

Speech by Commissioner for Tourism at the Society of the Golden Keys of Hong Kong's 30th Anniversary Grand Dinner (English only)

Following is the speech by the Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Philip Yung, at the Society of the Golden Keys of Hong Kong's 30th Anniversary Grand Dinner today (September 13):

Fred (Lui), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great pleasure to join you to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Society of the Golden Keys of Hong Kong. I also wish to extend a very warm welcome to all the overseas guests present this evening.

First of all, let me congratulate all members of the Society. 30 years is a remarkable milestone. Established in 1982, the Society has been playing a pivotal role in ensuring professionalism and consistently high standard of service in the hotel industry. You have done a marvellous job in making our visitors feel at home during their stay in Hong Kong.

Indeed the job of a hotel concierge has become more challenging than ever with tourism playing such an important role in the Hong Kong economy and with the continued increase in the number of tourists coming to this city. In 1982, 2.6 million visitors (itself a respectable number) came to Hong Kong. 30 years on, the first seven months of 2012 saw total visitor arrivals reaching 26.7 million, up 15.2% over the same period of 2011. In fact, in 2011, our total arrivals got to an all time record of 42 million, about half of them being overnight visitors staying in various hotels and other accommodation.

So one key message I wish you to highlight to your hotel guests is that we are constantly broadening our tourism appeal to enhance the experience of our visitors. We have been investing heavily in our tourism infrastructure. I am glad to let you know that of our theme parks, the Ocean Park has undergone a major facelift and we are already working closely with its management on another ambitious plan of adding a new integrated theme zone, mainly an all-weather

waterpark, to the Ocean Park. For the ever popular Hong Kong Disneyland, two new themed areas were completed in the past year. The last themed area under its current expansion plan, the “Mystic Point”, is planned for opening early next year.

Another new key element of our tourism infrastructure is the cruise terminal being built in Kai Tak. The cruise terminal building and the first berth are expected to commence operation in mid-2013. Two months ago, the Central Government announced that Mainland tour groups taking cruise from Hong Kong to Taiwan would be allowed to travel on the same cruise beyond Taiwan to Japan or Korea before returning to the Mainland. This new measure will be conducive to encouraging more cruise deployment to Hong Kong and promoting the development of cruise industry in Hong Kong.

There have also been exciting developments in the hotel industry. I am sure you are all very well aware of that. We are pleased to see that more interesting hotels are coming into the market. A heritage boutique hotel converted from the Old Tai O Police Station was opened earlier this year. A new hotel with convention facilities in scenic Discovery Bay is expected to commence operation by the end of this year. The Ocean Park is now working on the re-tender exercise for its hotel project. This year and the next one we shall see 8 600 new rooms available to our visitors, bringing our total room stock to 73 000. Well this means that you, as the getting everything done persons for hotel guests, will be even busier.

Ladies and Gentleman, tourism is no doubt an important pillar of Hong Kong’s economy. Frontline hotel colleagues like you are certainly one of the first points of contact for our visitors when they come to Hong Kong. The impression you give them is vitally important. I must take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Society of the Golden Keys of Hong Kong for all you have done for our tourism industry. I look forward to continuing to work with you to make Hong Kong an even more appealing place for our visitors.

I wish you all a very enjoyable evening. Thank you.