

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

**Consul-General Yang, Dr Oehring, Mr Prekop, Mr Aust, Wing, Mr Becker,
ladies and gentlemen,**

1 Guten Abend. It's good to be back in Hamburg. As a representative of Hong Kong - the **Gateway to China** - it is my great pleasure to welcome you in the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg - Germany's "**Tor zur Welt**".

2 Being "gates", both cities share the spirit of open mindedness towards economic and cultural exchanges. Being harbour cities, both cities play the role of important logistics and maritime centres for our hinterland. Sharing a similar business sense, both cities have much potential to build on the strong bilateral relation, not least in the logistic sector. It is therefore a great honour for my office, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, to bring the Hong Kong Film Festival to Hamburg tonight and take part in the festivities of the fourth biennial China Time Hamburg. Since 2006, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg has leveraged on the China Time festival to demonstrate its expertise on China. I would like to applaud the strenuous efforts of the Hamburg government in bringing our people closer together through this festival. I am also very much looking forward to the Hamburg Summit, China Meets Europe, to be organised by the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce in November, which will provide an excellent platform for us to share issues of mutual interests such as the internationalisation of the RMB and Hong Kong's pivotal role in the process.

3 But tonight, we will be first celebrating the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 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 the 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 companies, not least those of you in the 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 eleven contemporary Hong Kong films in the first ever Hong Kong Film Festival here in Hamburg. 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 Continuing our 15th anniversary celebration, my office will stage a joint performance of the Hong Kong Children's Choir and the Hamburg Girl's Choir at the National Youth Music School Hamburg in the final concert of their European Tour on 26th August. Like me, I am certain that you would not wish to miss the opportunity to listen to their angelic voices.

10 Ladies and Gentlemen, Germany, in particular Hamburg, and Hong Kong enjoy excellent bilateral relations. I look forward to having your continual support to bring these relations to new heights.

11 Last but not least, I would like to thank Mr Aust for providing this excellent cinema for our event and the continual support of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council which has always been our best partner in promoting Hong Kong. Thank you.

Ends.