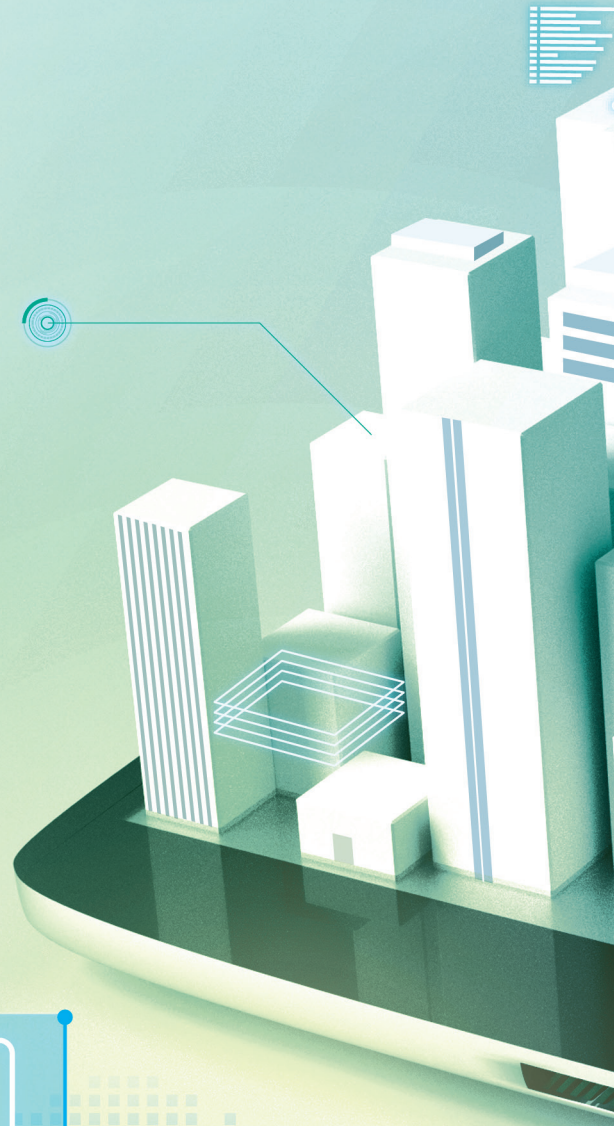


CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE





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2020 has been an arduous year. As COVID-19 wreaks havoc globally, Hong Kong alone reported more than 8,800 confirmed cases and 148 fatalities during the year. Multiple anti-epidemic measures such as immigration control, working from home and social distancing arrangements seriously disrupted socio-economic activities. Hong Kong's unemployment rate reached a record high of 6.6% in the last quarter of 2020. Although the job opportunities brought about by new construction projects enabled the Hong Kong's construction industry to fare a bit better, the RMAA (Renovation, Maintenance, Alterations and Additions) sector was still hard hit with a high unemployment rate.

During this difficult time, the Construction Industry Council has proved its value as a bridge between the Government and the industry, extending help to frontline workers in need and construction enterprises. The CIC assisted in the vetting of applications and disbursement of funds under the Construction Industry "Anti-epidemic Fund" and the "Employment Support Scheme", totalling over HK\$6.3 billion government subsidies. One million man-time of registered frontline workers received monetary assistance and nearly 23,000 subsidy applications from enterprises

or employers were successfully approved, benefitting construction companies and long-term casual employees. The CIC also helped the Government to distribute 6 million masks to more than 110,000 workers.

Separately, the CIC also contributed HK\$200 million from its own financial reserve to subsidise the operation of small and medium-sized construction companies as well as providing additional training subsidies for on-the-job construction workers to upgrade their skills.

In the past few years, the Construction Industry Council, together with the Development Bureau, has been tirelessly promoting industrialisation, digitalisation, innovating technologies, and in particular, bringing into Hong Kong Modular Integrated Construction (MiC). Notable MiC pilot projects included the Nam Cheong 220 transitional housing project, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation's InnoCell and the Fire Services Department's Married Quarters at Pak Shing Kok. The successful completion of these projects has helped the industry accumulate solid experience in MiC project design, evaluation and approval, procurement and actual construction. Such valuable experience has enabled Hong Kong to deliver expeditiously the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, with 816 negative pressure beds and separately more than 4,000 units of quarantine facilities in Hong Kong. Such timely and efficient facilities boosted Hong Kong's arsenal in its battle against the pandemic.

The Construction Industry Sports and Volunteering Programme, another major initiative of the CIC, with an aim of cultivating a healthy and caring culture amongst the construction community, has also played an integral part in the fight against COVID-19. In the same spirit, the CIC initiated the Construction Industry Caring Campaign – Fight against Novel Coronavirus at the onset of COVID-19 to raise funds amongst the construction community to support infected construction workers and those who had to undergo mandatory quarantine. The funds raised had delivered HK\$11.66 million financial assistance to 2,580 affected workers, and provided 550,000 protective face masks and 130,000 bottles of hand sanitiser to construction workers in need when there was a shortage of personal protection supplies.

On a separate front, some of the CIC's activities had to be held online as a result of social distancing measures. Notwithstanding this restriction, we continued to connect with our industry counterparts by hosting more than 100 virtual technical seminars, talks and workshops, including the 2nd CIC Sustainable Construction Award Conference and Presentation Ceremony, the Zero Carbon Park Concerts, Construction Safety Week, the 26th Considerate Contractors Site Award Scheme Award Ceremony, Construction Month 2020, the Employers Appreciation Ceremony 2020, the 2nd HKIC Outstanding Alumni Award, the Construction Industry Volunteer Award Presentation Ceremony 2020, the

Registered Specialist Trade Contractors Scheme Leadership Summit 2020, the Construction Workers Professional Development Scheme Award Presentation Ceremony and CIC Lunch Talk etc. Meanwhile, our key work plans, such as Industry Development programmes, Workers' Training, Trade Testing, Workers' Registration, Registered Specialist Trade Contractors' and Subcontractors' Registration remained in force.

Looking ahead, the CIC will continue to support the HKSAR Government in leading the construction industry to overcome COVID-19, with a concerted effort to achieve zero new infections, creating the right conditions for the resumption of normal life and economic activities with Mainland China and other recovering economies.

Whilst being responsive to changing times, the CIC stays committed to elevating the construction industry by promoting industry upgrades and building a professional, innovative and caring culture. The endorsement and support of the industry assures us that we are on the right track. We shall continue to collaborate with the Government to cultivate a sustainable business environment for the wide implementation of MiC and BIM (Building Information Modelling), both of which are vital to the success of the construction industry reform.

After the pandemic, I very much look forward to visiting and exploring the Greater Bay Area with my industry counterparts, and witnessing the region flourishing into a world-class bay area and grooming base for our younger generation and the Hong Kong's construction industry.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all CIC Council Members, Committee Members and staff for your resilience and perseverance in fulfilling your duties throughout the pandemic.

Chan Ka-kui

Chairman, Construction Industry Council

April 2021