

State Councillor officiates at Giant Pandas Gift Presentation Ceremony

State Councillor Mr Tang Jiaxuan officiated at the Giant Pandas Gift Presentation Ceremony at Ocean Park today (June 30), with Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Rafael Hui; and the Chairman of Ocean Park, Dr Allan Zemen.

Other officiating guests were the Deputy Director, Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Chen Zuoer; Minister of State Forestry Administration, Mr Jia Zhibang; and Governor of Sichuan Provincial People's Government, Mr Jiang Jufeng.

On behalf of the Hong Kong SAR Government and the people of Hong Kong, Mr Hui expressed his heartfelt thanks to the Central People's Government for giving a pair of young giant pandas to Hong Kong, in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the SAR.

"We are extremely grateful to the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council for its support and assistance, as well as the giant panda experts led by the State Forestry Administration for choosing Ying Ying and Le Le, a pair of lovely and vivacious giant pandas for Hong Kong," he said.

Mr Hui expressed his gratitude to the Sichuan Provincial People's Government and the Wolong Nature Reserve Administration, for their help in making all necessary arrangements for the safe arrival of the two young giant pandas.

He said that Ying Ying and Le Le had been adapting very well to their new environment since their arrival in Hong Kong on April 26. The cubs had become even lovelier under the care of the experts at Ocean Park and those from Wolong who came to Hong Kong to help take care of the pair.

"I believe Ying Ying and Le Le will bring about what their names suggest, and that is, prosperity, joy and a thriving economy to the Hong Kong people."

Mr Tang and other officiating guests went to the Giant Panda Habitat after the ceremony to visit the young pair and the other giant pandas An An and Jia Jia.

At today's ceremony, two members of the judging panel of the naming activity - the Director of Wolong Nature Reserve Administration, Mr Zhang Hemin; and Chairman of the Tsuen Wan District Council, Mr Chau How-chen - as well as Foundation Director of Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong, Ms Suzanne Gendron, presented prizes to the winners of the "Name the Giant Pandas" activity.

The activity, which was organised by the Home Affairs Bureau, received an overwhelming response. The winning pair, "Ying Ying" and "Le Le", was chosen from among 13,000 entries. As well as Mr Zhang and Mr Chau, the judging panel also comprised Dr Louis Cha; Chairlady of the Ocean Park Conservation Fund, Hong Kong, Ms Judy Chen; and the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Lam.

The State Forestry Administration announced on January 10 that the Central People's Government would give another pair of giant pandas to Hong Kong, in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the SAR. The Hong Kong SAR Government immediately began preparatory work for their arrival.

Mr Hui led a delegation to visit the China Conservation and Research Centre for the Giant Panda at Wolong National Nature Reserve in Sichuan Province in early March, where the new giant pandas were to come from.

The State Forestry Administration then announced on March 20 that a pair of young, healthy and fertile giant pandas had been selected for Hong Kong.

The health of the Ying Ying and Le Le is excellent after a two-month quarantine and adaptation period. People will be able to visit the two pairs of national treasures, Ying Ying, Le Le, An An and Jia Jia at Ocean Park from tomorrow (July 1).

Ends/Saturday, June 30, 2007