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**Hong Kong Computer Society's Response to Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address**

**November 25, 2020. Hong Kong** - The Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS), as the well-established and the largest ICT professional association in Hong Kong, expressed its support and welcomed the continued investment in the development of innovative technology and smart cities to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness in the long run, as well as the announcement of a number of innovative technology policies, in this year's Chief Executive's Policy Address. Under the Policy Address announced today, HKCS is pleased to see that there will be closer innovation and technology cooperation with Shenzhen and the Greater Bay Area, further promotion of smart city by the government, the plans of digitalisation for a number of government services, the launch of Smart Mobility to improve Hong Kong's transportation planning, the support to the popularisation of 5G technology, and the promotion of the learning and exchanges among ICT talents between Greater Bay Area and Hong Kong, as well as the initiatives to attract more foreign STEM talents, and strengthening support for the e-learning needs of disadvantaged students. Under the "new normal" affected by the epidemic, HKCS welcomes to see the government's initiatives to encourage continued digital transformation among all walks of life, and at the same time actively promote the digitalisation of the construction industry and the cloudification of legal services. It also strives to promote the development of Art Tech, with the lead by the Secretary of Home Affairs jointly cooperated across Innovation and Technology Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau as well as the Education Bureau.

Dr. Ted Suen, MH, President of the Hong Kong Computer Society, said: "We are glad to see that the government has taken innovative technology as the driver for economic development, government services improvement and career future for youngsters of Hong Kong upon whom it has been focusing on investing in innovative technology for the past few years. Policies and related work are already underway and some results have been achieved. The Hong Kong Computer Society has always seen the importance to the cultivation of scientific and technological talents. We strongly support the plans under the Policy Address to attract more overseas STEM talents into Hong Kong, and the arrangement of local young people to work in scientific and technological areas in the Greater Bay Area. This move can broaden the horizons of the local talents, and especially for the youth employment and entrepreneurship

programs in the Greater Bay Area, they can help local young talents crafting a better understanding of the development potential of the Greater Bay Area, as well as the operation, management and career opportunities of the ICT industry, which will be very useful for enriching the talent pool for local technological development in the future. In addition, in the policy address, the Chief Executive especially expressed her gratitude to the Hong Kong technology industry for its contribution in the fight against and prevention of the epidemic. It clearly demonstrates that technology has become an important pillar for improving our society and people's livelihood, and the development of the innovation and technology industry has become one of the government's main policies."

Dr. Ted Suen continued: "However, HKCS believes that, on the smart city development front, the government can collect broader ideas and opinions from wider scope of industries, academia and overseas experts. In addition, in the fight against and prevention of the epidemic, it can strengthen the application of local innovation and technology achievements, as well as support the disadvantaged groups to cope with the digital needs under the new normal. Meanwhile, we also urge for the attention to talent training to fill the digital gap and formulation of necessary legal provisions in accordance to the latest technological development."

Dr. Ted Suen noted that, with the essence of the "2020 Policy Address" being "Expanding Global and Greater Bay Area Opportunities. Building an International Innovation and Technology Center", the main part of the Policy Address is short and precise, and the "Supplement" section contains policies in various areas; Among those which are related to innovation and technology, the Hong Kong Computer Society is pleased to see and welcome the government's announcement of the following major new measures to be implemented.

1. **Shenzhen/Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone, the "One zone, Two parks" concept to be jointly developed by Shenzhen and Hong Kong**

- The Central Government strongly supports the co-operation between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in developing an international I&T hub in the GBA, and has agreed to their joint development of the "Shenzhen/Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone (SITZ)"
- Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (HSITP) at the Lok Ma Chau Loop, with a view

to establishing "one zone, two parks"

- The governments of the two cities are exploring the feasibility of allowing the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) to lease and manage certain areas of the Innovation and Technology Zone in Futian, Shenzhen, so that institutes and enterprises which are interested in starting their business in the GBA can establish a presence in the SITZ before the completion of the first batch of buildings in HSITP

- Seizing the opportunity to foster the development of the ecological chain of the I&T industry in Hong Kong and Shenzhen so as to offer tremendous employment and start-up business opportunities for the young people of Hong Kong

## 2. Global STEM Professorship Scheme to attract globally I&T talents

- The government and universities jointly invested $2 billion to recruit outstanding STEM scholars and their R&D teams to settle in Hong Kong
- Provide 5-year salary allowance and the expenses for setting up laboratories

## 3. "Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme"

- Connect with technology companies which have operations in both Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area, and set up 400 I&T positions
- Provide jobs with a monthly salary of at least HK$26,000, of which HK$18,000 is funded by the government
- For a period of 18 months, working hours in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area each account for about half
- Help young people to enter into the I&T sector and experience and grasp the opportunities of innovation and technology development in the Greater Bay Area

## 4. Establishing Smart City

- In the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0 to be released in December, more than 130 smart city initiatives will be set up
- The one-stop personalized digital service platform, "iAM Smart" is to be launched in December this year. It will offer over 20 frequently used public services initially, including online application for vehicle licence renewal and electronic submission of tax returns. Other public utilities are to be invited to provide services on the platform. Hoping to see active participation in the

platform by the commercial sector.

- With the view of solving day-to-day problems in rural and remote areas with the use of technology, and to continue to improve public transportation infrastructure and services, "Smart Mobility" is launched for improving road efficiency
- In order to alleviate the problem of insufficient public parking spaces through the application of technology, the Transport Department is actively taking forward six pilot projects on automated parking systems (APS), and has invited tender for the first pilot project at Hoi Shing Road, Tsuen Wan, at the end of September. It is expected that the APS will be put into service next year
- In the public sector reform, it is mentioned that the government will promote the electronic application of all commercial license applications within 18 months

5. **Network Development and Wider Application of 5G**

- The 5G coverage of major mobile network operators is expected to reach 90% of the population this year
- It is planned to release more 5G spectrum in different frequency bands in 2021 to meet the needs of various 5G applications in terms of speed, capacity and coverage. The relocation and installation of the tracking and control stations in Tai Po to Chung Hom Kok Teleport are expected to be completed in four years. By then, various mobile network operators will be able to deploy the 5G frequency bands in a more holistic and efficient manner and improve their coverage
- To further promote the development of 5G application, the application period of the subsidy scheme concerned under the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) will be extended for six months until May next year
- Working with a number of public organisations to encourage the deployment of 5G technology in various sectors
- Facilitate the early adoption of 5G technology and application in government departments and public organisations

6. **Promote the development of creative industries and art tech**

- To inject an additional $1 billion into the CreateSmart Initiative to further promote the development of the creative industries in Hong Kong and provide support for them to adapt to the impact arising from the "new normal" under the epidemic
- To promote the development of Art Tech

- The Secretary for Home Affairs is appointed to take the lead in setting up a task force comprising representatives of the Innovation and Technology Bureau, the CEDB as well as the Education Bureau (EDB), and invite the participation of representatives from the relevant sectors and non-government organisations (NGOs) to formulate strategies and measures to develop and promote Art Tech
- To be more proactive in encouraging the related sectors to apply for funding under the Arts and Sport Development Fund, the Innovation and Technology Fund, the Film Development Fund and the CreateSmart Initiative to implement projects that integrate technology and arts
- A total of $100 million is set aside under the various funds, and to provide venues and complementary facilities for experimental use

### 7. Promote digitalization in all walks of life

- Further to the establishment of the LawTech Fund and the COVID-19 Online Dispute Resolution Scheme under the second round of the AEF, the DoJ will actively explore the development of the Hong Kong Legal Cloud, a state-of-the-art online facility equipped with advanced information security technology, to provide secure, reliable and affordable data storage services for the local legal and dispute resolution sector

- The Development Bureau (DEVB) has been proactively implementing the "Construction 2.0" initiative to facilitate the "professionalisation" and "revitalisation" of the traditional construction industry with the wider adoption of I&T. The CE will chair an International Construction Leaders Summit next year to collect views from and formulate strategies with various stakeholders

*Hong Kong Computer Society's Recommendations on the Policy Address*

Dr. Ted Suen said: "Apart from the actions stated in the Policy Address, the HKCS would urge the Government to focus strategically on the following to enhance the Policy's holisticness."

### 1. Establish a Smart City Advisory Committee

- It is recommended to widely invite participants from technology industry, academics, and foreign experts to form an advisory committee, to provide more diversified suggestions on the government's planning of smart city development.
- Numerous local experts under the umbrella of the Hong Kong Computer Society

are also happy to provide professional advice on the development of innovation and technology and smart cities for the government.

2. **Strengthen I&T application in flighting the epidemic**

- The Chief Executive expressed her gratitude to the contribution of technological products in preventing and fighting the epidemic and to maintaining economic operations during the epidemic.
- The government is recommended to encourage the industry and academia to develop more relevant technologies that help prevent and fight the epidemic, and reward those who have made outstanding contributions.
- And the Government to assist the commercialisation and promotion of related products or solutions.

3. **Strengthen the support of the digitisation for disadvantaged communities**

- Under the influence of the "new normal", e-learning will largely become the "new normal" of education. Therefore, the government is recommended to support school children and low-income families to access the Internet, as well as the regularisation of subsidies for purchasing computers and communication equipment.
- The government should allocate additional resources to support non-governmental organizations and charitable service groups to carry out operations electronically. Even when the relevant personnel are working at home, the recipients can still obtain the required services online.

4. **Filling the digital skill gap**

In June last year, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) published an Asia-Pacific regional survey on the "digital skills gap." 75% of the respondents, including employers, government officials, academics, etc., all indicated that there is an obvious problem of skill mismatch. If there is no more training to upgrade digital skills, it is believed that a large number of workers will be unemployed due to automation; and skill mismatch not only harms labor, but also harms the overall economy. If there are not enough people qualified for the main positions, productivity will definitely decline.

The digital economy is developing rapidly, but the education system has not been able

to catch up. At the APEC forum, which included participants from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, has come up with a roadmap to support and strengthen digital skills upgrading and retraining courses. The roadmap has been delivered to employers, governments and educational institutions in the Asia-Pacific region for implementation in the region.

The HKCS recommends that the Government should take the initiative to formulate policies to bridge the digital skills gap, including:

By supporting the large number of information and communication technology practitioners, to enhance their mastery of the new digital technology, and enhance the training of IT staff for the IT posts which are facing talent shortage. In addition, the HKCS has recommended that the Government should make good use of big data to collect the public views from the young generations, formulate relevant policies for the development of open data and artificial intelligence, and at the same time devote more resources into e-learning, especially for the benefits of the disadvantaged and poor families.

- In terms of policy, the Hong Kong Government has not yet formulated policies to fill the gap in digital skills, such as helping information and communication technology practitioners to enhance their mastery of new digital technologies, and as well enhancing the training of the high-talent-demand professional IT positions such as artificial intelligence and data engineers, and scientists, information security, etc., while providing support to local service provides on their service upgrades. It is recommended that the Government should refer to the APEC Roadmap as a model for filling the digital skills gap and to introduce or optimise Hong Kong's relevant policies based on the current situation; to encourage and subsidise tertiary institutions to develop and update the curriculum, so as to cater for future digital skills needs.
- The government should provide incentives to encourage government departments and enterprises to enhance their modern digital skills of their employees; courses should include online courses and certification, as to many of the employees, online training is more popular with greater flexibility than classes.
- The Hong Kong Computer Society strongly believed that it is very important for the Government to support the promotion of STEM education, and HKCS recommends that the education experts should continue to optimize and improve the STEM education system of our schools.

- Hong Kong has a strong asset pool of information and communication technology talents. To fill the digital skills gap and assist in the digital transformation of industries, the government should take the lead in using local technology talents, such as appointing them to join relevant government committees or working groups, and encourage public institutions such as the Monetary Authority, the Mandatory Provident Fund Management Authority, the Airport Authority, the Housing Authority, the Insurance Regulatory Authority, etc., to carry out similar appointments to maximize the use of their talents.

5. **Analyzing social sentiment with big data**

At present, many young generations in the society have different opinions and voices on government administration. It is necessary for the government to strengthen the reach-out to the public opinions. It is recommended to use big data and artificial intelligence technology to analyze the data of young generations, that are collected through outreach and liaison activities. Through analysis, to understand and predict changes in social sentiment, so that the Government would be able to more accurately get hold of the public opinions as reference for formulating policies.

6. **Open Data Policy**

The government's Policy Address for the past two years has mentioned the policy goal of open data. However, in the past two years, progress has been slow. The Hong Kong Computer Society recommends that the Policy Address can include proposals of more effective and clear implementation methods to achieve the goal; and set up an open priority, based on the value of the data to the business community and the public. It is recommended that the government should conduct adequate consultation with all major stakeholders, including government departments, public and private organizations, security and privacy professionals, and open service providers, to develop an open data framework. It is particularly important to establish clear guidelines on risks and benefits of data privacy, as well as the awareness and participation of the community and stakeholders in the open data policy, during the different stages of the adoption. And it is essential to use various technical and administrative measures to reduce the risk of personal data privacy intrusion.

7. **Artificial Intelligence Policy**

In the digital age, it is inevitable that artificial intelligence and machine learning will

affect Hong Kong's economic and social development. The government should develop artificial intelligence policies to support the application of related technologies and supervise their applications and formation in various important services. Policies should include ethical requirements for the application of artificial intelligence, technological development, compliance with individual industry legal requirements, data sharing policies, privacy and compliance, etc. It is recommended to establish a high-level advisory committee to supervise its development. The committee must analyze and deal with the many traditional types of jobs that are likely to be eliminated due to the emergence of artificial intelligence, including the impact on the labor market, ways to assist in labor transformation, social expectation management for labor market changes, retraining and skill upgrading of labor, etc. All the above factors require strategic cooperation from the government to prepare the next generation for the digital transformation society to ensure the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. .

**About the Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS)**

Founded in 1970, the Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS) is a recognised non-profit professional organisation focused on developing Hong Kong's Information Technology (IT) profession and industry. Their members come from a broad spectrum of Hong Kong's IT community, from corporations to like-minded individuals, all coming together to raise the profile and standards of the IT profession and industry. As a well-established IT professional body, the Society is committed to professional and industry development as well as community services to ensure the IT sector continues to make a positive impact on peoples' lives with three main goals, namely, 1) talent cultivation and professional development, 2) industry development and collaboration, and 3) the effective use of IT in our community.

For more details, please visit http://www.hkcs.org.hk.

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Issued by: Hong Kong Computer Society
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