

Note to Editors  
For Immediate Release

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## **CADENZA Symposium 2010: Age-Friendly World Cities and Environment Highlights World Health Organization's Guidelines for Contributing to an Elder-friendly Hong Kong**

More than 300 participants from different backgrounds, including professional practitioners from government, non-governmental organizations, academia and professional bodies, and thirteen distinguished overseas and local speakers are gathering at The University of Hong Kong to attend the **CADENZA Symposium 2010: Age-Friendly World Cities and Environment** on 8 and 9 October (today and tomorrow). It is the fourth symposium jointly organized by CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors with Faculty of Social Sciences at The University of Hong Kong and Faculty of Medicine at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The World Health Organization (WHO) initiated the Age-friendly Cities movement in 2005 in response to ageing populations living in cities all over the world. The CADENZA Symposium highlighted the WHO guidelines with respect to New York to discuss how health outcomes may be influenced by health and social care systems, neighbourhoods, and how urban design and use of information technology may contribute to making the environment more elder-friendly. It provided a platform for sharing insights and experiences, enhancing understanding and spreading concrete concept in making an elder-friendly Hong Kong.

The Symposium was officially opened this morning (8 October 2010) by **Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung**, GBS, JP, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, **Dr Donald Li**, JP, Steward, The Hong Kong Jockey Club and **Professor John G Malpas**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, The University of Hong Kong. In his opening remarks, **Professor John G Malpas** said that he hoped the expertise and enthusiasm the international delegates brought to this event would be further developed into long-term partnerships between academia, professionals and governments, "so that communities all around the world can benefit from their research, and more and more cities will develop reputations as being cities that 'work' – and not just for the young and the able, but for everyone," he added.

**Dr Donald Li**, JP, Steward, The Hong Kong Jockey Club, said, "for our city to stay competitive, we must create the environment that enables older people to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society." He added, "over the past years, the CADENZA Project has been working hard to determine how individuals can achieve positive ageing and how different sectors of our society can better collaborate to meet future needs of the silver-hair market. This year, the Symposium is bringing the discussions to the next level - how our city can be more age-friendly."

**Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung**, GBS, JP, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, said, "as the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age, many global economies are facing the challenge of an ageing population. Hong Kong is no exception. This symposium provides a timely and useful platform for us to take stock of our overall performance. In effect, this is a health check and the findings will shed light on our strengths and deficiencies."

In his keynote address, **Dr the Hon Leong Che-hung**, GBM, GBS, JP, Chairman of Elderly Commission, said, "perhaps one of the biggest stumbling blocks is that elderly discriminations are still fairly widespread and elderly abuses are not infrequent", and this would be what more can be done.

The symposium started by **Professor Ruth Finkelstein**, Vice President for Health Policy of The New York Academy of Medicine to address the WHO's guidelines and the New York experience in making cities age-friendly. She elaborated that the WHO issued a protocol of easy and affordable measures to guide 35 cities around the world in assessing how age-friendly they are and then mobilizing for change. This was resulted in 59 new initiatives and the development of public-private partnerships to make the New York City a better place in which to age.

**Professor Victor Rodwin**, Professor of Health Policy and Management, Robert F Wagner Graduate School of Public Service of New York University then shared the findings from the World Cities Project on ageing, health systems and health outcomes in New York, London, Paris, Tokyo and Hong Kong, and

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discussed common problems, such as inequalities of income, housing, health and health care across world cities.

**Professor Michael Gusmano**, Research Scholar, The Hastings Center quoted the findings from Managing World Cities Project which is in collaboration with CADENZA and Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong. He highlighted that the lack of access to community-based primary care in Hong Kong appeared to result in higher rates of avoidable hospital conditions among older residents of Hong Kong, despite the better health status of the population, than London or New York.

**Professor Jean Woo**, CADENZA Project Director discussed the contributions of geographic, socioeconomic and lifestyle factors to quality of life, frailty and mortality in elderly in Hong Kong. She pointed out that district variations in health outcomes existed in the Hong Kong elderly population, and these variations resulted directly from district factors and also indirectly mediated through socioeconomic position as well as lifestyle.

**Dr Chau Pui-hing**, CADENZA Research Assistant Professor quoted her study findings in Hong Kong to show better neighbourhood environment was associated with better health and social outcomes.

**Dr Jackie Kwok**, Associate Professor, School of Design of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University proposed a schema explaining the guidelines for the design of the living environment for older persons. She highlighted that their living environment should be a safe, comfortable place to lead a decent and private life and a place that can nurture community life.

**Dr Eric Tam**, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Technology and Informatics of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University examined the key issues involved in the design of an elder-friendly home environment, especially the use of modern technologies to facilitate independent living for the elderly, and the use of colour and colour contrast effectively in the home environment.

**Dr Benise Mak**, CADENZA Research Assistant Professor addressed the issue of societal age disparities in health care. She emphasized that to meet the needs of ageing societies and to meet the needs of all users equitably, health care policy needs to acknowledge constraints and the needs for prioritization. The public and professionals should engage with policy makers in formulating a policy based on cost benefit considerations and overall societal view of prioritization that is not based on age alone.

A forum on “Ageing in Place: Matching Policy to Needs” will be held tomorrow to address the perspectives from both world cities and Hong Kong, with case studies of non-governmental organizations. Speakers of the forum include **Dr the Hon Leong Che-hung**, GBM, GBS, JP; **Mr Patrick Nip**, JP, Director of Social Welfare; **Ms Christine Fang**, Chief Executive of The Hong Kong Council of Social Service; **Dr Bernard Kong**, Deputy Cluster Service Director (Community), Hong Kong East Cluster of Hospital Authority and President of The Hong Kong Geriatrics Society; **Ms Perina Li**, Chief Manager of Senior Citizens and Rehabilitation Services of The Salvation Army, and **Professor Victor Rodwin**.

For further information on the symposium, please visit: [www.cadenza.hk](http://www.cadenza.hk).

#### **About CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors**

CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors is a project launched by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust with a donation of HK\$380 million in 2006. The project aims at nurturing academic leadership in gerontology and changing the mindset and attitude of the general public through a range of training and public education programmes. Cross-sectional collaboration between organizations and the implementation of innovative elderly services and programmes are also encouraged in order to bring about a new mode of elderly care services to prepare for a rapidly ageing society. Details of CADENZA are available at [www.cadenza.hk](http://www.cadenza.hk).

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