

Speech by CE at Wealth for Good in Hong Kong Summit Principal Dinner (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Principal Dinner of the Wealth for Good in Hong Kong Summit today (March 26):

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am delighted to welcome you, tonight, to our Principal Dinner on the eve of the second Wealth for Good in Hong Kong Summit. Just now, you saw the dragon dance. This is the Year of the Dragon. It means vibrancy, it means energy, it means prosperity, and it means that we are getting together for the overall good of mankind, so I thank all of you for your presence tonight.

You are the decision-makers and high-profile professionals driving family offices all over the world, coming all the way from different parts of Asia, the Middle East, North America, Europe, and beyond. And you're here these next few days to learn more about Hong Kong. About why Hong Kong is the preeminent choice in which to base your family office. Why Hong Kong will provide the best for your offices, and your families, to thrive.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm happy to tell you why. This second Wealth for Good in Hong Kong Summit is among the high-profile events of Hong Kong's Financial Mega Event Week.

Yesterday, I opened our inaugural One Earth Summit. Focusing on global climate and the green economy, it was co-organised by the World Economic Forum's "Giving to Amplify Earth Action" initiative.

Today, the Milken Institute's inaugural Global Investors' Symposium was held here. It spotlighted opportunities in finance, technology, healthcare and philanthropy in Hong Kong and Mainland China, as well as North Asia and more.

These events are part of the emergence of Hong Kong as a hub for large-scale and international events. It's a clear and compelling statement of this world city's dynamism and potential for sustained growth – long down this 21st century road of opportunities.

Tomorrow's Wealth for Good in Hong Kong Summit brings together more than 400 influential decision-makers and professionals from the world's leading family offices, significantly larger than last year's inaugural Summit.

Well over 20 prominent speakers from all over the world will address you, under the theme "Growing with Certainty amid Growing Uncertainty". This is not an easy thing for us to talk about, but a very important thing for us

to talk about. They will detail how Hong Kong's strategic location and forward-thinking initiatives can contribute to wealth creation, preservation and succession among family offices.

And they will do so under four central Summit discussion themes: green technology, luxury and legacy, philanthropy and wealth legacy, and wealth creation. This convergence of minds is set to ignite fruitful dialogues, and forge lasting partnerships.

Hong Kong's financial sector, let me add, consistently leads the Asian region in numerous areas. In capital markets, we've been ranked number one for seven consecutive years in the volume of our international bond issuance.

In risk management, Hong Kong is number one in Asia and number two in the world in insurance density, calculated based on premiums per capita. In asset and wealth management, our assets under management reached about US\$4 trillion at the end of 2022, registering a strong 28 per cent growth over the four-year period. We are also the biggest cross-border wealth management centre in Asia.

There's more. HKEX (Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited) is streamlining our listing regime, targeting specialised technology sectors to boost competitiveness.

That can only strengthen Hong Kong's position as a premier technology hub. Great news for family offices and asset owners looking to invest in high-growth potential unicorns.

Hong Kong also leads Asia in green financing. We hold one-third of the region's market share in the issuance of green bonds.

And we are the world's largest offshore Renminbi hub, presenting unparalleled opportunities to tap into assets dominated in the Chinese currency.

Hong Kong's tax concessions and arrangements for family offices, with a low minimum asset threshold as compared to other cities in the region, make it an attractive destination for asset owners to thrive.

Hong Kong also attracts investors because of our absence of local investment requirements, value-added tax and sales tax.

Ladies and gentlemen, these advantages and Hong Kong's prowess as an international financial centre are all thanks to a unique framework. The "one country, two systems" principle ensures Hong Kong enjoys unparalleled connectivity with both Mainland China and the rest of the world.

And I am pleased to note that these advantages, including the Hong Kong SAR Government's unwavering support for family offices, have been welcomed by family offices and high-net-worth individuals. More than 2 700 family offices now operate in our city.

At last year's Summit, the Hong Kong SAR Government issued a momentous Policy Statement on Developing Family Office Businesses in Hong Kong. It outlines our directions and measures for attracting, and maintaining, global family offices and asset owners.

Over the past year, the Policy Statement's eight initiatives have been progressively implemented.

They include InvestHK's dedicated FamilyOfficeHK team and its wide-ranging services to global family offices. As at last month, this dedicated team has already helped nearly 60 family offices set up or expand their businesses in Hong Kong, and another 100 offices have indicated interest of expanding their presence here.

The Policy Statement's initiatives also include the establishment of the Network of Family Office Service Providers. It connects professional service providers, offering family offices specialised services. The Hong Kong Academy for Wealth Legacy has also been launched. It was created to offer guidance to next-generation wealth owners and private wealth-management professionals.

And this month, the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme opened. The scheme will allow family members to reside in Hong Kong and pursue development, allowing them – allowing you – to work and study here, bringing with you your unique experiences and talent to enrich our beautiful city. And I invite you to explore these and other initiatives designed to make it easy for you to call Hong Kong home.

They include our status as one of the world's largest arts markets. Art Basel Hong Kong opens this week. More than 240 exhibitors are taking part, in this coveted global showcase of top galleries. That's up nearly 40 per cent over last year. I'd say that speaks, and brilliantly, of the art world's renewed confidence in Hong Kong.

That comes as no surprise. The West Kowloon Cultural District, a vast piece of quality land next to our storied Victoria Harbour, is set to become Hong Kong's largest cultural hub. The Hong Kong Palace Museum, which showcases national treasures from Beijing's Forbidden City, and the M+ Museum, Asia's first global museum of contemporary visual culture, have become a game-changer for our city's modern and contemporary art credentials, and created a strong momentum in our arts market.

For many of you who are joining the official side events provided by the Summit's organiser, you will be able to see, and feel, the momentum, to enjoy the art, for yourself, ladies and gentlemen. This month is Art March in Hong Kong. Whether it's Art Basel or our colourful "Art@Harbour" project, whether you want to explore M+, the Hong Kong Palace Museum or any other art and culture venue or happening here in Hong Kong, we'll make it easy – and amazing – for you.

After all, we are the world's East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know you will enjoy this memorable evening, the stunning, cloud-side views and the good people all about you. And I wish you the best of business at tomorrow's Summit and throughout this promising year for your family business and for Hong Kong. Enjoy this evening, and enjoy the coming days.

Thank you.

