

Starting a New Chapter in Hong Kong Social Welfare Summit cum Inaugural Ceremony of Hong Kong Social Welfare Sector Heart to Heart Joint Action held today (with photos)

The Starting a New Chapter in Hong Kong Social Welfare Summit cum Inaugural Ceremony of Hong Kong Social Welfare Sector Heart to Heart Joint Action was held today (May 29). The Summit, jointly organised by the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), the Social Welfare Department and the Hong Kong Social Welfare Sector Heart to Heart Joint Action, brings together local, Mainland and international stakeholders to share and exchange views on social welfare issues.

The Summit cum Inaugural Ceremony, which was conducted in hybrid mode, attracted around 500 social welfare professionals participating in person and close to 10 000 participants online. Thirty keynote speakers or panelists from around the world spoke at the Summit.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, attended the opening of the Summit cum Inaugural Ceremony this morning and officiated at the ceremony with the Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (LOCPG), Mr Zheng Yanxiong; the Vice Minister of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Dr Liu Zheng; the Director-General of the Department of Civil Affairs of Guangdong Province, Ms Zhang Chen; the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun; the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Ms Alice Lau; the Director of Social Welfare, Miss Charmaine Lee; the Chairman of the Heart to Heart Joint Action, Reverend Canon Peter Douglas Koon; and the Chairperson of the Organising Committee of the Summit cum Inaugural Ceremony, Professor Annie Tam.

Mr Lee congratulated the inauguration of the Heart to Heart Joint Action, and hoped that it would unite different fronts to scale new heights in social welfare services in collaboration with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government. He commended that the Summit, which gathered social welfare professionals from around the world, has shown the unity of the social welfare sector as well as its strong support as Hong Kong is starting a new chapter in the development of the sector. He hoped that, with Hong Kong's distinctive advantage in enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems", the local social welfare sector would continue to engage in exchanges with the Mainland and overseas to promote high quality development of the sector.

Mr Zheng, who attended the ceremony on behalf of the Director of the

Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council (HKMAO), Mr Xia Baolong, the HKMAO and the LOCPG, also addressed the audience. He hoped that the social welfare sector will remain committed to its aspiration and mission and guide the way for a bright future for the sector. He also hoped that the sector will stay united to effectively forge consensus and promote the mainstream values of the core of "be patriotic and love Hong Kong" and implementation of "one country, two systems". He hoped that the sector will remain pragmatic and focused when serving the community so that the public can benefit more from the fruits of economic development in a fair manner.

Also addressing the ceremony, Dr Liu said that the inauguration of the Heart to Heart Joint Action has established a new platform and created new opportunities which strengthen exchanges and co-operation on social welfare work between the Mainland and Hong Kong. He hoped that the Heart to Heart Joint Action will serve as an important link which drives the local social welfare sector to foster exchanges with the Mainland and extend the scope of co-operation continuously.

Prior to the Summit, Mr Sun signed a Memorandum of Co-operation on Care for the Elderly (MoC) on behalf of the LWB of the HKSAR Government with the Department of Civil Affairs of Guangdong Province to foster collaboration in elderly care services between the two places. The MoC will boost support for elderly care development in both places, facilitate elderly care training and exchanges, encourage relevant organisations of the two places to explore and extend the scope and mode of co-operation, etc.

Mr Sun then introduced the latest developments of local elderly care services in detail in his keynote speech at the Summit. He said that the HKSAR Government would strive to overcome challenges of an ageing population through enhancing services, cultivating talent, optimising utilisation of land resources and promoting application of technology. He also encouraged the local social welfare sector to seize the opportunities arising from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and provide more quality options for retiring Hong Kong people.

In addition, Miss Lee spoke at the luncheon of the Summit in the afternoon. Three panel sessions titled "Helping the Deprived", "Assisting Persons with Disabilities" and "Supporting Elder Persons" were held in the afternoon, where participants had in-depth and interactive discussions with the panelists on poverty alleviation, rehabilitation services and elderly services.

To showcase Hong Kong's social welfare services developments and achievements, an exhibition on the services provided by local non-governmental organisations was held at the Summit to introduce products and provide service information including soft meals for the elderly, gerontechnology and pre-school children rehabilitation services.



