

My 10 wishes for 2018

Out of the Box

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IT IS THE NEW YEAR and, looking back at what I wrote at this time last year, I am pleased to see some, if not all, of my wishes for 2017 had turned out pretty well. We have seen more unity and harmony in our city than before, our new chief executive has laid down concrete plans and initiatives to boost development of science and technology, and some of our much-anticipated infrastructure project seems to have kicked off finally.

I took time to make a list of wishes for Hong Kong and the world in 2018 and, with a can-do attitude, I believe all of them are achievable, as long as we try.

1) I wish the new chief executive and her team all the luck she needs to move Hong Kong forward. It is not going to be easy as she faces a Herculean task to deal with the political opposition, as well as to bring closer collaboration between Hong Kong and the mainland while balancing interests on all sides. I wish her team every success in their quests ahead.

2) I wish new Hong Kong initiatives in innovation and tech well: the Greater Bay Area, the Loop, and an array of new government policies to finance and foster start-ups and entrepreneurs of our own all have great promise. Let's hope all these initiatives will get their budgets approved swiftly.

3) I wish we will see more unicorns (start-ups with valuations of over US\$1 billion, or HK\$7.8 billion) in

Hong Kong. We have seen a small number of these emerge in recent years and conditions have become even more favorable. In the results-driven world we are living in, having more unicorns will boost our profile as a world-class innovation and technology hub tremendously, and bring much needed inspiration to youths who seek to launch careers in IT.

4) I hope there are no more disruptive and divisive developments that would call for the Heads of Universities Committee to issue more joint statements. Our city can surely find better use of our energy elsewhere!

5) I hope I will get to use the Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai Bridge, and the high-speed rail, in 2018. Both projects are long overdue and I am sure skeptical views on infrastructure projects will change for the better once both become fully functional to all.

6) I wish HKUST well after I have stepped down as president. It has been a magical run and I am sure the university will continue to thrive under a new leadership. I also wish my fellow soon-to-step-down university presidents – Peter Mathieson, Joseph Sung, and Tim Tong – well in their futures. They have made tremendous contributions to local higher education in an increasingly challenging environment.

7) I wish Hongkongers health and prosperity.

8) Outside of Hong Kong, I wish the North Korean crisis will not further deteriorate (with the threat of nuclear war). All sides need to return to the negotiating table and tone down their rhetoric.

9) I wish more US-China collaboration rather than increased tensions. Having spent much of my life in both countries, I see great potential for collaboration between the two super power.

10) Last but not least, I wish for world peace. With all the turmoil going on in the Middle East, the South China Sea and with refugees in Burma, and elsewhere in the world, the need for peace is higher than ever.