

Address by Mr Carlson Tong, SBS, JP, *Honorary Fellow*

Council Chairman Mr Pang Yiu-kai, President Professor Stephen Cheung, Members of the Council, professors and lecturers, students, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Honorary Fellowship recipients - Mr Chu King-yuen, Dr Maggie Koong, Professor Lee Yue-hong, Mr Leung Kee-cheong, Mr George Wong and myself, I would like to express our deepest appreciation for having such an honour bestowed upon us. We are also grateful for the very warm reception that we, as well as our families and friends, have received.

When I was asked to be the representative in giving a Thank You Address on behalf of all of us, I felt rather overwhelmed and undeserving. This is because whilst my five other fellow awardees are all distinguished and experienced educators, I have only been involved in education through my involvement with the English Schools Foundation since my retirement four years ago.

My other involvement with youth is through the Hong Kong Sports Institute which as the Government's elite sports training delivery agent, is committed to nurturing elite athletes to pursue excellence in the international sporting arena and bring sporting honours to Hong Kong. However, our responsibility to our athletes goes well beyond sports training as the Sports Institute operates from a whole-person development model, recognising that the educational needs of our young elite athletes are also very important.

To meet these needs, we have to build strategic partnerships with academic institutions. I am delighted to say that The Hong Kong Institute of Education has been at the forefront of pioneering solutions to meet athletes' academic needs. This means that athletes do not have to sacrifice giftedness in sports for academic development. Since 2010, 23 of Hong Kong's most successful elite athletes in ten different sports have enrolled in HKIEd's Part-time Bachelor of Health Education programme (BHE). Recognising the success of this unique programme, last April a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Sports Institute and HKIEd, formalising their long-term relationship and extending this key programme to provide athletes with flexible access to tertiary education across a number of Degree programmes. Professor Cheung, on behalf of our athletes, thank you for your support.

I have found in the case of elite sports, in addition to having talented and committed athletes, we also need great coaches. Coaches and athletes work together as a team, as a partnership. I believe education is the same. Hong Kong has many talented youngsters but their skills need to be nurtured by our teachers, working as a team with students and their parents.

These days our children probably spend more time with their teachers than with their parents, so teachers play a critical role in our children's upbringing.

Personally I think our society has perhaps underestimated the importance of teachers, and has rather taken for granted the great contribution made by our teachers as well as by The Hong Kong Institute of Education, being the delivery agent for teacher training.

I therefore call upon the society and the Government to fully recognise and give full credit to our teachers, who have been working under great stress and difficult conditions in recent years without the credit they truly deserve. On behalf of our award recipients today, I would like to salute The Hong Kong Institute of Education, to salute your students in choosing this honourable career and to salute our teachers for everything they have done. You are the future for our youngsters and therefore the future of Hong Kong.

Thank you.