

Speech by Steve Benson, President of CIH, at the Annual Dinner 2008



Mr President, Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. May I begin by saying how delighted I am to be here with you this evening, and to be able to visit my friends and colleagues in the Asian Pacific region during my year as President.

I am particularly pleased to be with you on this special occasion which, of course, marks the 20th anniversary of the Hong Kong Institute of Housing. I know that our two institutes have worked closely together during that period, and that we share many common interests. On behalf of everyone associated with CIH, can I extend my congratulations to Mr Chan Sai-lun, in his capacity as President, and to those of you here tonight who have played a part in making the Hong Kong Institute of Housing so successful. Happy birthday!

In the time since your last Annual Dinner in October of 2007, which was attended by Paul Diggory, my predecessor, the Chartered Institute of Housing has experienced another very busy period, both in the United Kingdom and internationally.

Housing in the UK continues to enjoy a high profile at the present time, which is something that we loudly applaud, and significant changes are occurring. But the new environment has challenged us, because it is very important that the organisation stays ahead of the game and continues to be a relevant voice that is listened to and respected by government and other key decision makers. This has meant continually reviewing the way we relate to emerging political issues.

But the CIH is also alert to developments that are

taking place internationally, and it has placed great emphasis on positioning itself to be able to respond positively and to support the development of a global housing community.

Plainly, the needs of the housing industry in England, Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world are different. Housing policy and housing practice have to be set within the context of very different economic circumstances, societies and cultural values. The CIH, however, has a unique role in working with colleagues in different countries to ensure that people working in housing have adequate education, training and professional support to develop housing solutions which will meet local needs.

And this is critical, because the sector we work in is undergoing significant change. Much of the debate about the future of affordable housing has been, and will continue to be, about how to secure sufficient investment both to improve the existing housing stock and to provide new homes. In the UK the housing sector has responded imaginatively — particularly in creating new vehicles to attract private sector funding — and as a result we have a much more diversified housing sector than even a decade ago. The question is now whether these new vehicles can not only deliver the investment that is needed, but whether they can also bring about improvements in service delivery and ensure the development of sustainable communities in which people can live and thrive.

A key challenge for the CIH, therefore, is to ensure that the profession has skilled and educated staff who can cope with these changes, and still focus on providing high quality services, which will help to create and maintain sustainable communities.

I know that many people in this room tonight are striving to deliver good quality services which satisfy tenants and other service users, and many of you are using your skills and expertise to help regenerate communities.

This past week I have visited housing projects in Beijing, Macao and here in Hong Kong. As a profession and as individual organisations, we need to have a clear vision of where we are going. We need to recognise the changes that are taking place in our operating environment, and we need to inspire our staff in contributing positively to what must be a shared agenda.

At the CIH, one of the key corporate priorities in our Business Plan is to equip the profession for today and tomorrow. Our aim is to provide the tools and support required to enable housing and other professionals working in communities to be the best they can be. We believe it is crucial to the sector that individuals and organisations always have the skills and knowledge needed to deliver excellence for their customers.... today and tomorrow.

And we are well placed to achieve this.

As the Chartered Institute, we are concerned about all aspects of housing. We represent individuals working across all tenures, and we are concerned about improving standards, which we achieve through promoting professional practice. And we are concerned about shaping housing policy, drawing on our members' experiences to influence new ideas and initiatives.

In each case we support this by helping to develop the knowledge and skills of housing professionals..... working with Universities and Colleges to implement our education programmes.....providing training courses and other events.....and through our professional practice publications and advice.

This is at the core of what the CIH is all about.

At the same time, we are committed to doing all we can to ensure that knowledge and experience from around the world is shared within our profession. A few moments ago I referred to our Business Plan, which was introduced at the beginning of this year. The new Plan is significant, because for the first time it identifies as a corporate priority....one of only five, I should add... uniting the global housing community.

To achieve this we are committed to extending our activities overseas to work with partners across the

world to promote and facilitate shared learning and international co-operation. Our aim is to improve our own organisational knowledge and develop our support for, and appeal to, new international members. Through the development of strong and effective international partnerships we will also help the professional development of housing in countries seeking our support.

By way of example, I can inform you that CIH is currently in advanced discussions with housing authorities in both Nigeria and South Africa to support the development of housing professionalism in those countries. And we are very pleased that we have been invited to do so.

The CIH already has a significant overseas membership. Here in the Asian Pacific, membership of the CIH now stands at over 2,000 people, which is 10% of our total membership. That is a wonderful statistic, and one that my colleagues and I on the Institute's governing Council are extremely proud of. That membership has held strong over more than 40 years now.

In recent years my colleagues on the Asian Pacific regional committee have done much to extend networking with individuals and to strengthen communications with friendly organisations in the wider region. They did so because of a strong desire for increased professionalism across the region as a whole.

Members of the Asian Pacific Region of the CIH deserve full acknowledgement for their vision, and on behalf of the CIH's Council I would like to thank all those members who have contributed to that vision and who continue to promote the role the CIH plays in developing professional housing management.

Mr President, Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen....the Chartered Institute of Housing's prime purpose is to develop the art and science of housing management. This can only be achieved with skilled and trained professionals who are motivated and inspired to deliver policies into practice on the ground.

May I wish you all an enjoyable evening.....

運輸及房屋局局長鄭汝樺於聯合週年晚宴的講話



陳世麟會長、周超雄主席、各位嘉賓、各位朋友:

我很榮幸獲邀出席香港房屋經理學會和英國特許房屋經理 學會亞太分會聯合舉辦的週年晚宴。今年是香港房屋經理 學會的20週年誌慶,是一個特別值得高興的日子,在此我 首先衷心祝賀,並感謝兩會多年來對改善市民居住環境所 作出的貢獻。

香港房屋經理學會成立已20年,英國特許房屋經理學會亞太分會更有超過40年的歷史,它們都直接參與及見證香港的房屋管理工作進入成熟階段。事實上,兩個會的會員數目眾多,現時負責管理的公私營房屋,佔全港總數七成多,工作十分重要。

過去幾十年,香港不斷進步,市民對房屋的要求也不斷提升。從前房屋可能只是「有瓦遮頭」就足夠;但今時今日在香港這個國際大都會,無論租戶抑或業主,對自己所居住的單位,以致整個屋邨或屋苑,都很有期望,追求的是優質生活。

為符合居民的期望,房屋管理人員的角色和工作亦要隨着 社會步伐而改變和改善。專業不再只是一些特定的知識和 技能,更重要的是態度、價值觀念和背後的精神。今天, 物業管理人員不但要為居民提供清潔、保安、維修等服 務,亦要經常聆聽個別居民的意見,了解他們對居住環境 的訴求,甚至是作息的習慣,還需要處理居民之間就居所 問題產生的糾紛,回應他們的查詢,提供他們所需的資料 等等。可以說,房屋管理人員除了是服務提供者外,也是 業主、住客及居民組織的朋友,和居民與居民之間、甚至 居民與外界及居民與政府之間的橋樑。 西方有一句諺語說"A house is not a home",或者我們也可以把「一間屋不等於一個家」這概念套用到房屋管理人員的工作。要把家的感覺帶到社區,房屋管理人員不獨是把物業維修至一個高水平,更要透過「以人為本」的精神,和人性化的服務,才可以協助居民培養歸屬感,促進鄰里的互助精神,凝聚社會動力以締造一個安全、健康及可持續發展的優質生活環境。

作為香港房屋委員會(房委會)主席,我亦期望房屋署下的房屋經理職系的同事,就房委會推展大大小小的維修及改善計劃,包括全面結構勘察計劃、全方位維修計劃、室內電線重鋪計劃和綠化工程等,繼續發揮你們的功能,以全面而專業的服務,及以人為本的精神,作居民與負責這些計劃人員之間的橋樑,並提出切合居民需要的實質意見,讓維修及改善工程可以順利地進行,達致良好的效果。

我亦期望香港房屋經理學會和英國特許房屋經理學會亞太 分會,繼續為本港、國內和海外的房屋管理人員提供有效 的平台,透過廣泛交流意見,分享大家在日常運作及管 理範疇的經驗,進一步提升物業管理的水平,建設一個美 好、和諧和可持續發展的社區。

最後,我謹祝兩會會務蒸蒸日上;在座各位工作順利、身 體健康、家庭幸福。

