

**Keynote Speech by  
Mr Ricky LAM Ho-yin**

The Housing Authority (HA) is committed to providing, among others, maintenance, repair and management services for one third of the households in Hong Kong. To maintain the operation of housing estates and to ensure the quality of facilities for those households, we need the hard work contributed by approximately 3 000 maintenance and repair workers, 7 000 cleansing workers and 13 000 security personnel. In the light of the above, both the HA and its contractors have a duty to provide a safe working environment to their frontline workers.

Last year (i.e. in 2020), one accident relating to estate maintenance works under the HA was recorded, representing an accident rate of 0.3 per thousand workers, which is the lowest rate of all time. This is due to the efforts of members of the maintenance industry and our property management staff, who have strictly followed safety practices, such as wearing suitable protective gears, in every aspect of their daily work. On behalf of the HA, I would particularly like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your past endeavours.

Since mid-2019, we have implemented a number of enhancement measures, including asking contractors to cite real cases of accidents relating to estate maintenance works and the relevant suggested improvements as training materials. By providing training in a real-life setting and quoting injury cases as examples, we can raise the risk awareness among workers and equip them with greater competence in adopting safety procedures. Contractors must explain to their workers those real cases in detail in both induction and refresher courses. To reduce accidents to probationers or newcomers at construction sites, we also implemented the “P and N” Caring Programme. Apart from enhancing the safety of workers, this Programme can also help increase work efficiency and productivity, leading to a win-win situation for both contractors and workers.

Starting from the end of last year, we also requested contractors to engage safety supervisors accredited by the Occupational Safety and Health Council to ensure that safety and health duties would be performed by those safety supervisors with necessary qualifications and capabilities, including having rich experience in the work at construction sites and the relevant knowledge of occupational safety and health. Needless to say, even one accident at construction sites is too many. In 2021, we will continue our efforts to pursue improvement in order to minimise injuries and accidents at work.

Regarding the Housing Authority Safety Auditing System (Maintenance and Improvement), we have reviewed afresh the safety training materials provided for Building Maintenance Workers, so as to promote occupational safety awareness and encourage early discovery, identification, control and elimination of existing or potential risks. This year, both safety officers and safety supervisors under different District Term Maintenance Contracts are invited to participate in a safety refresher course exclusively for Housing Department. The refresher course aims to strengthen their safety awareness and inspection techniques in relation to repairs, maintenance and improvement works.

As for the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS), we will continue to strengthen our system management capability and maintain our ISO 45001 certification for repairs, maintenance and improvement works.

On the subject of maintenance and improvement works for lifts and escalators, we have allocated more resources to carry out various enhancement works so as to increase their safety and reliability. Meanwhile, we maintain close contact with the industry and strengthen our mutual co-operation through regular meetings to enhance the safety of site works.

When awarding outsourced contracts for property management services, cleansing services and security services, we have already included a term in the tenders to bar companies with relevant conviction records under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance or the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance from tendering. Furthermore, as required under the terms of tenders for outsourced property management services and cleansing services contracts, tenderers must have obtained ISO 45001 certification of the OHSMS.

Under the outsourced service contracts, contractors are also required to provide their employees with adequate personal protective equipment to ensure the latter's occupational safety and health. In an effort to raise the safety awareness of contractors, we continue to implement the Alert and Warning Trigger System for Occupational Injuries and to promote the importance of occupational safety and health through briefings.

The theme of the Forum this year is to explore ways to implement safety practices and to demonstrate professionalism among work personnel. I am sure all persons in charge or the management staff in the industry would agree that fulfilment and implementation of safety practices are the keys to success. I look forward to your active participation in this Forum and your co-operation with us to achieve the goal of "zero" accidents.