

Speech by Acting Commissioner for Tourism at opening ceremony of
Asia Fruit Logistica 2010 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Acting Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Vincent Fung, at the opening ceremony of the Asia Fruit Logistica 2010 today (September 8):

Mr (Gerald) Lamusse, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me enormous pleasure to welcome back the Asia Fruit Logistica to Hong Kong for the second time.

As the gastronomic centre of Asia, Hong Kong never fails to meet the expectations of gourmet-lovers with our multinational cuisines and excellent local delicacies. Alongside the growing quest for healthiness, fresh fruit and vegetables are rapidly gaining popularity in many parts of the world including Hong Kong. Our world-class logistics network guarantees that fresh produce from every corner of the globe can be sourced to Hong Kong in a most efficient manner. Since moving to Hong Kong in 2008, the Asia Fruit Logistica has been growing in terms of exhibitor numbers and significance in the industry. We are proud to be the home of this premium trade show in the global fruit and vegetable business.

With top-notch exhibition venues, professional support services and a business-friendly environment, Hong Kong is the ideal place for hosting conventions and exhibitions. We have a liberal visa regime, excellent flight connectivity and good English standards. We spare no effort in extending our visa-free-entry network. In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that we signed an agreement with Ukraine last Saturday whereby Ukrainian visitors can come to Hong Kong visa-free, starting in early November. Furthermore, our strategic location on Mainland China's southern tip and strong ties with the Mainland mean that we are a unique bridge between China and the world. All along, Hong Kong has been serving as the marketplace where Mainland buyers can meet overseas suppliers while overseas clients can source products from the Mainland.

The Government provides full support for the development of the MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions and Exhibitions) industry in Hong Kong. Our aim is to attract more large-scale MICE events from different sectors. To this end, we have set aside HK\$150 million for MICE promotion and established the Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) Office under the Hong Kong Tourism Board to

showcase Hong Kong as a premier MICE destination and provide one-stop support to event organisers.

In the first half of this year, we received 660,000 overnight MICE visitors, a significant increase of 30% over the same period last year. Around this time, in addition to the Asia Fruit Logistica, another two food-related shows, namely the Asian Seafood Exposition and Restaurant and Bar exhibition, are being held in town. All these are vivid testimony to our unrivalled edge as the MICE capital in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, if "variety" and "freshness" are the catchwords for today's event, they too stand for our tourism attractiveness. As Asia's world city, our Chinese heritage combined with Western influence has given rise to a unique blend of cultures. In addition to the many festivities and events held in Hong Kong each year, we are adding new attractions to our two major theme parks and constructing a new cruise terminal so as to bring an extraordinary experience to our visitors. In October this year, we will be staging the Wine and Dine Festival again to offer our visitors a taste of exquisite wine from all over the world at the scenic West Kowloon Promenade. I sincerely invite you to visit Hong Kong time and again to enjoy the vibrancy and diversity of our city.

May I once again welcome you all and wish the Asia Fruit Logistica another resounding success. Thank you.

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