

Speech by CE at Launching Ceremony of OASES Partnership (English only) (with video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Launching Ceremony of OASES Partnership today (October 4):

Distinguished guests from strategic enterprises, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon to you all. It is a great pleasure to be here, with you, for today's ceremony. This occasion brings together some 30 high-profile strategic companies and the Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region) Government, specifically our Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises. We call it OASES.

OASES is an apt acronym for our position. Oases is the plural of oasis. It reflects what the Hong Kong SAR Government believes the companies here today can count on: an evergreen and innovative economy, and a productive and engaging community.

Even better, this oasis, our Hong Kong, is surrounded not by a desert, but by the Mainland of China, by Asia – the global economy's predominant engine of growth, in this 21st century of opportunities.

This is all thanks to the unique "one country, two systems" principle, under which Hong Kong is bestowed with unparalleled connectivity, to both the Mainland and the rest of the world. It ensures Hong Kong's continuing status as an international economic, trade and financial centre, and our enviable ability to grasp the boundless prospects of the country's rapid development.

We in Hong Kong are more than ready to share these immense opportunities with the world.

A year ago, I announced the establishment of OASES in my first Policy Address. I gave this new team one of the most important missions of Hong Kong: to bring home high-profile, high-potential enterprises in strategic industries from around the world.

It is tremendously encouraging that, a year later, some 30 strategic enterprises have joined us here – primed to set up or expand their businesses, their future, in Hong Kong.

We want to achieve mutual growth with our partners, as we pursue high-quality development together.

I know that the senior representatives of these key enterprises, as well as many who are nearly closing their deal with OASES, are here with us today.

They represent a lot of money, a big dollar sign. So it is a very precious moment. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in giving a round of applause to welcome them!

Yes, Hong Kong welcomes you all with open arms. You come from all over the world, and you bring with you innovation, technology and expertise in a great variety of sectors and areas, from life science, biotech, fintech, to advanced manufacturing, AI (artificial intelligence), data science and more.

I take a "result-oriented" approach in my governing style. To that end, I am pleased to note that over the next few years, your companies will invest over HK\$30 billion, here in Hong Kong, with plans to create some 10 000 jobs here.

These smart, strategic companies – and the many more that follow in the coming months and years – will help spur Hong Kong's rise as an innovation and technology centre, a position backed by the National 14th Five-Year Plan.

Hong Kong is a value-added conduit between Chinese and overseas enterprises, and we are keen to facilitate the growth of your enterprises. To help you drive for results, and accomplish so much more.

From recommendations on venues and land, to visa application for employees and their children's education, OASES provides one-stop facilitation services to address the needs of strategic enterprises.

As the only Asian city with as many as five universities in the world's top 100, Hong Kong has long been a manpower hub with a good mix of talents from different disciplines.

To nurture our local talents, we have set a target to have over 35 per cent of our university students enrolled in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) subjects within the coming four years. Our multi-talented and energetic workforce will fuel our budding I&T (innovation and technology) scenes, and your fast-growing companies.

Meanwhile, we continue to attract talents from around the world, to ensure the seamless provision of manpower to our burgeoning economy.

At last count, our enhanced talent admission regime has attracted over 160 000 applications globally, and we have already approved over 100 000 of them.

They are, if I may add, specialised talents and young graduates who are looking for opportunities to shine in this well-connected gateway between Mainland China and the world.

The future, in short, looks good for Hong Kong and for the companies we are pleased to partner with today.

In a moment, we will witness their signing of a partnership agreement

with OASES, to jointly participate in the development of the innovation and technology ecosystem of Hong Kong.

Ladies and gentlemen, your confidence in Hong Kong will reward us all. Of that, I am highly confident.

I wish you all an enjoyable afternoon and the best of business in the coming years.

Thank you.