

Speech by C for Tourism at HK Exhibition and Convention Industry
Association 20th anniversary dinner (English only)

Following is a speech by the Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Philip Yung, at the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association 20th anniversary dinner tonight (May 6):

Stanley (Chu), Daniel (Cheung), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

I am most delighted to be here tonight to express my best wishes to the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association (HKECIA) on its 20th anniversary.

Just like Rome, the success story of the MICE industry in Hong Kong has not come by just overnight. Over the past 20 years, the convention and exhibition industry has gone through the ups and downs of our economy and become part and parcel of Hong Kong's economic dynamism. Thanks to your steadfast efforts and profound commitment, you have made Hong Kong prosper and become the premier MICE capital in the region. Indeed, all of you deserve big applause for your tremendous contribution to Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has always been a major trading hub in the world which hosts exhibitions on a very wide portfolio, providing the necessary platform to market our goods and conduct business. At the same time, meetings, incentive travels, conventions and exhibitions bring in huge numbers of high spending visitors. The latest figures of the Hong Kong Tourism Board show that an overnight MICE visitor spent 20% more than an average tourist. Last year alone, MICE visitors generated over \$8 billion of spending in Hong Kong, making MICE an important pillar of our tourism industry.

It is also well known that we owe much to the exhibition and convention sector for our prominent international profile. We have hosted a good number of world-renowned conferences. In 2005 and 2006, we hosted the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference and ITU Telecom World respectively. The Asian Financial Forum in January this year attracted many famous specialists from all parts of the world to Hong Kong. The staging of many academic, medical and technology conventions every year further put us on the forefront of the latest developments of

these sectors. Hence, we not only reap commercial gains from a vibrant MICE industry, but also reinforce Hong Kong's leading position in many sectors.

To provide further support to the MICE sector in the face of increasing competition in this part of the world, the Government earmarked in 2008 an additional \$150 million for enhancing MICE promotion over the following five years. In November the same year, the Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) Office was established under the Hong Kong Tourism Board as a dedicated agency to promote MICE tourism.

Since its establishment, the MEHK has been closely co-operating with the HKECIA and trade members in conducting overseas promotional activities, bidding for more MICE events and providing one-stop support to MICE event organisers.

With the concerted efforts of the trade and the MEHK, we have secured 590 events for Hong Kong last year which are expected to bring in over 150,000 additional MICE visitors from 2009 to 2013. Hong Kong was also voted the "Favourite City in the World" and "Best Business City in the World" in a number of polls organised by the MICE media in Asia. In 2009, Hong Kong received 1.16 million overnight MICE visitors, a performance virtually on par with 2008. I need not stress how remarkable is this feat against the background of an unfavourable business environment.

Ladies and gentlemen, our exhibition and convention sector has gone a long way in the past 20 years. I have no doubt that our industry players will not rest on our laurels, and will redouble our efforts, with our trademark resilience and ingenuity, to reach new heights. On this note, may I wish the HKECIA continued success in the years to come. We look to you in helping to make Hong Kong an outstanding MICE city in the world.

Thank you.

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