

Policy support and growing ecosystem provide driving force for social development through **innovation and technology**



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In the face of an ever-changing global landscape and increasingly fierce competition in technology, China is determined to become a world-leading country by implementing innovation-driven development strategies and using the power of technology to lead the development of all aspects of society, from social to economic, wellbeing to health. The National 14th Five-Year Plan indicates support for Hong Kong's development into an international innovation and technology (I&T) hub. Professor Nancy Ip Yuk-yu, Morningside Professor of Life Science and Director of the State Key Laboratory of Molecular Neuroscience at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), says that Hong Kong's I&T ecosystem is getting more and more mature. She adds that by grasping the tremendous development opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and collaborating with its GBA counterparts, Hong Kong will be able to complement each other's strengths, undertake more scientific research tasks and become an important force contributing to the national strategic planning.

After receiving her PhD from Harvard University, Professor Ip undertook research work at a biotechnology company in New York. With her outstanding performance, she was soon promoted to become the only Chinese senior scientist in the company, taking charge of a laboratory with over 20 researchers. Professor Ip admits that it was not an easy decision to give up a career that was already on track to return to Hong Kong. However, she was born and raised here, and has

always hoped to contribute to the city's development in science and technology and help nurture a new generation of technology talents. It so happened that HKUST was established in 1991 and its founding president, Professor Woo Chia-wei, was recruiting top scholars and scientists from overseas to join HKUST. Sharing the same vision with Professor Woo, Professor Ip joined the university in 1993 and has been working there ever since. She says: "Twenty-nine years have passed in no time. I am glad that I have witnessed and taken part in the flourishing development of technology in Hong Kong and the Mainland over these years."

Hong Kong is very strong in basic scientific research, with five universities ranked among the top 100 in the world. Many scholars and experts are recipients of leading international and national research awards, demonstrating the abundance of local talents. According to results of the Research Assessment Exercise 2020 conducted by the University Grants Committee, 45 per cent of the research projects assessed were rated "internationally excellent" while another 25 per cent have even attained "world leading" rating. "The assessment was conducted by distinguished scholars from around the world to ensure international credibility," Professor Ip explains. "The results reflect the exemplary scientific research capabilities of local universities and they have assumed a leading role in terms of research quality in various fields. The solid foundation helps attract top-notch research institutions and talents from around the world to Hong Kong."

