

Speech by Commissioner for Tourism at opening ceremony of 47th
OSEAL Forum (English only)

Following is a speech by the Commissioner for Tourism,
Miss Margaret Fong, at the opening ceremony of the 47th Orient
and Southeast Asian Lions (OSEAL) Forum today (December 5):

International President Mr (Albert) Brandel, Chief Executive,
Lions dignitaries, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome such a large
"pride" of Lions back to Hong Kong, Asia's world city.

We are honoured to have played host to the 1992 and 2005
Lions Club International Convention, and the OSEAL Forum in
2002. They were all huge successes. I hope they bring back
fond memories for everyone who participated.

I am delighted that the OSEAL Forum has returned to Hong
Kong in just six years. I am confident that you will find
us a welcoming host supported by world-class infrastructure
and a commitment to go the extra mile in everything we do.

Your being here today is a strong vote of confidence in
Hong Kong as a maturing civil society, as a responsible global
citizen, and as a city with a unique role to play in China's
development.

Today, we have more than 1,400 Lions in Hong Kong. They
are versatile and enterprising, and leaders in their own
fields. But what brings them together is their commitment
to foster understanding among people and their dedication to
serve the community.

None of us could have predicted two years back, when Hong
Kong started to prepare for today's forum, the impact the
global financial crisis would have on communities round the
world. This forum gives us the perfect opportunity to reflect

on the intricate relationships that bind the fate of economies thousands of miles apart. As citizens of the global village, we must all do our part in soldering through these times of economic pains but never forgetting our responsibility to the less privileged. I therefore applaud this year's Forum's theme "A New Dimension in Humanity". Only when the whole world respects and honours human dignity would we be able to achieve real harmony among communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you very fruitful deliberations in the next two days.

But amidst your very packed programme, I encourage you all to find some time, or better still, stay an extra day or two with us to experience the cosmopolitan metropolis that is Hong Kong. We have in store for you an impressive array of attractions and activities for your mind and senses, from iconic skyscrapers, to beautiful mountain hikes and a shopping experience that rivals any great city in the world.

And for the gourmets, I urge you to pick up a copy of the MICHELIN guide Hong Kong Macau 2009, hot off the press, as you navigate our varied dining scene. I promise you a world of fine wine and dishes you cannot resist.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong has a long partnership with Lions Club, I look forward to welcoming the International Convention and the OSEAL Forum back to Hong Kong in the very near future. Thank you.

Ends/Friday, December 5, 2008

Issued at HKT 16:48

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