

Hong Kong Maritime Week 2021 - Opening Ceremony (Video Only)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen and those joining us through the live streaming,

Good morning and welcome to the Opening Ceremony of the Hong Kong Maritime Week 2021. With the staunch support and partnership of the Hong Kong maritime communities, this long-awaited annual event has returned in its fifth edition this year. With an objective to showcase the strengths of the Hong Kong maritime industry, the Hong Kong Maritime Week has been a signature event among our maritime community since its inception in 2016. The fruitful programme of the Week this year is the concerted efforts of various parties, including –

- the organiser, Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board
- the co-organisers, Hong Kong Shipowners Association and Hong Kong Maritime Museum;
- the partners, Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Invest Hong Kong; and
- last but not least, all of our local and international activity organisers.

To formally kick off the opening ceremony of the Week, may I invite Mr CHAN Fan, Frank, the Secretary for Transport and Housing and the Chairman of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board to come on the stage and deliver the opening remarks. Mr CHAN please.

Opening Remarks

Distinguished guests, friends of the maritime community, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I would like to extend my warmest welcome to you all for joining the Hong Kong Maritime Week 2021. We are delighted to see the return of the Hong Kong Maritime Week despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

At a time when the global supply chain suffers from unprecedented disruption by the pandemic, international trade and logistics resilience provides a lifeline for millions, enabling access to food and other essential supplies. According to the World Trade Organisation, merchandise trade declined by 5.3% in volume and 7.6% in value in 2020. However, despite some initial disruptions, the value of trade in medical products rose by 16%, and trade in personal protective equipment expanded by 50%. In the first half of 2021, merchandise trade had rebounded above its pre-pandemic peak, and the World Trade Organisation is now predicting a 10.8% growth in volume in 2021, followed by a 4.7% rise in 2022. So we do see the light at the end of the tunnel.

In 2020, Hong Kong ranked 6th among leading world traders, accounting for 3.2% of world merchandise trade, with a total trade value of US\$1.1 trillion. With over 90% of our cargo volume being carried by water, port and shipping play a vital role. With over 150 years of maritime heritage, robust international connectivity and our multi-faceted maritime excellence, the Hong Kong port remains one of the top ten container ports in the world, as well as a transshipment hub in the region. There are some 280 weekly container vessel sailings, connecting to over 600 destinations worldwide. We are also home to nearly 900 shipping-related companies, providing a broad spectrum of well-developed maritime services. The opening of the first overseas office by the International Chamber of Shipping and the designation of Hong Kong by the Baltic and International Maritime Council as their named arbitration venue all speaks for themselves.

Being an international maritime center, Hong Kong is not immune from global challenges faced by other port cities, particularly the disruptions caused by the pandemic. We put public health first and foremost, we also endeavor to do whatever we can to help ensure a smooth and steady flow of goods across the globe, with our port operating ceaselessly round the clock. Besides, we also facilitate sea crew change, bunkering and re-provisioning in Hong Kong.

While the pandemic is yet to be over, we must plan ahead for post-COVID and long term development. For Hong Kong, other than fostering closer collaboration with counterparts in the Greater Bay Area to make the most of cluster effect, and enhancing our competitiveness and global out-reach in maritime services, we are determined to go Smart and Green too. Adopting the use of innovative technology and promoting digitalisation has topped our agenda. To this end, we have set up a Task Force on Smart Port Development, and call upon industry stakeholders, to critically examine and see to it.

The 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development re-affirms the unwavering support of the Central People's Government to reinforce Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is committed to integrating into the "dual circulation" and contributing to the national development strategy. All these would provide maritime stakeholders, both local and global, immense opportunities for common prosperity.

2021 marks the fifth edition of the Hong Kong Maritime Week. With concerted efforts, it has become an annual flagship event of Hong Kong's maritime sector. This year, we have over 30 activities, organised by over 40 partners from home and abroad, with a wide variety ranging from seminar, conference, forum to light-hearted activities such as visit, exhibition and family fun day. Such extensive coverage and participation is a clear demonstration of solidarity and teamwork of our maritime community. Enjoy the programme, and I wish you all a fruitful week. Thank you.

Thank you Mr CHAN and please stay on stage for our next session.

Coming up next, let's invite the other guests of honour to come on the stage to join us for the officiating ceremony. May I invite –

1. Ms Mable CHAN, Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)
2. Ms Carol YUEN, Director of Marine
3. Ms Agnes CHOI, Chairman of the Promotion and External Relations Committee
4. Captain Bjorn HOJGAARD, Chairman of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association and also the Chairman of the Maritime and Port Development Committee
5. Mr Willy LIN, Chairman of the Manpower Development Committee
6. Mr Richard HEXT, Chairman of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum Limited

Now we have each guest standing in front of a visual button. May I ask all the guests on stage to put your hand on top of the button and then face the camera in the front for a picture first please!

Thank you. Now on the count of three, let's press the button to officially kick start the Hong Kong Maritime Week 2021!

Ready, One, Two, Three !

The Hong Kong Maritime Week 2021 has officially begun. Let's get another shot for this special moment.

Thank you everyone.

While it brings to the end of the opening ceremony of the Week, there are a great variety of activities lining up ahead for your discovery.

Starting at 10am at Room S421, which is located right next door, the Economist has brought in the World Ocean Summit Asia-Pacific Insight Hour to discuss potential solutions for the possible resumption of normal marine transport around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to see you there. Thank you again and hope you enjoy the fruitful week of activities ahead.