



## Property & Facility Management Division Chairman's Message



*Sr Dick Kwok PFMD Council Chairman*

September was a busy month for conferences and I was delighted to be able to join two very meaningful and inspiring ones – The Sustainable Building 2013 Hong Kong Regional Conference (SB13 HK) and the 2013 HKIS Annual Conference.

SB13 HK was jointly organized by the Construction Industry Council and the Hong Kong Green Building Council. This year, the main theme of the conference was “Urban Density & Sustainability”. I must say that SB13 HK was an excellent venue for gathering experts in the field of sustainable development to foster exchanges on the latest technologies and knowledge of developing green buildings. More importantly, participants gained a better idea of how to balance urban growth and sustainable development in the Hong Kong context. A remark from one of the conference’s most profound speakers, Professor John Ng, who shared his expertise in “High-density Sustainability and Liveability – The case of Hong Kong,” struck many. Like many other cities, Prof Ng said, Hong Kong faces the immense risks of climate change and the universal quest for sustainable development. While we enjoy beautiful country parks and a bountiful natural environment, Hong Kong’s urban living environment is confronted with multiple challenges, namely worsening air quality due to cross-boundary air pollution; marine and roadside air pollution; municipal solid waste; energy wastage; nature conservation; and a shortage of housing supply, offices, and quality public spaces.

To deal with these problems, the building sector should change, as it consumes around 91% of Hong Kong’s electricity generation and produces more than 60% of its GHG emissions. But the built environment not only has to serve as a habitable environment for the well-being of its people, it has to be sustainable, too. According to Prof Ng, commercial buildings account for 65% of Hong Kong’s total electricity consumption, while residential buildings account for another 26%. Building users are the major source of the city’s high carbon emissions, so the solution is to make them “go green”. I greatly share Prof Ng’s view that “green buildings” are a solution to Hong Kong’s air pollution problem due to its high urban density. PFM Surveyors could be very important stakeholders because they can promote greener buildings by helping building owners apply for BEAM Plus assessments and convince more people to embrace a wide range of sustainability standards.

The theme of this year’s HKIS Annual Conference, “Evolving Hong Kong – Infrastructure & Property Development,” has become a very hot issue in Hong Kong lately. The Hong Kong Government has been pushing infrastructure investment to support economic growth and job creation in recent years. But there have been many debates over how to balance infrastructure development and social needs, including environmental protection, low income housing demands, historical building protection, etc. Mr Ling Kara Kan, JP, Director of Planning, delivered a remarkable speech on “Hong Kong New Town v3.1 – Innovative Live-work Spaces for the New Generation”. New town developments have played a very important role in Hong Kong’s urban planning. The government implemented the new town concept to supply land for large residential and industrial developments after the fire at the Shek Kip Mei squatter settlement in 1953. Following that, the government has developed many new towns, including Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Tai Po, Fanling/Sheung Shui, Yuen Long, Tin Shi Wai, Tseung Kwan O, and Tung Chung. Mr Ling shared the new planning concepts and principles for Hong Kong’s new towns. In view of its growing population and continuous demands for housing, new towns should remain a major part of Hong Kong’s future development to relieve the pressure on its congested urban areas and meet the increasing housing demand. Also, railway development has also had an irreplaceable role in helping Hong Kong remain one of Asia’s premier cities, as Ir Chew Tai Chong, Project Director of the MTR Corporation, mentioned in his speech, “Keep Moving Forward or Stop Here? – Sustainable Railway Infrastructure Developments”. Ir Chew gave an overview of railway developments in Hong Kong by introducing five railway projects that were in the pipeline. Those essential railway infrastructure developments that will support the continued growth of Hong Kong’s economy were also discussed.

Thanks go to the Hon Tony Tse, who has kept chasing the Home Affairs Department on the progress of the bills submission regarding the proposed licensing of Property Management Companies and practitioners. The news is that the bills will likely be put before LegCo later this year. We shall work closely with the office of the Hon Tony Tse and keep members informed of the latest developments in due course. ■