

25th Anniversary Gala Dinner in Zurich
(13 June 2022)

Welcome Remarks by DBL

Ambassador Wang (Shihting), Ms Winsome Chan, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my privilege and great pleasure to welcome you all to our reception to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. This is an important milestone for our city as we set to surge towards a brighter future with the unwavering support of the Central People's Government. Since the return of sovereignty to our Motherland on 1 July 1997, the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" has been the foundation of our governance, upholding our unique strengths and sustaining our success.

2. The 25th Anniversary's theme of "A New Era – Stability, Prosperity and Opportunity" not only represents Hong Kong's exemplary achievements over the past 25 years, but also underscores our eager anticipation for and confidence in a brighter future. Our Office is celebrating this special occasion by hosting and participating in a series of events ranging from exhibition, gala dinners, dragon boat races, street food festival to film festivals. This gala dinner is our first few large-scale gatherings in celebration of the 25th Anniversary. I feel honoured to share the joy with you in the beautiful city of Zurich in Switzerland.

3. Perhaps let me take the opportunity to give you a brief update about Hong Kong's economy which should be of interest to many of you. I am delighted to say that Hong Kong's economic outlook remains positive despite the pandemic. Our economy has recovered remarkably well in 2021 with an overall growth of 6.4%, while investment expenditure even rose by 10.1%. For 2022, notwithstanding the disruption caused by the Omicron wave in the past few months and worsened global economic prospects, we are still forecasting that Hong Kong's economy will stay resilient and achieve growth of 1 to 2% in real terms for the year as a whole. Meanwhile, business confidence in Hong Kong remains strong, as evident from the fact that Hong Kong remains at the top among various international rankings.

4. Hong Kong and Switzerland has long shared close economic ties underpinned by strong trade figures. Since we have our friends from the Hong Kong Trade Development Council here with us today, perhaps I will leave it to Winsome to update you more on the trading front. As Hong Kong continues to consolidate our role as an international financial and trading centre under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, we can foresee that there will only be more and more business exchange and cooperation opportunities between Hong Kong and Switzerland.

5. Talking about people-to-people exchange, I wish to highlight some good news, which some of you might already be aware of. Starting from this April, the hotel quarantine period for travellers entering Hong Kong has already been substantially shortened to seven days. And from last month onwards, non-Hong Kong residents who are fully vaccinated are able to enter Hong Kong again after more than two years. We very much look forward to welcoming you all in Hong Kong!

6. This brings me to the next important update about Hong Kong that one cannot miss. On 8 May, Mr John Lee was elected as the sixth-term Chief Executive, succeeding the incumbent Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam from 1 July. Under his able leadership and with the support from the Central Government, we are confident that Hong Kong will scale new heights by capitalising on Hong Kong's unique advantages under "One Country, Two Systems", and pursuing a sustainable development through strengthening our role as a gateway between the world and Mainland China.

7. I am glad that our friends from the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and InvestHK are here with us tonight, so please feel free to approach them to learn more about the business opportunities between Hong Kong and Switzerland.

8. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you once again for joining us tonight on this special occasion. It's really been a while since we last get together. To make tonight a little bit more memorable for you, we are delighted to present you with classical music performed by young talents from Hong Kong, after which delicious dinner will be served.

9. Please enjoy the evening!

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