

Celebrations for HKSAR 10th Anniversary rolled out

More than 450 celebration activities for the participation and enjoyment of everyone in Hong Kong will be organised by the Government and the community to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR.

Announcing the official launch of the 10th Anniversary celebrations at a press conference today (March 30), the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Lam, said a wide range of celebration activities would take place from April to December.

"We are impressed by the overwhelming response of community groups which have initiated a wide range of activities to celebrate HKSAR's 10th anniversary. This has created a celebration programme with a good mix of events in various major economic and social sectors and in the 18 districts for wider public engagement. We are confident that these activities will manifest the vibrancy and diversity of Hong Kong, the harmony in our society and our strength as Asia's World City," Mrs Lam said.

"We encourage every member of the community to take part in the activities to share the joy of this memorable occasion," she said.

Also speaking at the press conference, the Director of Celebrations Co-ordination Office, Mr Raymond Young, gave a brief introduction of the events which cover a wide range of activities including ceremonial and celebratory events, commissioning of infrastructure projects, major exhibitions and conferences, as well as various cultural, sports, community and district events.

An Events Calendar which sets out details of the celebration activities has been produced for wide distribution. Copies of the calendar can be obtained from the 18 District Offices of the Home Affairs Department. It can also be accessed from the 10th anniversary website (www.gov.hk/10). Updated information on the celebration events can also be obtained from the website.

Apart from local celebrations, overseas Economic and Trade Offices and offices of the HKSARG on the Mainland will also organise celebration activities and roving exhibitions in overseas and Mainland cities to showcase Hong Kong's achievements in the past decade and opportunities in future.

"I would like to thank all individuals, districts and community organisations, and business establishments which have given donations to or taken part in organising the celebration activities for their generous support and active involvement," Mr Young said.

At today's press conference, a special preview of the theme song for the 10th Anniversary was shown to raise the curtain of celebration activities. The theme song, entitled "Just Because You Are Here", was created by composer Peter Kam and lyricist

Chan Siu-kei and sung by local artists.

The song will be broadcast on television and in radio as well as in major shopping malls. People are welcome to download the song from the 10th anniversary website.

The joy and festival spirit of the 10th anniversary will be enhanced by the arrival of a pair of national treasures – the giant pandas. "We wish to express our deep gratitude again to the Central Government for sending us another pair of giant pandas and to the State Forestry Administration and the experts for their meticulous work in selecting the two young, healthy and vivacious giant pandas from the China Conservation and Research Centre for the Giant Panda in Wolong, Sichuan," Mrs Lam said. To show the love and enthusiasm of Hong Kong people for these young giant pandas due to arrive before May, a "Name the Giant Pandas" activity would be organised to seek suggestions on names for the giant pandas.

All Hong Kong residents are welcome to take part in the activity which will be held between April 2 and 11. The names should be meaningful and creative and be able to reflect the young, lovely and vivacious characteristics of the giant pandas.

Entry forms, with details of the naming activity, are available from the Public Enquiry Service Centres of all 18 District Offices, Ocean Park and major venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The form may also be downloaded from the websites of the Home Affairs Bureau (www.hab.gov.hk) and the 10th Anniversary website. Participants may also submit entries online.

To add to the festive atmosphere of the 10th Anniversary, special arrangements have been made to promote community participation in the anniversary celebrations.

Mrs Lam said that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department would offer free admission to its museums, indoor sports facilities and swimming pools on July 1 and 2.

Children born in 1997 will also receive special offers from theme parks in Hong Kong and gift vouchers sponsored by commercial enterprises and coordinated by the Home Affairs Department.

To ensure the celebration was a joyous event for the whole of Hong Kong, and to ensure that under-privileged people would have the opportunities to take part in the celebrations and share the joy, a socially inclusive programme – the "Celebrations for All" project – would be launched.

Co-ordinated by the department and implemented by district NGOs providing social services, the project aims to proactively and directly facilitate the under-privileged people to participate in various celebration events to share the joyous atmosphere, Mrs Lam said.

In addition, to commemorate the HKSAR 10th Anniversary, China Post and Hongkong Post would jointly issue commemorative stamps, which would be the first

Mainland-HKSAR joint issue of stamps. A range of souvenirs, some of which are designed by renowned local designers, will also be produced for distribution to the public, including a set of "10th Anniversary Figurines".

Each set of figurines comprises two "Panda" and two "10-year-old child" characters. All Hong Kong residents who have taken part in three celebration events on the Events Calendar will be eligible to take part in a lucky draw for the figurines.

"With the combined efforts of the Government, District Councils and community organisations, today's launch marks the satisfactory completion of our first stage of preparation for the celebrations. We believe that corporations will continue to enrich the programme with more innovation and initiatives to make the occasion a resounding success," Mrs Lam said.

Ends/Friday, March 30, 2007