

Speech by Commissioner for Tourism at opening ceremony of AgriPro Asia 2010
(English only)

Following is a speech by the Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Philip Yung, at the opening ceremony of the AgriPro Asia 2010 today (December 13):

Mr (Kenny) Lo, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. A very warm welcome to all of you who came to Hong Kong for this major new event of the agricultural industry, AgriPro Asia 2010.

One of the greatest attractions of Hong Kong as a leading tourist destination is our huge number of restaurants in various parts of the city, serving Chinese and foreign cuisines. The foundation for this success is our impeccable supply chain that can deliver high-quality fresh vegetable, poultry, meat, seafood and dairy products anywhere and anytime efficiently. In the first three quarters of this year, the total value of import, domestic export and re-export of food and live animals in Hong Kong has gone up by 14%. This favourable environment facilitates large-scale agriculture trade shows to be held in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong sits at the doorstep of Mainland China. Our strong linkages with the Mainland and the world mean that we are the premier market square for overseas suppliers and buyers to do business with their Mainland counterparts. We have world-class convention and exhibition facilities, transparent import and export control, robust protection for intellectual property, a liberal visa regime, high English proficiency as well as a level-playing field. Earlier this year, we hosted the Asia Fruit Logistica and Asian Seafood Expo, both of which are major events of the food and beverage sector. In 2010, Hong Kong has once again been selected as the "Best Business City in the World". Indeed, Hong Kong is the trade fair capital of Asia by any standard.

The HKSAR Government is fully supportive of the development of the MICE (Meetings, Incentive travels, Conventions and Exhibitions) industry in Hong Kong. In 2008, we set up a dedicated agency, the "Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong" Office under the Hong Kong Tourism Board, to bid for more MICE events and provide one-stop support to event organisers. In the first three quarters of this year, more than 890,000 overnight MICE visitors have come to Hong Kong, a 25% growth compared with last year.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Asian economy is flourishing and abundant opportunities are lying before us. With 120 exhibitors from all over the world, I have no doubt today's exhibition will be a golden chance to make business deals, establish new contacts and learn the latest trends of the agricultural sector. While in Hong Kong, please do not forget to experience our diverse tourism offerings and enjoy yourself in this vibrant Asia's world city, particularly in this festive season.

May I welcome you all once again and wish the AgriPro Asia a successful head start in Hong Kong! Thank you very much.

Ends/Monday, December 13, 2010

Issued at HKT 19:09