

Speech by SFH at opening ceremony of Hong Kong Jockey Club Conghua Racecourse (with photos)

Following is the English translation of the speech by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Conghua Racecourse in Conghua, Guangdong, today (August 28):

Mr Song (Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Song Zhe), Mr Chen (Director of the Standing Committee of the Guangzhou Municipal People's Congress, Mr Chen Jianhua), Simon (Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Dr Simon Ip), Winfried (Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is my great pleasure to join this event today to celebrate the official opening of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Conghua Racecourse, and witness this historical moment with all of you.

The 16th Asian Games was successfully held in Guangzhou eight years ago, and it was also the first international equestrian event hosted by the Mainland. Given the close co-operation between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, respective Mainland authorities and the Guangdong Provincial Government, the joint effort marked the exemplary achievement of implementing the first internationally recognised Specific Equine Disease-free Zone (Conghua Equine Disease Free Zone) on the Mainland, which enabled horses from overseas to participate in competitions held on the Mainland for the first time. Beyond the expectations of many, this collaboration has created a unique opportunity for the Hong Kong Jockey Club to develop the Asian Games equestrian venue into the current Conghua Racecourse, providing high-quality facilities for horse training.

The newly established Conghua Racecourse is an important support base for Hong Kong racehorses. The HKSAR Government and Mainland authorities signed four collaboration agreements in December 2017, which safeguard the system and co-operation on the operation of the Conghua Equine Disease Free Zone. In addition, with the close Hong Kong-Guangdong co-operation, the disease prevention and control measures could be fully implemented, ensuring the long-term high-health status of horses moving into and out of the Conghua Equine Disease Free Zone. At the same time, the two authorities have also enhanced customs clearance, inspection and quarantine procedures, and successfully implemented the "single approval, multi-entry" equine quarantine and transportation arrangements.

World-class racing in Hong Kong has gained significant international recognition. The HKSAR Government has imposed stringent measures on the import and export of plants and animals, as well as equine quarantine

requirements, enabling high-health, high-performance horses from all over the world to join competitions in Hong Kong every year. The establishment of Conghua Racecourse is a collaborative achievement involving the HKSAR and the Mainland, building on the strengths of the Mainland's infrastructural facilities, the HKSAR Government's experience in equine inspection and quarantine, and the Hong Kong Jockey Club's expertise in equestrian sport. The Central Government is supporting the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, leveraging the comparative advantages of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macao as well as enhancing their co-operation and promoting economic growth. For the medical and healthcare field, I led a delegation to Guangzhou, Zhongshan and Shenzhen in early August to study the medical development in the Bay Area. This delegation comprised some 100 representatives from medical institutions and healthcare professional bodies from the HKSAR, reflecting the anticipation of the medical and healthcare sector with regard to the development of the Bay Area. The establishment of Conghua Racecourse is in line with the direction of the Bay Area development, the equestrian sport and related fields in the area, setting an excellent example of the Bay Area development.

The Conghua Equine Disease Free Zone is recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health as a successful application of the concept of an equine disease-free zone. The European Commission has also reaffirmed the high-health status of horses in the Conghua Equine Disease Free Zone. These endorsements demonstrate significant global recognition for the Conghua project.

I believe the establishment of Conghua Racecourse will strengthen the co-operation and exchange between the Mainland and Hong Kong with regard to veterinary science, equine inspection and quarantine procedures, surveillance and control of diseases as well as training of professionals. The HKSAR Government will continue to foster its co-operation with Mainland authorities concerned in ensuring the smooth operation of the Conghua Equine Disease Free Zone.

Lastly, I would like to offer my best wishes for the successful operation and continuous development of Conghua Racecourse, and for all guests to have a happy, healthy and rewarding stay. Thank you very much.

