

SLW forges closer ties between Hong Kong and Japan to tackle ageing challenges (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, today (August 7) concluded his visit to Tokyo, Japan, saying that Hong Kong looked forward to strengthening collaboration and exchanges with the Japanese government and trade sector on elderly care and gerontechnology in tackling the challenges of a rapidly ageing population.

In his meeting with the State Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, Mr Yoshinori Oguchi, yesterday (August 6), Dr Law said that Japan started to tackle ageing challenges earlier than Hong Kong and thus its experience in many aspects has been a valuable reference for Hong Kong. He encouraged Japanese businesses to tap the Hong Kong market and foster exchanges with local non-governmental organisations. Dr Law also called on the Cabinet Office today and was briefed on Japan's policy initiatives in response to the challenges of an ageing society including the financial burden on long-term care needs and acute shortages of care staff.

Together with delegates from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Dr Law visited a showroom and a service centre of a care equipment supplier yesterday to take a closer look at innovative products supporting household care and ageing in place, such as care beds for purchase or rental.

Dr Law and delegates attended an expert panel discussion on the same day to exchange views with the elderly and the rehabilitation care service sector on matters including the operations of local equipment rental services, the role of case managers and home nursing care services. He also had a candid exchange with representatives of the gerontechnology trade at a dinner hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Tokyo.

Speaking during the above occasions, Dr Law pointed out that Hong Kong launched a \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care to promote the application of gerontechnology as well as to subsidise service units to try out and procure or rent technology products. He appealed to Japanese manufacturers to consider the Hong Kong market, and to tap business opportunities brought about by the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Before concluding his visit today, he met with the Chinese Ambassador to Japan, Mr Kong Xuanyou, and updated him on the latest labour market and economic situation in Hong Kong. He departed for Hong Kong this afternoon.

