

**CAHK Symposium 2022**  
**Challenges and Opportunities for Fibre Gigabit Economy**  
**15 December 2022**

**Opening Speech by Mr Chaucer Leung**  
**Director-General of Communications**

**Introduction**

Kenneth, Duncan and fellow participants.

2. Good afternoon. It is my honour to deliver the opening remarks in this Symposium. The topic today is “Challenges and Opportunities for Fibre Gigabit Economy”. Nowadays, commercial sectors and industries increasingly rely on the high-speed and large-capacity telecommunications networks for efficient operations and service delivery. Fibre broadband connections become crucial, if not indispensable, to these entities and the general public in the era of Gigabit Economy.

**Role of OFCA**

3. The Office of the Communications Authority, OFCA, as a regulator for telecommunications and broadcasting in Hong Kong, has been continuously updating our regulatory regimes to facilitate the development of the sectors. Let’s see where we are now in terms of fibre connectivity.

**Connecting Hong Kong with Rest of the World**

4. With the externally oriented nature of our economy, Hong Kong is a city with the highest international bandwidth per internet user in the world. Currently, there are 12 submarine cable systems and 23

overland cables already landed in Hong Kong. We are coordinating for landing of several more submarine cable systems in the coming few years.

5. Submarine cable landing stations are also essential infrastructure to enable landing of more submarine cables in Hong Kong. Over the last few years, we have been working closely with Lands Department to release more coastal sites in the Chung Hom Kok Teleport. So far, two land lots were sold through tenders in March and August respectively this year. We are planning to issue the tender for the third one very soon. If your company is interested in the site, please stay tuned of our announcement!

### **Fibre Broadband Services in Hong Kong**

6. According to the latest report of European Fibre to the Home Council, Hong Kong is the fifth in the “Global Fibre-To-The-Home Ranking” with a penetration rate of 86%. While people living or working in urban areas have ample choices of gigabit fibre broadband services, residents living in remote villages may not have the same but rely on copper-based broadband services with humble speed.

7. With this in mind, the government has allocated over 700 million Hong Kong dollar to subsidise fixed network operators to extend their fibre networks to 235 remote villages scattered across the New Territories. The project has started in 2020 and targets for completion in 2026. An important part of the Subsidy Scheme is to connect three major outlying islands, namely Lamma Island, Cheung Chau and Peng Chau, with submarine cables. The associated cable laying works are currently in progress. Our expectation is that over half of these villages will have fibre access before the end of this year. Villagers there could then subscribe to gigabit broadband services at competitive prices.

8. In order to give the penetration of fibre broadband service a push, we have just re-launched the Optical Fibre Access Labelling Scheme

last month. The Scheme aims to promote the awareness of the public, including building owners and management offices, about the merits of having optical fibre access to their buildings, so that they would be more willing to facilitate the access of new fibre networks.

### **Contribution of 5G in the Gigabit Economy**

9. Gigabit Economy is not only powered by optical fibre networks but also wireless broadband services. In fact, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of Central People's Government advocates "Double Gigabit Networks" and has laid down action plans for having at least one hundred cities having such networks across Mainland China by end of next year. In Hong Kong, OFCA is also implementing a series of facilitative measures to support more extensive coverage of 5G services, which can offer a highest download speed over 1 Gigabit per second. According to the latest benchmarking report by Opensignal, Hong Kong was ranked the third globally in terms of 5G coverage.

10. To seek further enhancement, we have opened up about one thousand five hundred government venues for mobile network operators to install their radio base stations at a nominal rent of one Hong Kong dollar per annum. And, as an initiative in the Policy Address recently announced by the Chief Executive, we are planning to go for legislative amendments to provide floor spaces for accommodation of 5G radio base stations in new buildings.

### **Closing Remarks**

11. In summary, OFCA will continue to ensure the relevance of its regulatory regimes and facilitation for sustainable development of telecommunications networks and services in Hong Kong, and for our Gigabit Economy to flourish in the interest of the community at large.

12. Last but not the least, I hope that with active participation from all of the speakers and participants, the CAHK Symposium today will be a great success!

13. Thank you.