

行政長官董建華先生致詞全文 Opening Address by the Chief Executive, the Hon. Tung Chee Hwa

譚議員、安老事務委員會委員、各位嘉賓：

我很高興出席今天的研討會。首先，我要歡迎在座所有嘉賓，特別是由北京、澳洲、以色列、日本、瑞士和美國遠道而來的講者。

五年前在我就任行政長官時，我承諾的其中一項重要政策，是要改善安老服務，提高長者的生活質素，使我們社會能夠做到「老有所養、老有所屬、老有所為」。在過去五年，我們加強發展社區護理服務，盡可能協助有長期護理需要的長者達成在家安享晚年的心願，如今已有約二萬九千名長者接受了這些服務，比五年前增加了約六成。我們亦為無法在家中居住的長者提供了約二萬六千個資助安老院宿位。現時本港超過一半的長者居住在資助公營房屋，而通過多項長者配屋的優先計劃，長者家庭在公屋輪候冊的數目已由1997年的一萬六千個下降至現時約七千九百個，平均輪候時間由三年縮短至約一年半。在這個財政年度我們在安老服務方面的支出達到35億元，比五年前增加超過一倍；而為長者提供經濟支援方面的支出為120億元，比五年前增加超過五成。此外，透過安老事務委員會，我們亦展開了「康健樂頤年」運動，積極推廣健康的生活方式，致力促進長者的身心健康。

統計顯示，目前本港65歲以上長者，有超過一半與子女同住，得到家庭照顧，亦證明我們社會對家庭價值觀的重視。在未來幾年我們在安老服務的目標是加強對有需要的長者的支援與及協調社區及院舍護理服務，包括在長者人數眾多的公共屋邨提供綜合護理服務，及舉辦多些社區活動，鼓勵關懷互愛，長幼並融，使長者能夠渡過健康和積極的晚年。

我亦想藉此機會向安老事務委員會主席譚議員和各委員致意。過去五年，安老事務委員會就各項長者政策和服務，向政府提供意見，使我們推行的政策能夠切合長者的需要和改善他們的生活質素。雖然我們在改善長者服務方面已經做了不少工作，展望未來，人口老化對我們社會發展有非常深遠的影響。

最新的人口推算顯示，在二零三一年，香港每四名市民就有一人年齡達到65歲或以上。雖然一直以來，我們都知道，與世界上許多其他地方一樣，香港的人口正不斷老化，但這些數字卻突顯了本港人口老化的速度比我們想像中快，本港的年長人口在三十年內將會增至超過200萬，與現時78萬相比，增幅超過一倍。

對於人口老化，一般人著眼於這個現象會為本港的社會保障、醫療護理和安老服務帶來更大壓力。無可否認，這些都是大家應該關注的事項和面對的挑戰。但是，年老並不等如體弱多病及需要別人照顧。事實上，隨著醫療科技不斷進步，市民愈來愈長壽，加上將來會有更多長者擁有更高教育程度、更好健康和更佳的經濟能力，因此人口老化不一定只會為我們帶來負擔，如果我們能好好利用長者資源，亦可以為社會創造一

些新的動力。

研究發現，從小養成健康的生活習慣，年老後也可以享有健康、積極的人生。事實上，本港的長者大多身體健康，過著獨立的生活。因此，我們的社會應該積極研究如何讓長者過豐盛健康的人生。我們需要對「老化」這個觀念，以及我們對長者的定義要有正確的認識。老化是一個成長的過程，是帶有積極意義的人生必經階段。我們不應視長者為負擔，誤以為長者身體衰弱，又無生產力。在我們的長者人口之中，其實只有約百分之十有某程度的缺損，需要一些援助和照顧。事實上，大部分長者都能夠繼續扶持家人，貢獻社會。

我們不但要時刻緊記長者多年來為社會發展作出的辛勞和貢獻，而且更要認識長者的人生經驗和累積的生活智慧是我們社會的重要財富。我們要盡力照顧有需要的長者的同時，亦必須讓身體健康的長者能夠過正常的生活，繼續盡展所長，在社會和經濟方面作出貢獻。要達到這個目標，是需要家庭、社區及政府齊心協力、攜手合作：

第一，因應現今社會急速發展，資訊科技一日千里，我們要鼓勵終身學習，使社會上不同年齡的人都能夠與時並進，特別是要幫助長者繼續保持與社會接觸，參與社會活動；

第二，我們要積極利用長者資源，提供適當的環境，鼓勵長者及退休人士多參與自願服務，將他們的累積知識和經驗，用不同的方式，繼續為社會貢獻；

第三，我們要制定一套可持續的長者服務政策，確保在社會資源可承擔下，為有需要的長者提供有效的社會福利保障；

第四，照顧長者是社會、家庭和為人子女者要共同承擔的責任，我們要鼓勵社會發揚傳統敬老的美德，認識「家有一老，如有一寶」的智慧，要為家庭提供協助，使長者能夠盡可能與親人、子女一起渡過幸福、愉快和充實的晚年。

香港面對人口老化問題的同時，我們亦要克服經濟轉型的挑戰，兩者是息息相關，因為如果我們不能盡快改善教育，提高我們就業人口的質素，鼓勵工商業走高增值的路線，加強我們經濟的競爭力，待現時年青一代進入中年、老年期，將會使我們人口老化的問題百上加斤。

香港是世界上其中一個出生率最低的地方，偏低的出生率引致我們的人口不斷老化。要保持我們經濟的活力和競爭力，我們必需因應香港的經濟發展的方向、人才需求、土地資源、移民進出包括內地人士來港的數量、和保障本地工人就業機會等因素，制定一套全面的人口政策，吸納人才，以提升香港的人口質素和確保我們經濟和社會的可持續發展。這將是第二屆特區政府開始時其中一項首要工作。

今天研討會的題目是人口老齡化帶來的挑戰和機遇。我懇請在座各位積極參與討論，共同制定藍圖，鼓勵大家積極樂觀面對年長的過程，享受豐盛人生。我謹祝研討會成績美滿。多謝各位。

Mr. Tam, members of the Elderly Commission, distinguished speakers, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today's symposium. Let me first of all extend a very warm welcome to all participants and guests, especially the eminent guest speakers from Beijing, Australia, Israel, Japan, Switzerland and the United States.

When I took the office of Chief Executive five years ago, I pledged, as one of the major policies, to improve care for elders and their quality of life, ensuring that they will continue to enjoy a sense of security, a sense of belonging, and a feeling of health and worthiness. Five years on, we have enhanced the community care services for elders in need of long-term nursing to meet our elders' preference to age at home. Today, about 29 000 elders have used these services, up by 60% over five years ago. We have also provided about 26 000 subsidized residential care places to elders who cannot be adequately taken care of at home. More than half of our elderly population lives in subsidized public housing. Through a number of priority housing schemes for them, the number of elderly households on the Waiting List for public rental flats has been reduced from 16 000 in 1997 to the current 7 900, and the average waiting time from 3 years to about 1.5 years. Expenditure on elderly services in this financial year amounts to \$3.5 billion, more than double the expenditure five years ago; while that on elderly financial support totals \$12 billion, an increase of more than 50% over five years. In addition, through the Elderly Commission we have launched the Healthy Ageing Campaign to promote a healthy and active lifestyle among our elders so that they can enjoy both physical and mental health.

Statistics reveal that more than half of our elders aged over 65 are living with and cared for by their own families. This testifies the importance attached to family values in our society. In the coming years, our elderly services will aim at providing better support to elders in need and co-coordinating community and institutional care services. For example, public rental estates with a high concentration of older people will be provided with integrated care services. We will also organize more intergenerational activities in communities to help our elders enjoy healthy and active ageing.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman, Mr. Tam, and all members of the Elderly Commission for their invaluable advice rendered to the Government over the past five years on a wide range of elderly policy issues and services, contributing to the implementation of policies that can really meet the needs of the elderly and improve their quality of life. While much has been done in improving our services for the elderly, population ageing will remain in future a subject with far-reaching implications on the development of our society.

The latest population projections show that by the year 2031, one in every four persons in Hong Kong will be 65 years of age or older. While we all along know that, like many other places around the world, Hong Kong's population is ageing, the figures have highlighted the fact that our population will age at a pace quicker than expected. In thirty years, the number of older population will increase to over two million, more than double the current 780 000.

Most of the reactions so far to population ageing have focused on the greater demands an older population will place on our social security, healthcare and elderly services. No doubt these are legitimate concerns and challenges, which we as a community need to address. However, ageing is much more than the onset of poor health and dependency. In fact, with the advancement in medical science and increase in longevity, and with more cohorts of our population who will age with better education, in better health and with better financial means in future, older people will not be a mere liability, but a valuable pool of resources we can tap to create new impetus to the development of our society.

Research findings show that it is possible to experience healthy and active ageing if we start early in life to foster a healthy lifestyle. In fact, the majority of older people are healthy and independent. Therefore, we need to actively consider ways to enable our citizens to experience active and healthy ageing. We need to have a proper understanding of ageing and a right definition of "old people". Ageing is a natural and positive development process. We should stop seeing older people as a liability because of our misconception that old people are frail and unproductive. Contrary to conventional belief, only about 10% of our elder population have some impairment and need some assistance and care. Most of the older persons actually continue to contribute to their families and community.

We should always remember the efforts and contributions made by our elders towards the development of our society over the years. We should also recognize the fact that their experience and wisdom constitute a trove of treasure for us all. While we should do our best to take care of old people who are in need, we have to enable elders in good health to carry on a normal life and perform roles that allow them to continue to fulfill themselves personally, socially, and economically. The attainment of this goal requires collaborative efforts, which involve not only the family, but also the community and the Government:

First, in response to rapid developments in our society and advances in information technology, we have to encourage lifelong learning to enable people of all ages to move in step with the times. In particular, we should help our elders to

keep in touch with the community and take part in social activities.

Second, we should actively make use of our elderly resources. By creating an enabling environment and promoting senior volunteerism, we can encourage our elders, with their ample knowledge and rich experience, to continue making contributions to the community in various ways.

Third, we need to formulate a set of sustainable policies of care for the elderly to ensure that the well being of elders in need is effectively safeguarded by social security as far as social resources can afford.

Fourth, the responsibility of caring for our elders should be shared by our community and families. We should further promote the traditional value of respecting the old and educate people on the advantages of having elders in one's family. Assistance should be rendered to the families so that older persons can enjoy happy and active ageing with their own families.

Population ageing is an issue of much relevance to the challenge of economic restructuring we are confronted with. Therefore, we must compete with time to improve education, upgrade the quality of our workforce, encourage businesses to move up the value-added chain and sharpen the competitive edge of our economy. Otherwise, by the time when the present younger generation reaches middle or old age, population ageing will pose an even graver problem to our society.

Hong Kong registers one of the lowest birth rates in the world, causing an ageing trend of our population. For our economy to remain vibrant and competitive, we must upgrade the calibre of our human capital and ensure the sustainability of our economic and social development by developing a comprehensive population policy and attracting more talents to Hong Kong, with due regard to the direction of our economic development, talent demand, land resources, migration figures (including the number of arrivals from the Mainland), and the need to secure job opportunities for local workers. This will be one of the priority tasks of the second-term SAR Government.

The theme of today's symposium being the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population, I hope all of you will participate actively in the discussions and together, we shall chart our course in encouraging each and every one of us to be upbeat about growing old and enjoy the increased years bestowed upon us. I wish this symposium every success.

Thank you.