

It is my pleasure and honour to be invited to address my fellow Rotarians at this important occasion. Thank you DG Ada for giving me this opportunity. Where in the past in my thirty-some years as a Rotarian, I may have had the chance to talk at district or club events, but this time is my first time addressing you in a district function and in non-Rotarian capacity as the Chairman of the Government's Committee for the Promotion of Civic Education. And it gives me great joy because this is something very dear to my heart throughout my years in community services. Whether it is in my public service for vocational training, or applied research, or the environment, my passion has been about touching lives to instill a sense of belonging, responsibility, commitment, purposefulness, gratitude and happiness that comes from knowing you can make a difference. Indeed in the 12 years into the handover of Hong Kong, the promotion and understanding of civic and citizenship education has become increasingly important and obvious that it is what Hong Kong needs. More and more people are answering to the call and volunteering their time, effort and resources, like you, give back to improve the heartware of Hong Kong. The sentiment that Hong Kong is a borrowed place and borrowed time has slowly dissipated, calling for a sense of shared destiny, heritage and renewed spirit of Hong Kong to fill the void.

The quality of our people, especially in the current economic downturn, has become perhaps the only promising "silver bullet" that can keep us charging ahead. Besides improving our people's skillsets, my work in the Committee for the Promotion of Civic Education focuses on developing mindsets. When most of the rhetoric seems to zero in on values such as building self-esteem, confidence, individuality, and competitiveness, we at the Committee want to instill something more – the sense of giving. John F. Kennedy said "If a free society cannot help the many who

are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.” None of us can live in a vacuum, and giving back to society should no longer be seen as an option, but a natural duty of every citizen. This is where the Rotary movement and Rotarians become important, and has become important indeed.

Most if not all of the service themes of Rotary throughout the years talk about serving others, giving back, and at this juncture, I believe Rotary in Hong Kong can become an even closer partner with Government and community groups based on the shared vision of building a harmonious and caring society. There are synergies to be created as I know Rotarians serve with dedication, passion, and always do so with grace and good humour.

As I congratulate the outgoing District Governor Albert Wong and his team for making dreams come true for so many, I refer to the next service theme – The Future of Rotary is in your hands. And indeed, the Future of Hong Kong and Country can be in our hands. If somebody has to give back, it has to be us Rotarians who are in the fortunate positions to contribute. And I thank you on behalf of Hong Kong, for every sacrifice you have made to make our "home" a better place. Margaret Mead, the distinguished anthropologist and diplomat who was named “Mother of the World” in 1969 by Time Magazine reminded us "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Lastly, I seek DG Ada and your support and input on how we together can instill the proper values of commitment, responsibility, respect and gratitude into our future generations, who are the key to the survival, prosperity and peace of the community and earth that we all reside in and must come to treasure.

Thank you.

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