

**Welcome Remarks by Ivan K B Lee, Director, HKETO Berlin
At Opening Reception at the Hong Kong Film Festival in Dusseldorf
3 August 2012**

Mr Stähly, Mr Desinger, Consul Zang, Wing, ladies and gentlemen,

1 Guten Abend. A very warm welcome to our reception and opening night of the Hong Kong Film Festival on this mid-summer day. It is my first time here in Dusseldorf and I was very much impressed by the city's beauty, especially the scenic view of the Rhine River, which is just a few hundred metres away from us.

2 For those of you who are not exactly familiar with the work of my office, perhaps I should explain very briefly who we are. The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Berlin was set up in 2009 and is the official representation of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) overseeing the bilateral relations in economic and trade matters between the HKSAR and Germany under the working principle of "One Country, Two Systems". As part of the HKSAR Government, my office works closely with the well-established specialised bodies like the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourism Board based in Frankfurt to promote Hong Kong's interests.

3 Tonight, we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR through the creative medium of film. During the past 15 years, Hong Kong people have been administering Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy, consolidating our position as an international financial, trade and logistics centre. The flourishing development of our creative industries is a testimony to the civil liberties and freedom of expression that Hong Kong enjoys.

4 Over the years, Hong Kong films have gained considerable worldwide

acclaim. You may have seen our martial arts or action movies made by Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Jet Li and Donnie Yen. More recently, our film industry has diversified and broken new grounds. To cite two examples, the heart-warming *Echoes of Rainbow* was honoured with the Crystal Bear at the Berlinale in 2010; and Wong Kar Wai's romantic *In the Mood for Love* won the Best Foreign Film award at the Deutscher Filmpreis 2001.

5 In recent years, Hong Kong's film industry has broadened its horizons through closer collaboration with our counterparts in Mainland China. By virtue of the fact that we are a separate customs territory, we have our own free trade agreement with Mainland China. This agreement, the CEPA, has vastly expanded our access to Mainland China's movie market. Since CEPA was launched in 2003, the number of Hong Kong-Mainland co-productions has grown from about 10 titles a year to the current number of around 30. They have also enjoyed tremendous box office success.

6 I encourage German film companies, indeed those of you in the full range of creative industries, to use Hong Kong as the gateway to tap the growing business opportunities in China. Through Hong Kong, you can take advantage of CEPA, as well as our transparent, friendly business environment and strong intellectual property protection, to expand into the growing China market.

7 To showcase our latest achievements, we are presenting a line up of ten contemporary Hong Kong films in the first ever Hong Kong Film Festival here in Dusseldorf. These movies range from multi-million dollar blockbusters such as *The Great Magician* to independent productions such as *Big Blue Lake*. Through these films, you could also take a visual journey through the different epochs of Chinese culture - from ancient to modern times.

8 For tonight, we are very proud to present the award-winning *A Simple Life*.

Directed by our acclaimed director Ann Hui, the film is a real-life story about the bittersweet bonding between two human beings much divided by age and social background. The film has won many international awards including the Best Actress award at last year's Venice International Film Festival.

9 Ladies and Gentlemen, Germany and Hong Kong enjoy excellent bilateral relations and our office look forward to further strengthening them. The celebration tonight is not only for our 15th anniversary, but also for the strong German Hong Kong bilateral ties. I look forward to having your continual support to bring German Hong Kong relations to new heights. Thank you.

Ends.