

## **Advancing Hong Kong's Leadership in 6G Development**

### CAHK's recommendations to the HKSAR Government's 2024 Policy Address

In July 2024, Communications Association of Hong Kong (CAHK) attended and expressed our views at the 2024 Policy Address 2 Consultation Sessions, namely International Innovation and Technology Centre and Building Sustainable City and Quality Living Space to the HKSAR Government. On behalf of CAHK and its members, we welcome the opportunity to provide our recommendations. CAHK has recommended five critical areas requiring strategic focus to drive Hong Kong's telecommunications and technology sectors towards a new era of innovation. These recommendations are:

1. Developing sixth-generation wireless communication technology (6G) in Hong Kong;
2. Hosting the 6G Global Summit;
3. Granting mobile network operators (MNOs) utility status;
4. Enhancing the infrastructure for international submarine cable landing; and
5. Fortifying data centre backup power capabilities.

We believe it is crucial to advance Hong Kong's position as a regional communications hub and to secure the sustainable advancement and competitiveness of our digital economy in the future.

### **6G Development in Hong Kong**

From its inception, 6G has been envisioned to deliver significant economic, environmental and social benefits. 6G is not just about speed, it is also a mindset shift towards sustainability, availability, reliability and security. 6G will enhance mobile capabilities for various applications, including artificial intelligence, robotics and sensing. It is vital for transitioning to sustainable operations through mobile solutions. Hence, establishing the necessary infrastructure for 6G development — such as global standards and skilled talents — will require considerable time. Since substantial groundworks at the national and regional levels for 6G standardization process has commenced, Hong Kong must advance its position to maintain our competitive advantages and shape the 6G visions from the beginning of the standardization process.

### **Hosting the "6G Global Summit in Asia 2025" in Hong Kong**

In order to advance 6G development, as a first step, CAHK proposes Hong Kong to host the "6G Global Summit in Asia 2025". CAHK shares the Government's ambition to developing

Hong Kong into an international I&T center, thereby enhancing its competitiveness. Hosting the next “6G Global Summit in Asia 2025” by the Office of the Communications Authority is an excellent starting point, providing a timely opportunity to position Hong Kong as the ideal platform for ongoing discussions on global 6G standards. This event would attract prominent leaders and organizations worldwide, making Hong Kong an ideal location <sup>1</sup> for continuous discussions on global 6G standards.

### **Granting MNOs Utility Status**

In addition to 6G development, we urge the Government to continue its support to MNOs in their networks rollout for better coverage and continuous enhancement. With the Central Government's support for Hong Kong's transformation into an innovation hub, achieving territorial-wide 5G or 6G coverage is crucial for smart-city applications and digital integration.

CAHK and MNOs welcome the Government's recent amendments to the Telecommunications Ordinance and relevant guidelines to ensure that appropriate space is made available in new buildings for the installation of mobile base stations (MBS), and the latest proposed subsidy scheme for MBS rollout in remote areas. However, MNOs continue to face challenges in finding space for MBS installation in existing buildings as the installation of MBS is still being treated as commercial activities without policy mandate. CAHK urges the Government to develop policies and amend relevant rules / regulation so that MNOs would be treated as utility such as fixed line networks, electricity, gas and water supplies in order to facilitate their access into existing building.

### **Strategic Enhancement of Submarine Cable Infrastructure in Hong Kong**

Hong Kong has long been a key hub in the Asian submarine cable networks, with systems distributed across eight landing stations. These cables provide significant advantages over satellite communications and wireless networks, offering cost-effective, stable, real-time, secured and point-to-point transmission. However, our competitive edge is greatly challenged by Singapore's rapid expansion and government-backed support for its submarine cable infrastructure. The situation has been rapidly worsening and since 2017 Hong Kong has not established any new international submarine cable connections, resulting in reduced competitiveness in bandwidth and connection costs. This situation impacts the growth of data centers and diminishes our ability to attract international technology companies and skilled professionals. To address this problem, we recommend the following actions:

- **Accelerate Cable Projects** - Expedite the approval and construction of new submarine

cable projects by negotiating with relevant mainland authorities to resolve delays in granting operational rights and simplifying approval procedures.

- **Promote Hong Kong as a Communications Hub** - Enhance our global promotion efforts, emphasizing Hong Kong's geographic and technical advantages as a submarine cable interconnection hub.
- **Strengthen Regional Cooperation** - Foster collaborations with neighboring regions to collectively enhance data communication capabilities across the Asia-Pacific.

## **Establishing Data Centers with Dual/back-up Power Supply between PRC and Hong Kong**

Establishing data centers with dual/back-up power supply between PRC and Hong Kong would greatly enhance reliability and stability. Hong Kong ranks among the top data center markets but it faces challenges such as land and power shortages. Operating at an advanced "Tier 4" level, these centers have redundant systems to prevent failures. We believe the Hong Kong Government could leverage the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park to develop facilities with Shenzhen, using dual power supply for better reliability. This unique setup, combined with Hong Kong's favorable business environment and low tax rate, could position us as a world-class data center hub.

### **Conclusion**

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views. Indeed, Hong Kong is well-positioned to become the preferred venue for organizing upcoming discussion platforms leading to the 6G standardization process from 2025 to 2030. An ecosystem would form around these platforms, supporting the Government's innovation and technology vision, including patents and skilled personnel. We believe 6G is a critical enabler for the innovation and technology sector and will play a unique role in the national development of the "New Quality Productive Forces" (新質生產力)

August 31, 2024

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*1: **Why 6G?** - Hong Kong (China) holds a clear leadership position in mobile communications, encompassing market dynamics, system design, hardware and software, use cases, and innovative applications. It is obvious benefits for Hong Kong to maintain our competitive advantages and shape the 6G visions at the beginning of the standardization process.*

***Why Hong Kong?** - HK has the most competitive market environment/ comprehensive use cases / broad range of physical environments (with high rise, country parks, harbours). In fact, it's an*



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*excellent living city laboratory for designing and deploying 6G services.*

**Infrastructure and Support** - *Hong Kong boasts world-class infrastructure, with top-tier researchers, universities, and research institutions (e.g., the highest FIEEE per capita globally). Strong policy support from the Government further advocates for innovation and technology, building a robust ecosystem for 6G development.*

**Strategic Position** - *Hong Kong's strong links to the Greater Bay Area (GBA) I&T hub, position it as a crucial player in the 6G landscape.*

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### **About Communications Association of Hong Kong (CAHK)**

CAHK is a non-profit making organisation incorporated in Hong Kong on 27 May 1983 following the announcement of deregulation of local communication products and services. It is the association for Hong Kong's communications industries, with responsibilities across broadcasting, wireline and wireless communications, and other sectors in information communications technology.

For more information, please visit: [www.cahk.hk](http://www.cahk.hk)

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