

SHA's speech at HAB's spring reception

Following is the speech (English translation) by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, at the spring reception of the Home Affairs Bureau today (February 13):

Mr Tsang, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Spring Reception of the Home Affairs Bureau. On behalf of my colleagues, may I wish you all health, happiness and prosperity in the year Wuzi.

Over the past year, you not only made achievements in your own fields, but also contributed greatly to community services, charity and the promotion of social harmony. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you.

Today is the seventh day of the year according to the Chinese lunar calendar and to the Chinese it is the birthday of mankind. Human beings are considered the wisest of all beings because we are endowed with a spiritual quality and the power to love and care for each other. Just before the Chinese New Year, many provinces on the Mainland were hard hit by severe snowstorms rarely seen in history. Transportation and electricity supply were disrupted. Economic activities and the livelihood of the people were seriously affected. The Hong Kong SAR Government responded quickly and secured funding from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council to provide immediate support to the stricken areas. Voluntary organisations, community groups and many sectors also took the initiative to raise donations for those affected. I understand that leaders of these provinces have expressed to our Chief Executive their deepest gratitude to the people of Hong Kong. They also remarked that our timely and warm-hearted support have assured their confidence in tiding over difficulties. We are all glad to know that the calamities caused by the snowstorms have eased and the economy in the affected areas is returning to normal.

During the Chinese New Year, Hong Kong is in festive spirit. Last year, we enjoyed continuous economic growth. In the Year of the Rat, Hong Kong is poised to ride on the wave of our economic success. Indeed, we have challenges ahead, yet I believe there are more opportunities to be captured. In unity and with perseverance, Hong Kong people will face up to external competition and will continue to enjoy the

fruits of economic success.

The year 2008 is the Olympic Year. For the first time, the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held in China. I am sure every Chinese is excited and proud about it. Hong Kong, in particular, is highly privileged to be an Olympic co-host city to stage the Equestrian Events. We will do our best to make the Equestrian Events a phenomenal success.

Spring is in the air. I hope the whole community will be more united and harmonious and everyone will live in contentment and happiness.

Thank you.

Ends/Wednesday, February 13, 2008