

SCED's speech at 24th annual dinner for Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, at the 24th annual dinner for the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association (HKECIA) tonight (May 30):

Daniel (Chairman of the HKECIA, Mr Daniel Cheung), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

It gives me great pleasure to be here tonight to celebrate with all of you the 24th anniversary for the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association.

First of all, congratulations to the 18 newly elected members for the 2014-2016 HKECIA Executive Committee, in particular Mr Javed Khan, the new Chairman of HKECIA. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Daniel for his tremendous contribution to promote the development of the MICE (meetings, incentive travels, conventions and exhibitions) industry over his past four years of chairmanship. We will continue to look to HKECIA for its staunch support under the new leadership to promote Hong Kong as a premier MICE destination.

Thanks to the steadfast efforts and profound dedication of each and every member of HKECIA, the MICE industry has over the years played a key role in the economic development of Hong Kong. Your success has helped shape Hong Kong into an international MICE capital and trading hub. Hong Kong has received numerous international recognitions in recent years. For example, Hong Kong has been selected as the "Best Business City in the World" by the Business Traveller Asia Pacific magazine for five consecutive years since 2009. Readers of CEI Asia Pacific magazine also chose Hong Kong as the "Best City for MICE Events" in 2013 again.

It was a fruitful year for the MICE sector in Hong Kong last year. According to the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), in 2013, Hong Kong received a record high of 1.63 million MICE overnight visitors, representing a 1.8 per cent growth as compared with 2012. These visitors are of high spending power, and they brought us promising economic and tourism benefits. In 2013, their average per capita spending was close to \$10,000, almost 21 per cent higher than that of the general overnight visitor. To keep up

the momentum, we will continue to support HKTB in stepping up the promotion of Hong Kong as a premier MICE destination through its Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong office. HKTB will endeavour to solicit more international MICE events to be staged in Hong Kong under its prevailing promotional platform "Hong Kong: The World's Meeting Place", and focus its MICE promotion work in target source markets with higher growth potential.

As our neighbouring cities have been proactive in drawing convention and exhibition visitors in recent years, we must adjust our strategies from time to time. The Financial Secretary has announced in his Budget this year that the Government will allocate an additional \$45 million in total to HKTB for use in the coming three years. This new money will be used for the provision of more attractive and targeted services and concessions for organisers and participants of conventions and exhibitions of various scales and types. I am sure that HKTB will make good use of this additional funding to scale up its offers so as to increase Hong Kong's competitiveness in bidding for international MICE events.

Meanwhile, the Government adopted the recommendation of the Working Group on Convention and Exhibition Industries and Tourism under the Economic Development Commission, and commissioned a consultancy study early this year to assess the demand for convention and exhibition facilities in Hong Kong in the coming 15 years, taking into account the situation in Hong Kong and the global and regional developments of the convention and exhibition industries. The Government will consider appropriate measures to facilitate the future development of the industry.

Ladies and gentlemen, our MICE industry has gone a long way in the past 20 years. In the face of increasing competition from our neighbouring cities, we must work together to enhance our long-standing competitive edges and explore new elements to boost Hong Kong's advantages. On this, I will count on the continual support from HKECIA.

Finally, may I wish you all an enjoyable night and HKECIA continued success in the years to come.

Thank you.

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