

“2019 Fellowship & Honorary Award Presentation Ceremony”
Hong Kong Baptist University Academic Community Hall
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Stephen Kai-yi WONG, Barrister
Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong

Dr Pei, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me extend my warmest congratulations to those receiving fellowships and honorary awards on this very special occasion where their contribution is deservedly recognized. I am most grateful to Dr. Pei and the Social Enterprise Research Academy (SERA) for having me today.

SERA is acclaimed to be the first professional body in Asia to have developed, amongst other things, the Social Caring Pledge Scheme for businesses that are committed to a voluntary set of ethical standards in the areas of social care and responsibilities. The vision is adorable; the mission is admirable and the efforts made and the results are commendable. Nowadays, especially in Hong Kong, the rule of law has become a topical issue again. The rule of law does not simply refer to compliance with the legal requirements but also other positive, fair and just values. This is where ethics come in, to bridge the gap that may be caused by draconian or outdated laws. As the CEO of Apple Tim Cook once said, “We should not only do what is required by the law, but what we believe we ought to do.” I would like to add that we should also do what we are expected by the right-minded people to do.

The notion of an ethical market reconfigures what is meant by a market from a conventional transactional or contractual model to a realm for values-driven negotiation. Beyond the direct effects on the transactional parties, enterprises should help foster a culture of genuine respect for the interest of their customers and society as a whole. This is where mutual trust and confidence should be built on.

In this data driven economy, Hong Kong is a pioneer advocating data ethics in Asia. My office has been engaging all organizations, public or private, to complement compliance with the law by the adoption of data ethics, integrating the values of fairness, respect and mutual benefits into the collection and use of data, such as providing customers with real choices, obtaining meaningful consent, eliminating

possible bias or discrimination, and putting both the organisations and individuals on a level playing field. This will not only help the company to resolve some of the privacy issues, but also build the requisite trust, enhance organizational reputation and competitiveness. The crux of the issues is fairly simple – the data does not belong to organisations but to the individual person concerned.

Many congratulations to the fellows and awardees for acting as role models for demonstrating the social enterprise value and the specific ethical outcomes. I believe your exemplary achievements, together with the continued efforts and initiatives of the Academy, would help transforming the behaviour of many organisations, fueling and reflecting consumer expectations of firm social or environmental performance.

Thank you.