

**Kick-off Ceremony of  
Celebration of the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hong Kong Observatory  
World Meteorological Day, 23 March 2013**

**Speech by Mr SHUN Chi-ming  
Director of the Hong Kong Observatory**

Mr David Grimes, President of the World Meteorological Organization;  
Mr Shen Xiaonong, Deputy Administrator of the China Meteorological Administration;  
Mr Andrew Wong, JP, Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development;  
Distinguished Directors, Guests, Colleagues and Friends;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this celebration of the World Meteorological Day and kick-off ceremony of the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hong Kong Observatory. It is indeed our great privilege to have the presence of our heavy weight Guests of Honour here. It is also a very unique and memorable occasion where we have the presence of all our retired Chinese Directors of the Observatory (as well as our most senior retired colleague Mr Lo Gun here – he joined the Observatory shortly after the Second World War).

The Hong Kong Observatory was established in 1883 on a small hill named “Mount Elgin” in Kowloon, at exactly this site where we are all standing now. I believe the Observatory is the only government department in Hong Kong which is still operating on its original establishment. Through the professionalism, perseverance and commitment of our predecessors, we have maintained the weather records at the Observatory for more than a century, despite a brief interruption by the Second World War. As we are all concerned about climate change and the possible effects of global warming to our future generations, the long history of climate records at the Hong Kong Observatory is a valuable asset to both Hong Kong and the international community for better understanding of climate change, and for developing the Global Framework for Climate Services currently being championed by the WMO, as our President Mr Grimes has just highlighted.

In the past 130 years, the Observatory has evolved from a minimal staff establishment of three, to about three hundred today. Throughout the years, the Observatory has vastly expanded its **services** based on **science**, from its original three historical missions: meteorological observations, time service and magnetic observations, to the current portfolio, always evolving with time and **striving for excellence**.

Today we will launch the 130 anniversary book “Under the Same Sky”, in which you will find a lot of valuable reminiscences and memorable photographs provided by colleagues, partners and friends. I am very much delighted that many authors are present here today, especially our five retired Directors. Thank you so much for your contributions! Through these previously untold stories and memories, we are able to “stand on the shoulders of giants”, and continue to **innovate** and look forward into the future.

For example, we learn how the calamitous typhoons of 1874 and 1906 had affected our early history; how we started to **nurture** international meteorological cooperation as early as the 1930s; how our ex-Director Mr Benjamin Evans persevered in continuing weather observation at the Stanley internment camp and **enthused** his fellow internees by giving them a lecture on the stars during the World War II; how our ex-Director Mr Gordon Bell made the pioneering investigation flight using a Hong Kong aircraft into the centre of Tropical Storm Dot in 1973; how we developed in-house our first automatic weather station in the late-1970s, and subsequently extended it into a long-standing cooperation with CMA to establish the first automatic island weather station over the South China Sea, and the list goes on....

Reading all these interesting stories together, it becomes rather easy for us to recognize many of the common traits, or genes, that our predecessors have demonstrated, like the **scientific** and **innovation** spirits, and the mindset to **serve** and to **excel**. And equally, it is not difficult for us to appreciate how the Observatory, being a small organization with modest resources, could find its niche in the recent years, in successfully developing new initiatives like the WMO World Weather Information Service, the airport LIDAR Windshear Alerting System, the MyObservatory and MyWorldWeather mobile apps, and mostly recently the aircraft reconnaissance flights into typhoons.

And this time in our 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary book, we also received many contributions from our partners, providing their users' point of view of the Observatory's services and developments. Today I am very happy to see many of our partners here, giving us strong motivation to further enhance our services. Here I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of you: without the close **collaboration** and **partnership** that we have enjoyed in the past years, the Observatory alone could not have reached the current level of development and sophistication today!

130 years isn't short compared with a human lifetime, but from the perspective of human history, it is just a drop in the ocean. Through this "drop" of the Observatory, many generations of colleagues with passion and commitment have come together and established the collaboration with our partners. Let's treasure this opportunity that brought us together at this memorable occasion today. Let's celebrate and enjoy! Thank you very much!