

Speech by USCED at 21st Annual Dinner of Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association (English only)

Following is a speech by the Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, at the 21st Annual Dinner of the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association (HKECIA) this evening (June 17):

Chairman Daniel (Cheung), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great pleasure to attend the 21st Annual Dinner of the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association at the AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE).

Thanks to the steadfast efforts and professionalism of all members of HKECIA over the past two decades, you have made MICE one of the most important industries in Hong Kong. Your success has enhanced Hong Kong's position as an international convention, exhibition and tourism capital.

It was a fruitful year for the MICE sector in Hong Kong last year. Overnight MICE visitor arrivals amounted to 1.43 million, an increase of 22.8% over 2009. The number of visitors only tells part of the story as MICE visitors usually have greater spending power than general visitors. In 2010, the per capita spending of overnight MICE visitors increased by 22.3% to \$8,475. The MICE industry makes great contribution to our economy.

Attracting MICE events to Hong Kong, pro-actively supporting these events with customised solutions and enhancing the travel experience of MICE visitors will continue to be the focus of the Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) of the Hong Kong Tourism Board. For the meeting and incentive travels segments, the MEHK will strengthen its partnership with agents from the established markets of the Mainland, India, Japan and South Korea and also explore six new markets, which are the US, the UK, Australia, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. For the convention segment, the MEHK will continue to identify and work on potential organisations in six priority sectors of sports-leisure-culture. It will actively engage and assist the local chapters of the concerned associations to bid for events. For the exhibition segment, the MEHK will offer customised support services to better serve our existing exhibitions. MEHK will also attract new industry shows through promotional work in collaboration with its partners including HKECIA. We are

pleased to note that the scope of exhibitions in Hong Kong has been expanding.

On the hardware side, the Government will continue to promote co-operation between major venues to achieve better utilisation of the valuable convention and exhibition space in Hong Kong. In a spirit of co-operation, Hong Kong's two major venues have worked together to create better connectivity between the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and the AWE. Moreover, a new Exhibition Centre with priority for art related uses will be developed in the West Kowloon Cultural District. The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority is now studying the options for the Exhibition Centre and how it could create synergy with existing convention and exhibition facilities and with other arts and cultural facilities in the district. We are confident that this will boost and attract even more potential MICE organisers to stage their events in Hong Kong.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have put in great efforts to improve our infrastructure to facilitate the development of our MICE industry, we are aware of the competition from our neighbouring cities will continue to be keen. We will tirelessly enhance our long-standing competitive edges, adding new elements to boost the Hong Kong advantages. On this, I will count on the continual support from HKECIA.

Finally, I wish you all an enjoyable dinner. Thank you.

Ends/Friday, June 17, 2011

Issued at HKT 20:32