Shing East Estate, Kwai Luen Road near Block 8 of Kwai Shing West Estate, Tai Wo Hau Road near On Kwai House of Kwai Fuk Court, and Ching Hong Road near Cheung Hong Estate (Phase 4) Car Park.

The TD has been continuously reviewing the current standards for motorcycle parking spaces in residential developments under the HKPSG. The HKPSG sets out different parking standards for subsidised housing and private housing respectively based on the number of flats, and that appropriate amendments have been made having regard to factors such as the socio-economic situation and parking demand. Noting that the number of motorcycles has increased in recent years, which is probably due to the upsurge of demands for meal delivery and courier services in a short time during the epidemic, the TD will keep in view whether the situation will persist after the epidemic subsided, and timely review the standards of motorcycle parking provision under the HKPSG.

(5) Parking spaces in the car parks of government joint-user general office buildings (JUBs) are primarily for use by vehicles of the user departments of the JUBs or vehicles related to official purpose. Nevertheless, in order to optimise the use of land resources, the Government has opened up more parking

spaces at government buildings for public use during non-office hours with a view to increasing the supply of motorcycle parking spaces. The Government will lease out the parking spaces (including those for motorcycles) to contractors for operating as fee-paying public car parks during non-office hours (normally at night-time of weekdays, and on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays).

There are currently nine car parks at the JUBs or other types of government properties providing a total of 147 motorcycle parking spaces for public use. Some of the parking spaces are open during non-working hours, while the remaining ones are open all day long. The parking spaces are located across Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories.

(6) The Government has been highly concerned about the problem of abandoned vehicles. The Police handles vehicles that pose immediate danger to road users or cause traffic obstruction, whereas abandoned vehicles on unleased or unallocated government land other than public roads are dealt with by the Lands Department (LandsD). Abandoned vehicles that do not pose immediate danger to road users or cause obstruction on public roads and rear lanes are handled according to the modus operandi of inter-departmental joint operations. District Offices are responsible for co-ordinating and organising the inter-departmental joint clearance operations. The TD would, under the power delegated by the LandsD, affix notices on abandoned vehicles at the above-mentioned locations. If the vehicles concerned remain unattended upon the expiry of the notice period, the Highways Department would be responsible for towing away the abandoned vehicles to the storage pounds managed by the LandsD for further actions.

From 2021 to the first quarter of 2024, District Offices have co-ordinated over 440 inter-departmental joint operations, removing about 3 100 abandoned vehicles, of which over 90 per cent are motorcycles. The departments concerned will proactively organise joint operations on a continuous basis, with a view to handling the situation of abandoned vehicles in a timely manner.

In order to tackle abandoned vehicles at source, the Government is planning to make legislative amendment to tighten the requirements for vehicle registration and licensing, with a view to compelling registered owners to fulfil their obligation to properly dispose of the vehicles registered under their names that they no longer wish to keep. The proposed legislation will require registered owners of vehicles unlicensed for two years to renew the vehicle licence within a specified period, or cancel the vehicle registration with the TD after the vehicle has been scrapped/permanently despatched out of Hong Kong, or obtain an exemption from the TD by application in case of special needs; otherwise, the vehicle owners will commit an offence. The Government plans to submit the legislative amendment proposal within this year.

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# LCQ20: Introduction of China-made plug-in hybrid electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Lai Tung-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

There are views that, given the excellent performance of China-made plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (EVs), with a recently launched model boasting extremely low fuel consumption and remarkably long travel range, coupled with the fact that the supply of EV charging facilities in Hong Kong remains insufficient in the short term, Hong Kong should more proactively introduce as early as possible different types of China-made new energy vehicles into the market in addition to pure battery EVs, so as to meet the demand that will still exist before the cessation of new registration of fuel-propelled and hybrid private cars by 2035. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information in respect of the Transport Department's processing of applications for Type Approval of vehicles in each of the past three years: (i) the number of vehicle models applying for Type Approval, (ii) the number of Type-Approved vehicle models, and (iii) the average time taken for conducting Type Approval of vehicle models, with a breakdown by vehicle type (classified by fuel used, including but not limited to pure battery EVs and plug-in hybrid EVs) and place of origin of vehicle;

(2) of the staff establishment and strength of various ranks of the Type Approval Section under the Transport Department in each of the past three years; and

(3) whether it has considered providing tax incentives for first registration of motor vehicles to promote the introduction of high performance China-made plug-in hybrid EVs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) and the Transport Department (TD), my consolidated reply to questions raised by Hon Lai is as follows:

(1) The TD has always been approving vehicles in accordance with the requirements of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) and its subsidiary legislation. The purpose of vehicle type approval is to assess the technical specification, design and construction of a sample vehicle of the same make and model, in order to facilitate the authorised dealer or distributor in

importing and selling new mass-produced vehicles for first registration. Upon completion of documentary vetting and examination of a sample vehicle by the TD, the TD will issue a type approval certificate to confirm that such vehicle model is in compliance with the statutory requirements. The TD has been accepting submissions of Guobiao (GB) from the trade to substantiate that vehicles or their components comply with the objective vehicle construction standards stipulated in the legislation. In addition to GB, the TD also accepts other standards, including those of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

The TD has been regularly reviewing and amending existing legislation and guidelines with reference to different national or regional standards to cope with the latest development of the automotive market. For example, with a view to supporting the introduction of different new energy vehicles, the TD issued guidelines on Vehicle Construction Approval Requirements for Electric Vehicles in 2010 to elaborate in detail the technical and safety requirements for electric vehicles (EVs) in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, GB safety requirements for EVs and electric motorcycles have also been included in the guidelines. The latest version was released in May 2023, providing further guidance and specifications on the technical and safety requirements for EVs and facilitating the vehicle trades in providing relevant information on EVs to simplify applications for EV approval. The TD also updated the annex to the above guidelines in June of this year with a view to accepting applications for vehicle type approval of EVs with battery swapping technology.

The TD will continue to maintain close communication with the trade and listen to the trade's views, update technical guidelines and streamline the approval process in a timely manner to facilitate the introduction of more vehicle models by the trade, while ensuring that these vehicles meet the relevant technical requirements.

At present, the approval time for vehicles using different fuel types (including EVs, plug-in hybrid vehicles, fossil fuel vehicles and non-plug-in hybrid vehicles) is similar, taking generally 90 days for approval, including the time required for local authorised dealers to submit supplementary information to the TD and arranging examination of sample vehicles. The number of applications for vehicle type approval and corresponding approvals are as follows:

Number of vehicle models passing type approval (by fuel type of vehicles)

	Electric vehicle	Plug-in hybrid vehicle	Fossil fuel and non-plug-in hybrid vehicle
2021	145 (167*)	1 (1*)	725 (955*)
2022	122 (163*)	24 (27*)	555 (660*)
2023	164 (239*)	10 (15*)	515 (603*)

2024 (Up to May 31, 2024)	6 (93**)	0 (8**)	91 (239**)
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Note:

(\*) Number of vehicle models applying for type approval

(\*\*) Number of vehicle models applying for type approval, some of the type approval work is still in progress

Number of vehicle models passing type approval (by region of vehicle brands)

	Mainland China	Asia (other than China)	Europe	America
2021	55 (81*)	204 (245*)	572 (747*)	40 (50*)
2022	61 (77*)	252 (298*)	362 (446*)	26 (29*)
2023	83 (133*)	174 (195*)	415 (506*)	17 (23*)
2024 (Up to May 31, 2024)	10 (63**)	48 (87**)	39 (189**)	0 (1**)

Note:

(\*) Number of vehicle models applying for type approval

(\*\*) Number of vehicle models applying for type approval, some of the type approval work is still in progress

(2) There is a type approval section under the TD which is responsible for vehicle type approval works. The establishment of the team includes one Engineer, one Senior Motor Vehicle Examiner, two Motor Vehicle Examiner I and two Motor Vehicle Examiner II. The above establishment has not changed in the past three years, and the strength has remained approximately the same.

The TD has been streamlining the vehicle approval process to cope with the increasing workload of type approval applications. The TD issued new guidelines on the batch processing mechanism to the trade in December 2022, facilitating the trade in introducing EVs in batches and simplifying the approval application process for the same EV model. At the same time, the TD continues to hold a number of briefing sessions for the trade and issue corresponding guidelines to assist the trade in submitting complete vehicle technical information, so as to reduce the time for clarification on documents and thereby speeding up the progress of the overall vehicle type approval work. The TD will continue to maintain close communication with the trade and review the vehicle examination process and manpower arrangement to achieve better cost-effectiveness.

(3) Exhaust gas emission from vehicles is the primary source of roadside air pollution in Hong Kong and accounts for about 20 per cent of the carbon emission of the territory. Conversion to EVs can improve roadside air quality and help strive towards carbon neutrality. As for private cars (PCs), hybrid

PCs (including plug-in hybrid PCs) are not propelled solely by electric power and still have air pollutant and carbon emission. In comparison, pure EVs do not emit any exhaust gas and are more effective in improving roadside air quality in a high-density environment in Hong Kong. The supply of pure electric PC models on the market is increasing. Currently, about 70 per cent of the newly registered PCs are pure EVs. The Government has also set out the target to cease new registration of fuel-propelled and hybrid PCs in 2035 or earlier. Hence, we do not have plan to separately provide first registration tax concession for hybrid PCs which still have exhaust gas emission. On the other hand, to support the popularisation of EVs, the 2023 Policy Address has set out the target to increase the total number of public and private parking spaces with charging infrastructure in Hong Kong to about 200 000 by mid-2027.

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## LCQ10: Vocational and professional education and training

Following is a question by Professor the Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address has proposed to work with the relevant Mainland authorities to take forward the arrangements for mutual recognition between Hong Kong and the Mainland of sub degree level qualifications and put such mutual recognition arrangements on trial for selected pilot areas. In addition, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) and Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SZPU) have co-organised joint dual award programmes (the Joint Programmes). The VTC also promotes the "One Examination, Multiple Certification" arrangement (the Arrangement) under which candidates only need to pass one common examination in order to have their qualifications recognised by Hong Kong, the Mainland, and international professional organisations. Regarding vocational and professional education and training (VPET), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the trial run of the aforesaid arrangements for mutual recognition of qualifications has kicked off; if so, of the pilot areas, and the sub-degree programmes which are related to VPET; of the planning for pilot areas in the next three years;

(2) whether it knows, in each of the past three years, (i) the titles of the programmes offered by the VTC which are related to the industries covered by the Arrangement, (ii) the number of candidates who successfully passed the relevant examinations under the Arrangement and obtained the relevant qualifications recognition, and (iii) the number of local candidates who



worked in the Mainland through having their qualifications recognised by the Mainland under the Arrangement;

(3) whether it knows, in each of the past three years, (i) the titles of the Joint Programmes offered by the VTC, (ii) the number of students enrolled in such programmes and, among them, the number of those who successfully obtained higher diplomas from the VTC and professional diplomas and certificates from the Mainland;

(4) of the mechanism through which SZPU sends students to pursue studies in Hong Kong; whether the VTC has conducted survey on the interest of SZPU students towards pursuing studies in Hong Kong; if so, of the outcome; if not, whether it will consider conducting a survey on SZPU students' perceptions of the academic structure, tuition fees, accommodation, development prospects, etc. in Hong Kong, so as to facilitate the formulation of measures to attract them to pursue studies in Hong Kong; and

(5) whether it will establish post-secondary institutions specialising in offering VPET programmes mutually recognised by Hong Kong and the Mainland in the Northern Metropolis University Town?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been promoting the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) as a pathway parallel to conventional academic education. To this end, we adopt the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development. This is also in line with the national strategies of strengthening vocational education in the modern era, by encouraging the articulation between vocational and academic studies, co-operation between industries and education, and the integration of science and education, with a view to nurturing higher quality talent with applied knowledge and skills to support the development of strategic industries and the economy.

Our reply to Professor the Hon William Wong's question is as follows:

(1) In line with the national policy of promoting the high-quality development of modernised vocational education, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been collaborating with the relevant Mainland authorities to take forward the mutual recognition of sub-degree level qualifications, including the Higher Diploma qualification. The HKSAR Government will continue to follow up on the relevant initiative.

(2) Under the "One Examination, Multiple Certification" (OEMC) system implemented by the Vocational Training Council (VTC), candidates may obtain relevant certificates issued by the Mainland, Hong Kong, and Macao by passing a standardised examination. The OEMC system is currently implemented in the beauty and hairdressing industries, with two levels of examinations available for each industry. For the beauty industry, upon satisfactory completion of the examination under the OEMC system, candidates are awarded the Certificate

of Occupational Skill Level for beauticians on the Mainland, the Vocational Assessment Competency Certificate for the beauty industry in Hong Kong, and the Occupational Skills Certificate for beauticians in Macao. As for the hairdressing industry, candidates who complete the examination under the OEMC system are awarded the Certificate of Occupational Skill Level for hair stylists on the Mainland, the Vocational Assessment Competency Certificate for the hairdressing industry in Hong Kong, and the Occupational Skills Certificate for hair stylists in Macao. The OEMC system operates as an independent examination and is not tied to any particular programmes. The numbers of candidates who obtained certificates under the OEMC system in the past three years are as follows:

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
100	125	154

Remarks: The VTC does not maintain statistics on the number of candidates working on the Mainland after obtaining certificates under the OEMC system.

(3) and (4) The VTC and the Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SPU) have reached agreement on five collaborative programmes, allowing VTC students to attend these programmes at SPU, while the SPU has not yet arranged its students to study the VTC's programmes in Hong Kong. In particular, three Higher Diploma (HD) programmes, namely Electrical Engineering (Electrical Services), Building Services Engineering, as well as Games and Animation, have been successfully launched. In the 2024/25 academic year (AY), the VTC and the SPU plan to launch two other programmes in Fashion Design as well as Hotel and Catering Management.

From the 2021/22 to 2023/24 AYs, a total of 73 the VTC students of HD programmes in Electrical Engineering (Electrical Services), Building Services Engineering, and Games and Animation attended the collaborative programmes at SPU. Among them, 53 students successfully obtained qualifications from both institutions.

In relation to attracting non-local vocational and professional talent, the Government introduced the Vocational Professionals Admission Scheme (VPAS) in 2023. Under the pilot initiative, non-local students (including those from the Mainland as well as other countries and regions) enrolled in designated full-time HD programmes of the VTC in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 AYs will be eligible for applying to stay in Hong Kong for one year after graduation to seek employment in trades relevant to their studies, with a view to alleviating the manpower shortage in skilled trades. In this connection, the VTC is proactively recruiting non-local students and will be providing comprehensive support in areas such as accommodation, language and communication, living in Hong Kong, and career development, in order to attract students to study in Hong Kong.

(5) The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address announces that the Government will endeavour to develop a Northern Metropolis University Town (NMUT) in the Northern Metropolis (NM), where post-secondary institutions are encouraged to

strengthen co-operation with renowned Mainland and overseas institutions, and enhance synergy through sharing resources and enhancing collaboration with the industry sector in the area. To support the development of NMUT, the Government will reserve more than 60 hectares of sites in the area for post-secondary education development use.

Based on our preliminary idea, we will gradually take forward the relevant work, having regard to a series of objectives and strategies, including following an "industry-led" principle. We hope that the post-secondary education development in NM could suitably tie in with the different positionings of individual districts, promoting diversified development in collaboration with industries and strengthening synergy. In particular, we will consider proactively promoting VPET development in NMUT, facilitating co-operation between industries and education and integration of science and education, and supporting institutions to strengthen links and collaboration with industries in the area. Through incorporating enriched internship and work-based learning opportunities in programmes, institutions could nurture professional skilled talent with applied abilities to cater to the keen manpower needs of various sectors, adding impetus to the industry development in the area.

The Education Bureau (EDB) has introduced the post-secondary education sites in NM to post-secondary institutions and consulted the institutions on their preliminary development intentions and proposals. The EDB is currently comprehensively considering the proposals and collating the information submitted by the institutions. In accordance with the abovementioned objectives and strategies, we will closely communicate with institutions which are interested in the development of the NM, with a view to taking forward the development of NMUT in phases.

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## [Missing woman in Tin Shui Wai located](#)

A woman who went missing in Tin Shui Wai has been located.

Lai Mei-lin Elza, aged 57, went missing after she was last seen in Mong Tseng Tsuen on July 4 morning. Her family made a report to Police on July 7.

The woman returned to her residence last evening (July 9). She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

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# Speech by CS at Fire Asia 2024 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at Fire Asia 2024 today (July 10):

Secretary-General Wang Songmiao (Secretary-General of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Deputy Director-General Luo Yongqiang (Deputy Director General of National Fire and Rescue Administration of People's Republic of China), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR), Deputy President Wu Lizhi (Deputy President, China People's Police University), Deputy Director Xie Zhixiang (Deputy Director of the Bureau of Liaison of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. Welcome to Fire Asia 2024 and to Hong Kong! I am delighted to see so many experts in fire and emergency management gathered here from around the globe.

Indeed, some 600 professionals, including fire engineering experts, emergency responders, paramedics and other medical specialists, are joining this year's three-day conference.

They also include, let me add, delegations from a number of Belt and Road and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. Your presence underlines our shared commitment to making the world a safer place for us all.

The past few years have presented us with overwhelming challenges, including the pandemic, climate change, and the increasing complexity of emergency response.

Yet, in the face of adversity, we have witnessed the remarkable resilience, and innovative spirit, of many economies worldwide. Through this year's three-day conference, we have a golden opportunity to build on this good momentum.

Emergency preparedness is essential to protecting an economy and its people from the impact of wide-ranging disasters, crises and other emergencies. An effective emergency management system helps mitigate disruptions to essential services, economic stability and social order.

In today's interconnected world, the threats of emergencies and disasters could be cross-border by nature. Regional and international teamwork plays an important role in reducing risks and enhancing resilience.

To that end, just last month, the Hong Kong SAR Government, together with the governments of Guangdong Province and Macao SAR, signed the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Emergency Management Co-operation and Greater Bay Area Emergency Response Operation Co-operation Framework Agreement.

Under this framework, we are setting up a government-led co-operation mechanism for emergency response, enhancing our ability to cope with accidents, natural disasters and other crises that affect Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

At the same time, we are establishing a task force later this year. It will review our co-operation experience to develop a long-term emergency-management plan for the Greater Bay Area as a whole.

No less important, the Belt and Road and ASEAN also present ample opportunities for regional and global collaboration.

The Belt and Road's extensive infrastructure networks – from roads and railways to ports and much more – can enable the rapid deployment of emergency response personnel and resources across borders during crises.

And the institutional mechanisms within ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Co-ordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, allow member states to share information and co-ordinate responses.

Through all these and other regional initiatives, economies enhance their collective ability to respond effectively to emergencies that cross national boundaries.

Our speakers from Belt and Road and ASEAN countries will, for sure, broaden our perspectives on effective emergency management strategies across regions.

I have every confidence that, drawing on the collective expertise of all our high-profile speakers, we will move on from this conference safer, better prepared, and better protected, for whatever comes our way.

During your stay in Hong Kong, I urge you, as well, to find time for leisure. Our city, as the mega-events capital of Asia, is hosting more than 200 events this year – one every two days in the second half of the year.

Our city is also blessed with a wide variety of Michelin star restaurants, world-class coastal walks, beautiful country parks, and all sorts of arts, culture and entertainment you can easily find.

Hong Kong, after all, is rising as the world's East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. In short, enjoy yourself!

My thanks to the organisers of this year's Fire Asia, namely the Institution of Fire Engineers (Hong Kong Branch), the Hong Kong Institution

of Engineers (Building Services Division and Fire Division), the China Hong Kong Ambulance Service Institute, and the China Hong Kong Fire Protection Association.

I am grateful, as well, to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for its generous support.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a rewarding conference and a memorable stay in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.