

Speech

Speech by SFST at inauguration dinner of Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales Hong Kong Chapter (English only)

Friday, May 16, 2014

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, at the inauguration dinner of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales Hong Kong Chapter today (May 16):

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am glad to join you today at the inauguration dinner of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) Hong Kong Chapter. It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to Hong Kong and to thank you for bringing the ICAEW's work and mission into the very heart of Asia.

Established by Royal Charter in 1880, the ICAEW has over 142 000 members worldwide. The institute has been sharing its knowledge, insight and technical expertise by providing training and professional development opportunities for its members for over a century. By maintaining high professional standards, it has contributed to the smooth operation of economies and the development of industry and commerce globally.

The history of the institute and its predecessors is closely associated with the development of trade, commerce and corporate governance in the United Kingdom, dating back to the days when the limited liability company was born and the Companies Act was first passed. Among the early presidents of the institute were founders of some of the leading firms in today's accounting circle. The Chartered Accountants' Hall, which still stands in the City of London, is a reminder of those glorious days.

We have come a long way since the early days of the institute. As business and finance grew in both scale and complexity over the past century, it is hard to imagine a day without the watchful eyes of modern accountants, especially in an international financial centre such as Hong Kong. Indeed, the accounting profession has been a key partner for the Government and has made valuable contributions towards making Hong Kong a more efficient and better regulated city to do business. The profession has generously shared its knowledge and

expertise in our consultation exercises, and, with your support, we updated our Companies Ordinance last year. We now have in place a more competitive regime governing trusts, as well as a level playing field for Islamic financial products.

There are also new policy initiatives in the pipeline. We are currently seeking comments on our proposal to introduce the open-ended company as a fund vehicle. We completed the first stage of public consultation on the establishment of an effective resolution regime for financial institutions in Hong Kong last month. We are planning to launch a public consultation on proposals to improve the regulatory regime for listed entity auditors. We eagerly look forward to input from members of the accounting industry on these new initiatives.

Once again, I congratulate the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales Hong Kong Chapter on its inauguration. I look forward to working closely with the Institute and wish you every success in its pursuit of excellence for the profession in the years ahead.

Thank you.

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