



**Message from Mr Simon Wong, BBS, JP, Chairman of
the Hong Kong Brand Development Council**

As the new year ushers in new prospects, we are proud and delighted to welcome the new cohort of Brand Awards (the Award) winners. Today's ceremony is not only a celebration and a salute to the successful ones, but also serves as a collective review and a grand parade of the spectacular achievement of Hong Kong brands.

For the Organisers i.e. the Hong Kong Brand Development Council (the BDC) and the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong (the CMA), this year's Award also carries a special meaning — its longest-running award category "Hong Kong Top Brand" celebrates the 20th anniversary. When the Asian financial crisis hit in 1999, Hong Kong economy was faced with the dual challenges of a weak market externally and structural adjustments internally. Back then, the CMA anticipated the imperative need for our business to gear towards high value-added activities and it subsequently launched the "Hong Kong Top Ten Brandnames Awards". Through setting exemplary standard and raising public awareness of brand building, the Award aimed to encourage and assist local enterprises to "go branding" especially by transforming their operating model from OEM to OBM, so as to move up the value chain and to enhance competitiveness and sustainability.

The mission-driven "Hong Kong Top Brand Awards" had in the following 20 years witnessed the most phenomenal development of Hong Kong brands and played a pivotal role in this cause. It was during those 20 years that Hong Kong's quality products and services claimed their rightful place on the global stage, turning the City into a star-studded brand hub. More importantly, local enterprises across sectors took the initiative to pledge commitment and inject great enthusiasm into brand building. Meanwhile, a growing number of SMEs and even start-ups were riding on the courage and energy as "brand entrepreneurs" to establish their positions in the business world, adding new chapters to the fascinating Hong Kong brand stories one after another.

Over the course of the last 20 years, the Award was quick to diversify with a more colourful array of award streams added to the "Hong Kong Top Brand". Its role has grown from assessing product brands and identifying industry role models to also recognising top players in the service sectors and nurturing up-and-coming stars. As a result, the total number of award recipients has risen from initially the "Top 10" to more than 400 nowadays. The Award proves itself a touchstone for the development of Hong Kong brands; and it has seen the brand culture in Hong Kong take root, sprout, grow and flourish to the fullest, presenting a dazzling vista of Hong Kong economy and an enviable "Hong Kong bright spot" in which we take pride.

A revisit to the Award's evolution provides lessons and allows us to trace the footsteps of pioneers and draw inspirations from the past, while better understanding the grave responsibility placed on our shoulders. Much importantly, it also reminds us to

keep the Award's purpose alive and to carry forward the Hong Kong brand spirit, which is "having a foothold in Hong Kong, upholding originality, pursuing excellence, preserving integrity and promoting a caring culture".

Today, we are navigating an even more challenging market environment; in particular, the trade friction between China and the US has inevitably changed the landscape of the global supply chain. The business community in Hong Kong has always been known for its agility and dexterity against the odds; we are good at overcoming adversities and adept in seizing new development opportunities based on sagacity and far-sightedness. At a time of changes and uncertainties, more and more Hong Kong enterprises are turning their sights towards brand development, showing greater determination and putting in greater efforts to reinforce "brand competitiveness". For this very reason, the 2018 Award has achieved encouraging results, with the number of entry brands reaching a new historic high!

Through stringent selection and fierce competition, 43 brands have stood out as the new batch of laureates this year. Among them are household names, which dare to challenge the status quo and embrace state-of-the-art management techniques to sustain their decade-long legends, alongside next generation brands that have leveraged on cutting-edge technology and innovation to tap the new economy; and there are trailblazers that have taken the lead to explore the opportunities of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development and Belt & Road Initiative. These shining paragons of Hong Kong brand spirit stand to represent the highest standards of the City's brand development. Their success stories convey the very essence of "branding to win", providing stimulus and inspiration for companies that are striding forward amid adversity.

I congratulate and applaud winners of the 2018 Brand Awards. On behalf of the Organisers, I'd like to thank Financial Secretary the Honourable Paul Chan, officiating guest of the Awards Presentation Ceremony. I also wish to extend my gratitude to the government departments and the various parties which have offered tremendous support to the Award. They include the Judging Panels respectively led by Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Miss Eliza Lee, Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Dr Bernard Chan, and Director-General of Trade and Industry Ms Salina Yan; the Official Honorary Auditor-cum-Event Sponsor KPMG and the Trophy Sponsor Lukfook Jewellery; media that have assisted in promoting the Award; and other organisations and individuals who have participated in and supported today's event.

Lastly, let us offer our heartfelt congratulations again to the winners!