

Speech by CE at International Science, Technology and Innovation Forum of Boao Forum for Asia 2025 Hong Kong Conference (English only)

â€œFollowing is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the International Science, Technology and Innovation Forum of the Boao Forum for Asia 2025 Hong Kong Conference today (June 7):

Honourable Vice-Chairman Edmund Ho (Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and President of the International Science, Technology and Innovation Forum of Boao Forum for Asia), Deputy Director Liu Guangyuan (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Deputy Commissioner Li Yongsheng (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR), Professor Frederick Ma (Chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is a great pleasure to join you, today, for the opening of the International Science, Technology and Innovation Forum of the Boao Forum for Asia 2025 Hong Kong Conference. It is an honour for the HKSAR Government to be hosting this Conference together with the Boao Forum for Asia – and for the first time.

I'm pleased to note that over 800 I&T (innovation and technology) professionals and scholars, government officials, economic leaders and high-profile representatives from some 20 countries and regions are taking part in this fourth Boao International Science, Technology and Innovation Forum.

Hong Kong participated in the first three editions of the conference – in Macao, Guangzhou and Zhuhai. Our co-organisation of this year's event continues the Forum's tradition of hosting the conference in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The Greater Bay Area – bringing together Hong Kong, Macao and nine major cities in Guangdong – is committed to becoming a leading international I&T hub. Ladies and gentlemen, we're well on our way now.

Shenzhen, Hong Kong and Guangzhou have ranked second, as a science and technology cluster, in the World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index for the past five consecutive years – a testament both to the individual strengths we bring to our interconnected region, and our collective commitment to excellence.

Consider the I&T progress Hong Kong has made, under the unwavering support of our country. We are now ranked first in Asia, and seventh

globally, in digital competitiveness, and third globally, as an emerging start-up centre.

Our development is underpinned by the unique "one country, two systems" principle, which makes Hong Kong the only world city with both the China advantage and the global advantage.

We take full advantage, too, of the research and development (R&D) expertise of our world-class universities. After all, as a city with just 1 100 square kilometres in area, we boast five universities in the world's top 100. Add to that our established tradition of the rule of law, a common law regime that dovetails with many of the world's financial centres, and a robust intellectual property protection regime, Hong Kong is built to succeed as an international I&T centre.

Ladies and gentlemen, we stand at the consequential crossroads in human history – a moment where artificial intelligence and health technology converge not just as tools, but the architects of our evolution into the next era of development.

Hong Kong is committed to the development of these frontier industries. Our InnoHK research clusters will help us get us there that much faster. InnoHK was created to drive Hong Kong's R&D collaboration with world-renowned universities and research institutions.

Our first two clusters focus on healthcare technology, artificial intelligence and robotics technologies. Our third cluster will specialise in four research areas: sustainable development, energy, advanced manufacturing and materials. And it is open now, through the 29th of August, for applications from international research institutions and universities eager to work with Hong Kong – and the Greater Bay Area.

We're also making more land available for I&T development through the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone, which straddles our boundary with Shenzhen. The Hong Kong Park in the Zone will become operational within this year, and bring together vital sources of new quality productive forces for the country.

For innovation to thrive, it must be rooted in international co-operation. The exchange of knowledge, talent and ideas should be open and free. Without borders. Without boundaries. Without tariffs.

A long-standing champion of multilateralism, and a rules-based global economy, Hong Kong is deeply committed to building collaboration among governments, businesses and academic institutions. Everywhere.

And, rest assured, we will continue to advocate for free trade, economic openness and cross-border investment. That will ensure that technology serves as a bridge, rather than a barrier to co-operation, and the economic flourishing and societal well-being it can bring us all.

I wish you all a rewarding Conference, a memorable stay in Hong Kong and the best of innovation and technology in the coming year. Thank you.