

CNY Reception in Berlin

(13 February 2023)

Welcome Remarks by DBL

Dear Minister Zhang, Mr Beißert, Silas, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. It is a great pleasure to be celebrating the Chinese New Year together with you here in Berlin. It is my favourite occasion of the year, where we can reconnect with old friends and meet new faces while exchanging blessings for the new year.

2. This year, we are celebrating the Year of the Rabbit. The Rabbit symbolises vigilance and skilfulness, while being gentle and compassionate at the same time. Let us embrace these attributes in the year ahead, and rise to every challenge tactfully, while staying calm and composed.

3. As we entered into the Year of the Rabbit, I'm proud to say that Hong Kong is already embracing the liveliness of the Rabbit, as we open up ourselves once again after three full years of pandemic restrictions. Having lifted all travel restrictions, Hong Kong is now back to business with a fresh start.

4. In the Year of the Rabbit, while the external environment will no doubt continue to be quite challenging, the good news is that Mainland China is also resuming its economic activities and connection with the rest of the world. And what does it mean for Hong Kong? In brief, China's return to the world map will not only benefit Hong Kong's exports and tourism, but also drive up consumption and investment in the region. As Hong Kong regains its momentum and strengths as an international financial, trade and logistics centre, our economy is expected to see a visible rebound this year.

5. And if I may invite you to set eyes on a longer horizon, our Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, has outlined in his maiden Policy Address a strategic road map for Hong Kong's development into a more vibrant, liveable and sustainable city. Among other things, we believe that talents and enterprises are vital in fuelling diversified and vibrant economic growth. And that is why we have set up the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises (known as OASES in short) to attract high potential and representative companies from around the globe, as well as introduced the Top Talent Pass Scheme to widely entice talents to pursue their careers in Hong Kong. I wouldn't want to take up your time to elaborate on the details, but please do not hesitate to get in touch if you wish to learn more about these initiatives.

6. As the saying goes, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We have recently launched the "Hello Hong Kong" campaign, inviting tourists, business travellers and investors, from near and far, to come to Hong Kong. I would like to extend the same invitation to all of you – we welcome you to come to Hong Kong to experience in person the unique East-meets-West culture, indulge in our vibrant dining scene, and seize the unparalleled opportunities in Hong Kong as we converge the China and global advantages under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. As a start, we will be giving out 500 000 free air tickets, with many more offers and special events to come. So please stay tuned for the details!

7. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you once again for joining us tonight here to celebrate to Chinese New Year together. On this festive occasion, we are delighted to present you with a classical music performance by four talented young musicians from Hong Kong. I wish all of you a happy, prosperous and blessed Year of the Rabbit! Please enjoy!

– Ends –