Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, at the 2009 Cathay Pacific International Chinese New Year Night Parade in Tsim Sha Tsui tonight (January 26):

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kung Hei Fat Choy!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you on the first day of the Lunar New Year to share the excitement and spectacle of the New Year Parade organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

In this 14th year of the Parade, we will present to you a series of performances of dazzling international splendour, promising spectators a memorable evening that is full of fun.

In December, Hong Kong will for the first time host the prestigious East Asian Games. It is one of many big events planned for Hong Kong this year. To our friends from abroad, I hope you will enjoy the New Year celebrations, and that you will visit us again soon to experience the dynamism and vibrancy that is Hong Kong.

I wish you all a joyful and prosperous Year of the Ox.

Thank you.

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