

## Speech delivered by President Ir Aaron BOK at the HKIE AGM on 24 Aug 2022

Dear fellow Members,

It is truly an honour to address you as President of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers for Session 2022/2023 and I shall do my utmost to merit the confidence you have placed in me.

As some of you may know, mountain biking is my second passion after engineering. The key to mountain biking is to pick the right gear. That's why I am so thankful to the HKIE's past leadership, particularly Immediate Past President, Ir Edwin CHUNG, both for their vision and for choosing the best gears to take us over the big mountains of ongoing challenges and COVID-19 disruptions, leaving me to switch into high gear to accelerate the implementation of the Time to Change Roadmap!

Indeed, the Roadmap's timing could not have been any better since Hong Kong is also embarking on a new journey of development. Committed to pushing forward several mega-projects and fast tracking the delivery of infrastructures, land and housing to meet pressing public needs, the government is also investing in the city's development as a Technology and Innovations Hub. With annual construction expenditures set to reach about HK\$350 billion for the next 20 years and the opportunities offered by Hong Kong's integration with the Greater Bay Area, has there ever been a better time to be an engineer? Still, as mountain bikers, we know there is no room to relax even when smoothly surfing downhill; since there's always another bigger mountain awaiting ahead.

After beginning our digitalisation transformation last year, I am glad to embark on another phase of the roadmap and the theme of my presidency is:

***“Commitment to Change – Boosting Professionalism***

**WE ARE PROUD TO BE ENGINEERS**

香港工程師學會 - 專業維新

以工程師為傲”

As Hong Kong enters this new growth phase, it will need capable and dedicated engineers more than ever. But as you know, the image of our profession has been tarnished by series of isolated but highly publicised incidents, including some unfairly attributed to engineers. This has led to misleading publicity about our profession, making it less attractive to the non-engineering public, especially, to young people. This negative perception is compounded by recent market practices. We have seen many tenders won by low priced bids. As profit margins get squeezed, so are the working conditions, salaries and benefits of engineers, especially younger ones. Needless to say, this in turn impact our succession.

It is a priority of this Session to break this vicious circle, and this begins with pride! As some of you may know, I like to compare project teamwork with the Spirit Bomb 元氣彈 of Son Goku in *Dragon Ball*. In that beloved Japanese cartoon, Son Goku gathers energy from different creatures across the universe to create a powerful bomb. Similarly, just as the success of an engineering project depends on summoning powerful teamwork and team spirit, the HKIE needs energy from all our 33 000 members to enhance the image of our profession. Our members are the perfect ambassadors to help boost our image; but only if they are proud of being engineers!

Because we need the joint effort of all our members to enhance the image of our profession, I have commissioned a golden pin featuring the theme of the Session – PROUD TO BE ENGINEERS for our members to wear. You should receive yours shortly. By showcasing our pride in our profession, we also remind the public, especially the non-engineering community, of our contribution to Hong Kong. I urge all my fellow members to join in this important mission. Please wear your pin and showcase the good work of Engineers throughout your network of friends and relatives, especially teachers and those having children about to choose their career; also re-connect with your secondary school and see if we can support their STEM programmes. We need each of you to help. Your lived experience is our greatest selling point and your pride in the profession is worth more than a thousand words when it comes to telling a young person what it means to be an engineer.

We will also urge the government to review its procurement policy to ensure that more reasonable bids get accepted. Making sure that experienced engineers receive fairer wages and achieve a better work-life balance will make the profession more attractive

to young people and can give the experienced engineers more opportunities to innovate; thereby can bring in new materials or technology and hence improve productivity and reduce overall cost of projects. We will also seek to increase our public profile by inviting Divisions and Committees to contribute newspaper articles or produce YouTube videos to showcase our contributions, while asking our spokespersons to give media interviews within hours of an incident to provide the public with facts and professional views before others capture the spotlight. Finally, we will host the “Hong Kong Engineers Week 2023” from 4 to 11 March next year. Tentatively themed “we engineer our shared future. 塑造我們共同的未來 ”, this mega-event will target a wide audience including the general public. This event needs your unfailing support, from participation to sponsorship.

Meanwhile, education remains our priority. In addition to enhancing our School Ambassador Programme, we will introduce initiatives to promote STEM and engage with teachers’ unions, school-sponsoring bodies and the Education Bureau to better reach students.

The hill ahead may look steep indeed. But like in mountain biking, I am convinced that with our combined passion, creativity and determination, we can find the right gear to overcome any challenges and make this a successful journey.

Let’s do it! Let’s make all engineers feel proud to be Engineers

Thank you.

Ir Aaron BOK Kwok-ming

President

The HKIE