

Speech

Speech by SFST at Cyberport University Partnership Programme Demo Day (English only)

Tuesday, November 17, 2015

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, at the Cyberport University Partnership Programme (CUPP) Demo Day today (November 17):

Paul (Chow), Herman (Lam), panel of judges, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

I have visited Cyberport several times in the past few months. I believe this is a reflection of Cyberport's strategic position in our emerging Fintech ecosystem.

Cyberport is supporting an energetic and vibrant group of some 60 Fintech companies through its incubation and funding programmes, co-working spaces and other services. Through these programmes, it organises training, workshops and world class conferences for the startups to connect to the wider financial services and the tech communities. Its cloud computing platform provides Fintech startups with a very essential tool to test their products and models.

But an ecosystem is only sustainable when there are new members joining and contributing to the system - in other words, an adequate supply of Fintech talents and entrepreneurs. And this is exactly what Cyberport is doing.

The Cyberport University Partnership Programme is the first of its kind in Hong Kong. With visits to Silicon Valley and a one-week entrepreneurship "boot camp" at Stanford University, the programme helps entice the brightest minds in our universities to see for themselves the huge potential of Fintech and gain some first-hand experience. So my congratulations to the programme's university partners and mentors for making the programme a success.

When I saw the wonderful video, I could not stop reflecting on my

experience as the dean of a business school some time ago. It was perhaps about 10 years ago, and we were working on ideas of bringing entrepreneurship experience to our education programmes. We started with our MBA students. It was a wonderful experiment because we saw that by encouraging entrepreneurship, encouraging students to connect to the industry and coming up with new ideas, not only did it prepare them for a good business career, it was simply good education.

I realised with time that in many of the universities in the United States (US), even in the undergraduate programmes, there were a lot of students working on new ideas and with the entrepreneurship community to come up with their competitions. We tried more than 10 years ago to bring that idea to Hong Kong. Some students responded and we saw the beginning of that. But today, I saw from the video the full vision of those efforts. Now we can see that in many universities, there are entrepreneurship programmes, collaboration among students, and more importantly, collaboration between different faculties, engineering, business and other faculties. These really make for good education as they prepare youths for a successful entrepreneurial future. My thanks to all the universities and faculty members for making it so exciting for our students.

We know it is not enough just to introduce Fintech to students. We must consider how to provide a pathway to them for developing their great ideas into a concrete business plan, for turning this plan into a profitable model, and for scaling up a startup to eventually conquer the world.

So, if you want to strike out on your own and start your entrepreneurship venture, you may wish to know that there are some 40 co-working spaces in Hong Kong, a tenfold increase over the past four years. They provide a cost-effective and flexible base to launch your business. Many of them also offer seminars on business and technical skills, mentorship programmes and interaction with investors.

If you need more intensive support to bring your company to the next level, there are a number of Fintech-dedicated accelerator programmes in Hong Kong. These programmes will provide you with a structured curriculum on business development, marketing, technology, and pitching. They will sharpen your presentation and value proposition. They will also enrich your network by

matching you with potential investors and seasoned professionals from the financial and digital worlds.

And the community here, Cyberport and the Government, are doing more. We want to do more. I am currently chairing a Fintech steering group, which is really a melting pot of views from the industries, the regulatory authorities, academia, and research institutions. The group is forming ideas of how to build an even more conducive environment for Fintech companies. Rest assured that we will introduce more measures to benefit the young talents in the community.

Ladies and gentlemen, the presentations to follow will surely provide us a glimpse about the next generation of Fintech ideas. They will enlighten us on something innovative, something with market growth potential, and something that can disrupt the existing financial services industry.

You all know that I could not resist teaching, even today, when giving an opening remark. When I look at today's projects on remittance, currency exchange, innovative payment methods, personal finance management software, robo-investment advisors, and digital portals for insurance, financial products, market information and investment analysis, the key will be making clear how the solutions are intuitive for our customers.

There are projects on AI-based customer services, authentication, point of sales systems, loyalty programmes and investment into small businesses, and we have to highlight that the solutions are secure and efficient for the financial institutions. And last but not the least, I can see in these projects the ingenuity of our students in applying technology to achieve cost-effective solutions. Their efforts and bright ideas give me confidence that Hong Kong will remain an international financial centre for years to come.

Now, I wish all 18 teams good luck on their presentations, and everyone an enjoyable afternoon.

Thank you very much.

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