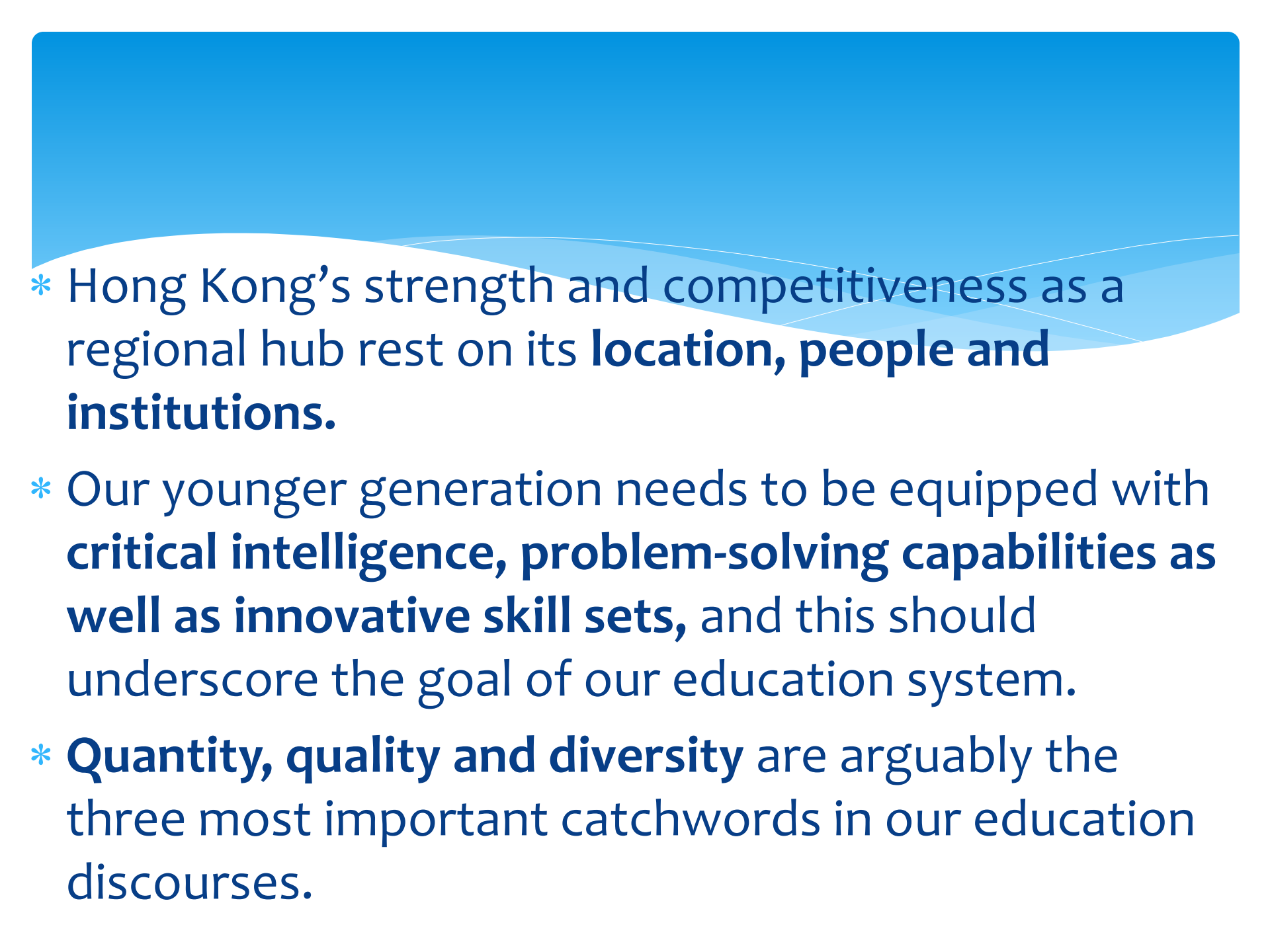


FSTE Conference 2018

**Keynote Speech by
Professor Anthony Cheung,
Chairman of the Committee on
Self-financing Post-secondary
Education**

Striving for Quality Education

- * “Striving for Quality Education” is **almost a universal theme** for government policy makers, education providers and educationalists across nations worldwide, which **drives education reforms** in different systems every now and then.
- * In a wider sense, **excellence in quality marks the success of both individuals and communities** in the highly competitive and ever-changing global environment.

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- * Hong Kong's strength and competitiveness as a regional hub rest on its **location, people and institutions**.
 - * Our younger generation needs to be equipped with **critical intelligence, problem-solving capabilities as well as innovative skill sets**, and this should underscore the goal of our education system.
 - * **Quantity, quality and diversity** are arguably the three most important catchwords in our education discourses.

Post-secondary Education Landscape

- * It has been the Government's policy in recent years to support the “**parallel development**” of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary sectors.
- * Since the policy pronouncement in 2000 to double the secondary school leavers' education participation rate to 60% within 10 years, our post-secondary education landscape has expanded vastly. **Post-secondary education participation rate has risen to over 70% in recent years, including around 45% in degree-level education.**

Quality Assurance of Institutions and Programmes

- * **Formal accreditation and QA processes and reviews** – QAC, HKCAAVQ, HKQF, HKQR, LCQA
- * They form the regulatory safeguards.
- * **But quality education should mean more than just such safeguards.** It ultimately hinges on the quality of teachers and the institutions, and support to students, and whether there exists the right culture and incentive system to drive the pursuit of excellence.

Publicly-funded vs Self-Financing Institutions

- * It is quite obvious that **our self-financing sector can in no way match with UGC-funded public universities** whether in terms of endowments, funding resources or institutional reputation.
- * If we are true to the policy vision of “**parallel development**”, we must ensure we have in place a landscape of self-financing institutions that is conducive to their sustainable growth, and that **government plays a role** in facilitating such growth.

Support to Institutions

- * Land Grant Scheme
- * Start-up Loan Scheme
- * Quality Enhancement Support Scheme (QESS)
- * Qualifications Framework Fund
- * Research Endowment Fund

Support to Students

- * Grants and loans
- * Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP)
- * Non-means-Tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies (2017)

Future of the Self-financing Sector

- * There is no reason why our self-financing private institutions cannot grow into boutique universities and colleges with excellence in certain specialties.
- * There is no reason why those students enrolled in these institutions should necessarily feel they are receiving inferior education just because it is not publicly-funded.
- * Such perception, still rather prevalent, should be corrected.

Self-financing Sector at Critical Juncture

- * The post-secondary sector as a whole has reached a level of saturation now. **Instead of seeing the student population decline as a threat, we should instead turn it into an opportunity** to consolidate and enhance the sector's strength.
- * Many parents and students are not fully aware of the opportunities and diversity contributed by the self-financing sector to Hong Kong's higher education. **Critical steps need to be taken to improve the balance of our post-secondary education provision**, to fully realize the Government's "parallel development" policy.

Preliminary Thinking

1. The self-financing post-secondary sector needs to be **“reformed” and “modernized”** – to operate alongside UGC sector to provide more options, adding diversity to higher education sector as a whole; **complementary and not supplementary** to the publicly-funded sector.
2. Proper differentiation and positioning of various self-financing institutions would have a positive impact on the sector’s long-term sustainable development as our **new “small stars”**.
3. To **expand into VPET** to strengthen market relevance of our post-secondary education - institutions should work more closely with different industries and professions

Staffing

- * I am not worried about the lack of academic expertise to fill the teaching and professorial ranks in our self-financing institutions.
- * A more conducive policy framework may well be needed to help self-financing institutions **retain and provide a career path to their teaching staff**.
- * At the end of the day, the academic strength of a university or post-secondary college is defined by the **diversity and dynamism** of its academic and teaching staff.

Institutional Autonomy vs Regulation

- * Any government regulation of self-financing sector should fully take into account **the mostly “private” nature of the providers and their mode of operation**, but there are concerns over the lack of strategic co-ordination among institutions in the provision of self-financing programmes.
- * **Policies and measures conducive to fostering strategic co-ordination among self-financing institutions can help them develop their distinct character and niche areas**, while maintaining the current oversight with focus on transparency, quality assurance and good governance, rather than micro-management.

Concluding Remarks

- * **Post-secondary education is resource intensive and demands substantial investment** from users as well as the Government through material support.
- * **A sound, robust and transparent quality assurance mechanism is essential** so that the community can be sure of the nature of the product.