

Welcome remarks by SDEV at opening ceremony of International Water Pioneers Summit (English only)

Following are the welcome remarks by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, at the opening ceremony of the International Water Pioneers Summit today (April 1):

Honourable Minister Li Guoying (the Minister of Water Resources), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to all of you to Hong Kong and to this International Water Pioneers Summit. It is my honour to join prestigious water leaders on this significant occasion and to benefit from discussions among experts.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to the co-organisers, including Hong Kong branch of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers and the Hong Kong branch of the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering. I thank them for their collaboration and generous effort to make the Summit possible. My heartfelt thanks also goes to the Minister of Water Resources of China and his team for their presence in this Summit. Your presence means a lot to us. I also wish to thank all our distinguished speakers and moderators from the Mainland and overseas for accepting our invitations and travelling to Hong Kong to participate in this Summit. We are honoured to welcome an exceptional lineup of speakers and moderators from nine countries across four continents here today. They are distinguished experts and leaders of international water and health organisations and senior government officials. With these renowned leaders sharing their insights, I am sure the upcoming exchanges would be inspiring and rewarding.

From the Hong Kong Palace Museum to the theme of the Summit

Today's venue, the Hong Kong Palace Museum showcasing the rich tapestry of Chinese art and culture, is a setting particularly fit for the Summit. Water is the essence of life and the cornerstone of human civilisation. It also has symbolic meanings in the Chinese culture. Most of you would have come across the Exhibition of Chinese Water Culture in the foyer before entering this Auditorium. The exhibition explains the origin, symbolism, philosophy and wisdom of water through the lens of Chinese culture. It also reminds us how water has shaped human civilisation, culture and connections.

The supply of Dongjiang water from the Mainland is a showcase of the Chinese water culture. It is not just an engineering achievement to address Hong Kong's water demand. More importantly, it is a touching demonstration of the core value in Chinese culture, "èi fā fā 1/4°" in Chinese, which means

"family connections are inseparable". The supply of Dongjiang water underscores the deep bonding between our country and Hong Kong as a special administrative region, as well as the unwavering love of our Motherland for Hong Kong. The extended spirit of unity and the sense of mission extending beyond the family to make the world a better place, serves as a guiding principle for us to work together to foster a community of life against the global water challenges.

With the growing impacts of global climate change and increasing pressure on how best we should use the finite resources around the world, the sustainable management of water is no longer optional but imperative. The theme of the Summit, "Smart Water · High-Quality Development", is undoubtedly very close to our hearts as it captures the urgency and importance of our having to overcome challenges we face nowadays. We need collective responses. We need innovative and actionable solutions. We also need forward-thinking strategies. Today's Summit comes in time.

The theme of the Summit – "Smart Water · High-Quality Development"

So how can we achieve "Smart Water · High-Quality Development"? Our morning session will focus on the high-quality development of water supply and technologies in response to global crises, the essential co-ordination of water, economy, and ecology for sustainable growth, and the transformative role of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in enhancing water management.

And we all know that the reliability and safety of water supplies are crucial to public health. So in the afternoon session, our speakers will lead us in delving into crucial strategies and technological advances for developing low-carbon, as well as green urban and rural water systems. We will also touch on recent developments in drinking water safety, and the challenges and opportunities in protecting health through water, adaptability, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

The special panel discussion – Belt and Road

The Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013 has connected countries, regions and continents through advancing infrastructure development and strengthening collaboration in various aspects. To bolster high-quality co-operation in water management among countries along the Belt and Road, a special panel discussion is arranged in this Summit to showcase successful examples of collaboration and highlight how shared expertise and resources can pave the way for sustainable water management across borders.

Special keynote speeches on the Dongjiang Water Supply

Another highlight of today's programme is the special keynote session on the Dongjiang water supply to Hong Kong, which is scheduled to take place later in the afternoon. I am sure that the renowned speakers would provide valuable insights on this mega water supply project, the achievement in

safeguarding the water quality of the Dongjiang water and a great strive taken over the years in advancing the operation and maintenance through smart technologies.

Ladies and gentlemen, the significance of this Summit lies not only in the exchange of knowledge but also in the spirit of collaboration it fosters. Water is not just a resource, it is a lifeline of the ecosystems, economies and communities to where we belong.

As we embark on today's discussions, let us remember that the challenges we face can only be solved through collective efforts. I encourage everyone here to actively engage in the discussions. Once again, a warm welcome to all of you and I wish the Summit every success. Thank you.

DH's first briefing seminar on "1+" mechanism for new drugs well received

The Department of Health (DH) yesterday (March 31) held the first briefing seminar on the "1+" mechanism for new drugs with an introduction of the requirements for registration of pharmaceutical products under this mechanism, as well as the upcoming workshops on good regulatory practices and pre-new drug application (NDA) meetings. The DH aims to work with the pharmaceutical industry to achieve the goals of early consultation to enhance quality and efficiency throughout the process so that registration approval can be expedited, thereby bringing more good drugs for use in Hong Kong.

"The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" announced that a consultation service for NDAs under the "1+" mechanism will be introduced to enhance the efficiency of processing relevant applications. The consultation service comprises briefing seminars, workshops and pre-NDA meetings. Yesterday's seminar was well received and was attended by 76 representatives from pharmaceutical and consultation companies inside or outside Hong Kong, as well as scientific research institutions. This marks the beginning of the consultation service. The DH will organise two more seminars on April 21 and May 16 this year. For further details and to register for future seminars, please visit the Drug Office's thematic [webpage](#) on the "1+" mechanism.

The DH will also organise workshops starting from June this year to provide guidance and sharing of good practices and real-life experiences on submitting applications through the "1+" mechanism. The DH will also offer to hold pre-NDA meetings with potential "1+" registration applicants starting from the second half of this year, providing specific guidance to assist in their planning of the NDA approval process and improve the quality of application documents to enhance the efficiency of the whole process. Details of the arrangements of the workshops and meetings will be announced in due

course.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has implemented the "1+" mechanism since November 1, 2023, to facilitate the registration of new drugs for treating life-threatening or severely debilitating diseases in Hong Kong. The HKSAR Government has extended the "1+" mechanism to all new drugs from November 1, 2024, including all new chemical or biological entities and new indications, and vaccines and advanced therapy products. Under the "1+" mechanism, new drugs which are supported by local clinical data and recognised by local relevant experts can be applied for registration in Hong Kong by submitting approval from the drug regulatory authority of one of the reference places (instead of two in the past).

The "1+" mechanism serves to attract more new drugs from different parts of the world seeking approval for registration in Hong Kong, giving patients more choices and further strengthening the local capacity for drug evaluation while enhancing the development of relevant software, hardware and expertise with a view to progressing towards "primary evaluation". Since the implementation of the "1+" mechanism, a total of 11 new drugs have been approved under this mechanism. The DH has been promoting the "1+" mechanism through different channels, and so far, has received 460 enquiries from 120 pharmaceutical companies, including those from overseas and the Mainland.

Meanwhile, the Government will continue its efforts to reform the approval mechanism for drugs and medical devices. These include putting forward a timetable for establishing the Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation and charting a roadmap towards "primary evaluation" in the first half of this year, aiming to spur the growth of new industries in pharmaceutical and medical device research, and development and testing.

[Speech by CE at International Water Pioneers Summit \(English only\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at International Water Pioneers Summit today (April 1):

Honourable Li Guoying, Minister of Ministry of Water Resources, Honourable Wang Weizhong, Governor of Guangdong Province, Honourable Zheng Yanxiong, Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Honourable Xiang Bin, Member of the Office Leadership of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am pleased to join you today for the opening of the

International Water Pioneers Summit. Gathered here are nearly 400 high-profile professionals and senior government officials from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Asia and around the world. Present here to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Dongjiang's water supply to Hong Kong, and to work together to ensure a sustainable water supply for us all.

Hong Kong's water story is one of transformation, illustrating how a city with limited water resource, can turn geographic and resource limitations, into engineering triumphs.

Hong Kong's water story is also one of deep and abiding ties. Because without the strong bonds and blood relation between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the engineering, and the water it made possible, would not have taken place. Certainly not in the 1960s.

As for the engineering, the main challenge was geography. Dongjiang is more than 50 kilometres away from Hong Kong. That meant building an 83-kilometre water channel, crossing half a dozen mountains. The water had to be lifted, via multi-stage pumping stations, from two metres above sea level to 46 metres at the highest point.

And the project was completed in less than one year. At 4pm on the 1st of March 60 years ago, the supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong began.

For the past six decades, Dongjiang has provided 70 to 80 per cent of the water needed by Hong Kong.

And the engineering feats continued. Because of our increasing demand for water, the Dongjiang-Shenzhen Water Supply Scheme, as it is presently known, was expanded three times from the 1970s to the 1990s. It was improved again in the early 2000s. These raised Hong Kong's annual water supply ceiling from the original 68.2 million cubic metres, to today's 820 million cubic metres, a rise of 12 times.

We are eternally grateful for the enormous commitment, and technical ingenuity, by the country and all our compatriots involved.

We like Dongjiang water. For good reasons. It meets the highest national standard for surface water used for human consumption. No less essential, it continues to flow, fuelling Hong Kong's economic miracle, supporting our economy and community, while helping to ensure our city's sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

The theme of this Summit is "Smart Water, High-Quality Development". That tells me that if we want to ensure a sustainable water supply, we need to invest in its future, and do it innovatively.

Hong Kong has long been recognised for its infrastructure prowess. Indeed, Hong Kong's infrastructure was ranked among the top 10, globally, in the World Competitiveness Yearbook last year.

Our major water supply projects include High Island Reservoir, Hong Kong's largest reservoir, and the Tseung Kwan O Desalination Plant, the first waterworks in Hong Kong to adopt advanced reverse osmosis desalination technology.

As an international centre of innovation and technology, we are keen on applying I&T to water management. Last year, we set up a Digital Water Office to drive the digitalisation of our water supply services.

The Office promotes the use of smart devices, digital twin technology and artificial intelligence, to gradually gain full automation of operations in our waterworks installations.

Innovation in infrastructure development will power our water-secure future. Our goal is to establish Hong Kong as an international infrastructure centre, that serves our city and China, our country.

Speaking of our country, let me add that it has built numerous water conservancy projects. And I'm sure you'll hear more about them in today's Summit.

I am grateful to the organisers of today's International Water Pioneers Summit. Grateful, too, to our distinguished speakers and moderators, here in Hong Kong from all over the world.

While you're here, I invite you to take full advantage of all that Hong Kong has to offer, in arts and culture. You can start right here, in West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong's largest arts development.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a rewarding summit and an enjoyable and memorable stay in Hong Kong.

Thank you.

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (April 1) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

[New sections of GreenWay in Kai Tak open today \(with photos\)](#)

A spokesman for the Development Bureau said today (April 1) that two new sections of the GreenWay in the Kai Tak Development are open to the public. Located at Shing Fung Road Park and the Kai Tak Promenade adjacent to the To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter respectively (please refer to the location map), each section is approximately 1 kilometre long, offering the public scenic views of the harbour along the Greenway.

The newly opened sections are about 6 metres wide, with ground markings, signs and speed-reducing rumble strips in place to ensure safe use for both pedestrians and cyclists. Moreover, bicycle parking spaces are available, and there is a barrier-free walkway running alongside the GreenWay for pedestrians, offering an additional option for the public. Banners listing relevant rules have also been placed on-site. At the initial stage after the opening, ambassadors will be present at the GreenWay to provide appropriate reminders to users.

â€‹The GreenWay was planned and designed by the Civil Engineering and Development Department, while the sections opened today are managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The remaining sections of the Greenway will be opened progressively in alignment with the implementation programme of infrastructure projects and open spaces in the area. For more details about the opened sections and the GreenWay, please refer to the location map and thematic website (www.kaitakgreenway.hk/en).

