

HKSAR's 15th Anniversary Celebrations cum The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners 28th Anniversary

21 September 2012

JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong

The honourable Chief Secretary Carrie Lam (Chief Secretary for Administration of HKSAR Government, Mrs Carrie LAM, GBS, JP), Deputy Director-General Xu Lin (Deputy Director-General, Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in HKSAR, Mr Xu LIN), dear guests, fellow hotel operators and friends,

Good evening and welcome to HKSAR's 15th Anniversary Celebrations cum The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners 28th Anniversary.

Over the years, Hong Kong has experienced volatile ups and downs on not a few occasions. Thanks to the unity and concerted effort of our fellow hotel operators, who have overcome challenges with wise strategies and grasped opportunity with astute market sensitivity, Hong Kong's hotel industry has continued to progress with new achievements and sound international reputation.

Over the 15 years since our return to China, the nation has provided strong backing for Hong Kong, which has created more opportunities for the hotel and tourism industries. Measures such as the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS), the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and, more recently, the "free-walk" scheme for funds have provided a booster to the Hong Kong's economy and further consolidated Hong Kong's international status.

The charisma of Hong Kong as a metropolitan city has not only attracted a continuous flow of Mainland tourists to Hong Kong, but also engaged business travelers from Europe, America and Southeast Asia. In the meantime, there has been a growing cooperation between Mainland China and Hong Kong in areas such as trade, finance, education, technology and tourism, forming a complementary and mutually beneficial partnership.

The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners was founded to facilitate communication between hotel operators and the government. With the primary aim of fulfilling the requirements of social and economic development, we have been committed to driving mutual support between the two in matters pertaining to macro-policies and statutory regulations. We have also tabled a number of recommendations to the government, such as those in relation to the expansion and improvement of convention and exhibition facilities, the construction of mega performance venues and world-class museums, as well as the development and improvement of tourist attractions. These facilities will enhance Hong Kong's appeal and competitiveness as a tourist destination and underpin Hong Kong's development into a tourism, trade, convention and exhibition centre.

As a major trend and an important pillar in the world economy, tourism is an important contributor of earnings to the real economy. It is essential that hotels, as a core segment in the operation of tourism, take care to nurture high-calibre personnel in order to maintain Hong Kong's world-class service standards, as well as its reputation as a metropolitan city. We sincerely hope that the government would allocate more resources to tertiary and vocational institutions, so that they could provide training of professionals for different business sectors to procure their sustainable development. In addition, we would like to, once more, call on the government to consider the setting up of a dedicated department in charge of tourism and hotel businesses, so as to further enhance this important business sector, which is a lifeline of Hong Kong's economy, so that it would enjoy more thriving development and attract more tourists.

Once again, I would like to thank our dear guests and friends in the business for attending this event. It is such a pleasure to see you all here. I must thank Chief Secretary Carrie Lam in particular for taking time out of her busy schedule to join us, showing concern and support for the development of the hotel industry. On behalf of the Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners, may I once again express sincere appreciation and gratitude.

I wish you all a delightful and enjoyable evening.