

**Welcome Speech by Mr Raymond KY POON,  
Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services,  
at the Welcome Reception of the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
of the International Railway Safety Council  
on 25 November 2025**

Distinguished guests, esteemed delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening! Welcome again and I remember in Vienna last year, I extended invitations to you to join the IRSC Conference 2025 in Hong Kong. Today, I am very delighted to greet you here!

It is my privilege to introduce to you our co-hosts of this Conference, Mr WANG Qiming, Deputy Administrator of the National Railway Administration of China, and Dr Jacob KAM, CEO of MTR Corporation Limited.

I would also like to introduce, Ir Alice CHOW, President of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers. Engineers and the railway industry are inseparable and have worked hand in hand ever since the first public railway<sup>1</sup> began here in Hong Kong over 100 years ago. And we are so glad to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers alongside this remarkable IRSC in Hong Kong.

We have chosen the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre as our IRSC venue, which is an iconic landmark visible from the waterfront on both sides of the harbour. The venue not only has its historical significance, having hosted the ceremony marking Hong Kong's reunion with China in 1997, it is a world class facility for exhibitions and conferences like the IRSC. The location is also convenient for you to explore Hong Kong Island or Kowloon by catching the Star Ferry nearby during your leisure time.

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1888: The Peak Tram begins operation, the first public rail transport in Hong Kong.

1904: The Hong Kong Tramways begin service along the northern coast of Hong Kong Island.

1910: The British Section of the Kowloon–Canton Railway opens, connecting Kowloon to the mainland border at Lo Wu. It was a single-track line that ran through the New Territories.

The theme of this year's Conference is "Advancing Railway Safety through Innovations and Collaborations". It reflects our focus and commitment to embrace innovation and technologies, and foster stronger partnerships to address our challenges of railway industry. In the next few days, we will hear from over 40 officials, experts, academia and stakeholders, to deliver their keynotes and presentations and share their insights and ideas in the Conference. As in all IRSC Conferences, I am sure networking and exchange of dialogues on subjects of mutual interests will happen both in and out of the Conference venue.

Some of you have enrolled for the two-day technical visit to China Guangzhou in the weekend. The High Speed Rail named "Fùxīng Hao 復興號" will depart at 10:09 sharp from our West Kowloon Station on Saturday, and will arrive at Guangzhou South Station in forty plus minutes, after about 140 kilometres journey. The local technical visits in Hong Kong are also exciting and we will take you to the MTR Operations Control Centre, which is the heart of the metro operations, MTR train depots, or else riding on the Peak Tram which was re-opened in August 2022 after full renovation and upgrade.

The gala dinner tomorrow evening, will be held at a Chinese restaurant inside the Beijing Palace Museum on Kowloon side. Don't miss the special pre-dinner museum guided tour where you will have a chance to see some of our national treasures on display at the museum. Last but not least, the farewell cocktail will be held at Tai Kwun in Central on Friday, which is a heritage-arts venue and home to 16 revitalised heritage buildings, including the former Central Police Station, Central Magistracy and Victoria Prison, to get a glimpse of heritage stories from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century of Hong Kong.

I have told you the main activities arranged. Before we dive into the serious businesses of the Conference, please enjoy this evening's welcome gathering to refresh from jet lag, connect and get to know your fellow delegates. May I also take the opportunity to encourage you to find time to explore some of the attractions of Hong Kong beyond the conference halls.

Welcome to Hong Kong again. I wish you a memorable evening and a truly rewarding week ahead.

Thank you.