

Speech by CS at THE ONE International and THE ONE HK Award Gala Dinner (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at THE ONE International and THE ONE HK Award Gala Dinner this evening (May 16):

Mr Ian Riseley (Rotary International President), Dr David Harilela (Founder and Global Founder of THE ONE Humanitarian Award), Mr H W Fung (Chairman of THE ONE Hong Kong Humanitarian Award), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I have the greatest pleasure to attend the award ceremony this year and celebrate the achievements of our invisible heroes!

Thanks to THE ONE International Award and THE ONE Hong Kong Award, we can identify and honour the dedication of unsung heroes to humanity and the betterment of mankind with their selflessness. Such recognition will also go hand in hand with financial support to further their humanitarian work and at the same time make their good work known to the world, thereby inspiring others to take part in charitable work – in short, to pass on the torch of "love".

We are often exposed to sad and tragic news every day and may forget the goodness of mankind. But we do not have to look far for shining examples. This year's finalists of THE ONE International Award and THE ONE Hong Kong Award joining us here this evening showcase the highest level of goodness, kindness and compassion of mankind. They empower the underprivileged with education, serve the homeless and the challenged and create a sense of belonging for the forgotten. Notwithstanding their different profiles, they share a common attribute – they put others before them and dedicate their life to helping the needy unconditionally. Every drop in the ocean counts. It is these ordinary acts that have the greatest potential to exhibit the glory of humanity.

The spirit of the awards echoes well with the current-term Government's vision of building a caring, cohesive and inclusive society. We are committed to providing sufficient resources to enhance the livelihood of our people, especially the disadvantaged and grassroots. The estimated recurrent expenditure of the Government on social welfare for 2018-19 is \$79.8 billion, representing a 55 per cent leap as compared to the figure just five years ago. In other words, for every \$100 the Government spends, \$19.6 goes to social welfare, just after education which has always topped the list.

Poverty alleviation is one of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's policy priorities. Among other measures, the Government

introduced the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme in May 2016. Far from being a "welfare" measure, it is more of a "workfare" to enable and empower people capable of working to achieve self-reliance and, in the long run, enhance the overall upward social mobility of our next generation. Tapping into our experience gained, we have, since April 1, 2018, renamed the Scheme to Working Family Allowance Scheme and brought into effect significant enhancements to the Scheme, including relaxing the working hour and income requirements as well as increasing the rates of allowances. We hope that the much-enhanced Scheme would benefit a larger pool of working households with better support.

We are mindful that Government's sole effort is far from enough to address changing needs and thorny issues in the community. We believe that cross-sector collaboration is a good solution. We also find it most encouraging and touching that numerous social leaders stand ready to lend us support. To this end, we have in place a Community Investment and Inclusion Fund which provides funding for the implementation of diversified social capital development projects. By leveraging the edges of different sectors, these projects serve to develop mutual help networks for the community, especially among the less privileged, in order to enhance their capacity in general and boost their resilience in the face of adversities. Since its establishment in 2002, about \$500 million has been approved to implement over 350 projects, establishing more than 2 100 mutual help networks. To further its well-received objectives, the Government injected an additional \$300 million into the Fund last year.

Another innovative initiative is the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged. The Fund was established in 2005 to promote tripartite partnership among the welfare sector, the business community and the Government to help the disadvantaged. In 2015, we created a dedicated portion under the Fund to encourage the business sector to work with schools and organisations to implement more after-school learning and support programmes for primary and secondary school students from grassroots families to facilitate their whole-person development.

Over the years, the Fund has approved a total of about \$580 million to deliver more than 1 100 projects, benefiting over 1 million people in need. On top of the \$800 million already set aside for the Fund, the Government will inject another \$400 million into the Fund in 2018-19 to support more projects beneficial to the disadvantaged. I strongly encourage everyone here to show your serving heart and innovative ideas to make good use of these funds with a view to making Hong Kong an inclusive society for all.

On this encouraging note, may I take this opportunity to pay my warmest tribute to Rotary International District 3450 for offering the meaningful awards. Please also join me to give a round of applause to the generous donors who have made these possible. No less important, I am most grateful to have the opportunity to salute all the heroes for their extraordinary and sterling contribution through ordinary acts and look forward to seeing more people joining their league for the betterment of our city.

Thank you.