

80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Department of Mechanical Engineering, HK PolyU  
Speech by Ir Frank CHAN, Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

Good evening President Tong, Professor Shi, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

80 years is just a blink in the history of time but long enough to transform Hong Kong into Asia's World City. As of today, Hong Kong has been ranked the world's freest economy by the Heritage Foundation since 1995. Our overall infrastructure has been ranked the best by the World Economic Forum for 7 consecutive years.

80 years ago, our population was slightly more than a million and Government revenue stood at HK\$33M. Today, our population comes close to 7.4M with an estimate Government revenue well above HK\$500B. Since 1937, Government expenditure for education has risen from HK\$2M to HK\$84B because manpower and talent combined is the life blood of Hong Kong. As a matter of fact, Hong Kong has little natural resources but we survive and prosper with nothing but people. Given their dedication, creativity and perseverance, Hong Kong keeps marching on. The story of Hong Kong is about people from all walks of life, and engineers are no exception.

Mechanical engineers work magic and turn iron into steel, with which the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa tower and many other iconic structures were built. Mechanical engineers shape not only the global landscape but also the way we live. We are empowered to fly beyond the sky and drill beneath the seas. We are enabled to go beyond physical confine, and people with broken parts are now given a new lease of life with artificial organs, medical implants and prostheses.

Mechanical engineers work magic for Hong Kong too. We have the best transport systems in the world, be it on land, air and sea. With the highest density of lifts and escalators per capita, we travel up and down skyscrapers at ease. Our ferries, taxis, buses and trams all run remarkably well. Our railway and metro achieve an overall 99.9% in terms of service reliability. We have the most reliable energy supply too, with availability over 99.99% for gas and over 99.999% for electricity. All these are just the tip of the iceberg of what mechanical engineers have contributed.

University is where people start appreciating who they are and how one relates to others. University is where idea and imagination blossom, where people challenge conventional wisdom with innovations and discoveries. University is where people undergo intellectual baptism of fire, where the younger generations are empowered to surpass the predecessors. Over the years, the PolyU Mechanical Engineering Department has nurtured more than 30,000 graduates with resounding success. The Department has been the forerunner in many fronts such as new energy and environment improvement, transportation, health and biomedical systems. Many of the graduates have become leaders, pioneers and key players in communities, government, industry and academia, both at home and overseas. Their accomplishments and contributions couldn't be better described by the Outstanding Alumni who are going to share with us their thoughts shortly.

Tonight, we all come together to celebrate, to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Tonight, I am humbled by the many honourable guests, Outstanding ME Alumni and all those who have contributed in one way or the other in making Hong Kong into what it is today. Apart from witnessing how fellow mechanical engineering alumni have transformed and excelled since the time when they

studied in PolyU. We are also here to pay tribute to all the staff of the Department, now and then, for their devotion and dedication in research and education, and for making dreams come true for the many students over the years.

In closing, I would like to share a little secret with you. Although I do not have the privilege to study in PolyU, I did have my industrial training completed in PolyU 40 years ago. In other words, I was made in PolyU too. So, brothers and sisters, may I invite you all to jointly extend our warmest appreciation to everyone of the Department and for everything they have done for us and for Hong Kong.

Thank you.

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