

Speech by Mr Stephen Ip, Secretary for Economic Development and Labour at the Launch Ceremony of “A Symphony of Lights” (January 17 2004)

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for joining us tonight for the official launch of “A Symphony of Lights”. I have great pleasure to welcome all of you, in particular guests from the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Forces Hong Kong, organisations and companies whose buildings are taking part in this project. Your presence tonight is a clear symbol of your support for this unprecedented and worthwhile project. Without your support and generous contribution, and orchestration by the Tourism Commission, there would have been no symphony tonight.

As a permanent feature to showcase the night vista of Victoria Harbour, “A Symphony of Lights” has several notable features. First, it has been accomplished through the joint efforts of the participating public and private organizations, amply demonstrating their long-term commitment to Hong Kong. Second, by enhancing Victoria Harbour’s attractiveness, “A Symphony of Lights” will encourage visitors to come to Hong Kong and extend their stay to generate more tourism income.

The present strength of the tourism industry is bringing benefits to a variety of trades and sectors, thereby helping to improve employment and the economy. Retail sales, for instance, have recorded positive growth for the past four months. The continuing economic improvement, and the positive atmosphere fostered by tourism activities,

have helped to boost the community's confidence and encourage domestic consumption.

“A Symphony of Lights” is, above all, about Hong Kong and Hong Kong people. It is a proud symbol of our innovative spirit, it represents community building, foresight and creativity of the participating organizations. These are our core strengths which help to make Hong Kong “Asia's World City”.

Please enjoy the show and I wish all of you the best of everything in the Year of the Monkey.