

Speech by SITI at Data Science and AI Forum 2023 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, at the Data Science and AI Forum 2023 today (May 30):

Professor Freddy Boey (President of the City University of Hong Kong (CityU)), Professor Joe Qin (Chair of Organising Committee of Data Science and AI Forum 2023, Dean and Chair Professor of School of Data Science and Director of Hong Kong Institute of Data Science of CityU), Professor Michael Yang (Vice-President (Research and Technology) of CityU), Professor Chi-hou Chan (Acting Provost of CityU), distinguished speakers and guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am most honoured to be here today at the Data Science and AI Forum 2023.

First of all, I would like to extend my appreciation to the City University of Hong Kong and the Lingnan University of Hong Kong for organising such a timely two-day forum. It also gives me an opportunity to congratulate the two new Presidents for taking up the important positions of the key universities in Hong Kong. I believe this Forum will provide an exciting opportunity for scholars and industry experts to explore and exchange on the latest development in AI (artificial intelligence) and data science.

Over the past few months, generative AI technology applications such as ChatGPT and other AI chatbots have drawn a great deal of attention in our society and worldwide. The technology and their instant popularity are certainly ground-breaking and impressive.

But all opportunities arising from ventures like generative AI come with risks and costs. This technology and its wide application have caused heated debates on information security, privacy protection, ethics and intellectual property rights, to name just a few. There is yet clear consensus on the universal approach to deal with these contentious issues. Different economies or even organisations within the same sector such as tertiary education are working on the best practice. The Hong Kong Government will keep in view the international discussion and adopt an open mind to the appropriate options to handle the AI-related pros and cons.

One thing we must share, I believe, is that any measures we contemplate and take with regard to AI must not stifle innovation and creativity in the making of a better world. One of the drivers in the promotion of innovation, research and industry development is consortium of talent. Since late last year, we have set up the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises, OASES in short, to foster the landing of strategically important businesses in Hong

Kong. We will tailor flexible packages involving land, tax and other financial incentives to targeted enterprises, including those in the field of AI and data science as the first batch. In just a few months, we have made good progress in attracting both Mainland and international tech companies to set foot in Hong Kong. I hope more will come forth after this Forum.

Another accelerator to forge ahead with the AI development is adequate computing infrastructure. As announced by our Financial Secretary in the Budget earlier this year, the Government will conduct a feasibility study on the development of an AI Supercomputing Centre in Hong Kong. I believe it will come in the next couple of years. This strategic technological infrastructure is set to provide cutting-edge computing power and capability to local universities and research institutes, government departments and industry sectors, and be a strong impetus to our AI ecosystem.

Ladies and gentleman, Hong Kong is poised to break new grounds and scale new heights by leveraging the huge potential of AI and other emerging technologies. We must work with best brains like you. I wish you all insightful takeaways from this Forum and a great success for the event. Thank you very much.