

# YMCA HK College of Continuing Education Graduation Ceremony

24 July 2004 (Saturday)

## Speech by Ms Eva Cheng, Commissioner for Tourism

Ms Oxley, Mr Snelgrow, Ms Allison, Dr Yuk, Mrs [Sue] Slavin, Mr [James] Choi (the headmaster), Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to express my heartiest congratulations to all of you and to the YMCA Hong Kong College of Continuing Education. I am very glad to see that the College has been a nurturing ground for the development of future leaders in the tourism industry and other major business sectors. Over the years, the College has endeavoured to provide students with quality education programmes and explore further education and career options for them. The College has collaborated with the West Coast College of Training and Further Education in designing and running courses at different levels and has worked closely with the local industry to cater for the academic and career needs of students. Congratulations again on your good work.

Alice and Mr Allison began the ceremony with some scripture reading. I feel obliged to have a quote of my own. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says – there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. I think if there is a best time to enter the tourism industry, it is now. Let me give you three good reasons.

First, the opportunity lies in the number. In the first half of 2004, we have already welcomed over 10 million visitors and we foresee the 2004 figure to be record-breaking, exceeding 20 million for the first time. We expect to see over half of them coming from the Mainland, which continues to be our largest source market. The Mainland visitor profile is changing, with the introduction of Individual Visit Scheme in July last year. So far, over 2.5 million Mainlanders have visited Hong Kong under the Scheme and brought about some HK\$15 billion visitor spending. Our other source markets, including South Asia, Europe and US are recovering well.

So I urge you all to continue brushing up your language skills and get ready to receive different visitors from all over the world.

The second reason why you have chosen an excellent time to join the tourism industry is that Hong Kong will have a number of new, world-class attractions. This year, we have already launched two new tourism projects, "A Symphony of Lights" and the "Avenue of Stars". Other projects coming on stream in the next two years include the Hong Kong Disneyland, the Tung Chung Cable Car System and the Hong Kong Wetland Park, the largest man-made wetland park in Asia. In response to demand, the hotel industry will also be growing. Some 14,000 rooms will be added to our stock of 38,000 rooms in the next two years.

Thirdly, you are entering an industry that demands high quality service and professionalism. It is an extremely promising career path. We already have some of the best hotels in the world, premier airlines and world-class airport. What we need to do now is to enhance and ensure quality service in all aspects of tourism. This relies

very much on the effort made by our existing tourism practitioners and your devotion in serving our visitors. We hope every visitor will remember Hong Kong not only for our tourist attractions, but the warm hospitality of our front-line staff and our citizens. In the coming year, the Tourism Commission will launch a brand new hospitality campaign and programmes to enhance the service quality of the tourism and related industries. We look to all of you for your support.

Today, we witness more than 200 of you graduating from the College that has in the past year prepared you with the basic skill sets, the knowledge, some practical experience, and a sense of responsibility to take up jobs as a hotel receptionist, a travel agent, a marketing assistant, a secretary, or a programmer. Some others may choose to carry on with further studies. No matter which path you choose, let me leave you with one thought. You shall be joining the ranks of our key service industries. True service requires two important ingredients. One, we need to serve from the heart, with empathy, that is, you need to see things from the perspective of the people you serve. So always try to look at things from their angle. Believe me, your customer will know the difference. Second, you need to serve with passion. See value in the things you do; believe in the things you do; and most of all, have fun with the things you do.

I wish all of you a very promising future. Thank you.

**Tourism Commission**

**July 2004**