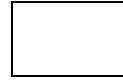


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**Speech by the Hon Mrs Selina Chow Liang Shuk-Yee,
GBS, JP
Motion Debate on Asia's World City, 11 June 2003**



Selina Chow:

Madam President, the Chief Executive and the Special Administrative Region Government have rightly positioned Hong Kong as "Asia's World City". For us, this is not our goal. Whether Hong Kong can claim itself to be "Asia's World City" is actually dependent on how people look at us and how we look at ourselves. Instead of singing our own praises, we might as well take a look at how the rest of the world looks at us.

To start with, from the angle of tourism, for three years in a row, including the latest statistics published on 10 June this year, our airport was chosen by "Sky Track's Research" in the United Kingdom as the world's top airport. With its passenger throughput reaching 30 million per annum, the Hong Kong International Airport was rated number one in terms of degree of satisfaction in a survey of 46 major airports in the world. Very often, Hong Kong hotels appear in the world's top 10 hotels list too. In June 2002, Cathay Pacific was chosen by the 14th "TGG" tourism award as the best airline of the year and the best airline in Northeast Asia.

From another perspective, in what manner does the international community look at Hong Kong as a business city? It was estimated in a survey in mid-2002 that there were 3237 overseas organizations in Hong Kong. The number of regional offices set up in the territory by these organizations was also the highest in 11 years. At the same time, Hong Kong is among the territories with the most representative offices of international banks in the world. Of the 100 largest international banks, 73 have chosen to set up their representative offices here, bringing the total number to 94. In November 2002, in a report published by the United States Heritage Foundation on index of economic freedom, Hong Kong was named the world's freest economy for the ninth year in a row. In September 2002, the Economist Intelligence Unit, in one of its issues of Global Outlook in Country Forecast, compared the business environment of 60 countries and territories, and Hong Kong was ranked second in Asia. In September 2002, the Business Traveller - Asia Pacific (having interviewed its readers) selected Hong Kong as the world's second most popular city for operating business.

When it comes to anti-graft operation, the "Transparency International", an anti-graft watchdog, pointed out in its global corruption survey

published in Berlin that Hong Kong ranked 14th on the global chart in terms of clean government, and came second in Asia.

Now let us look at Hong Kong from another angle. Up to 209 conventions were held in the territory in 2002, with the number of attendance totalling 33199. International exhibition activities were attended by nearly 350000 people, and enterprise activities attracted up to 111000 people. In September 2002, the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre was chosen by readers of the Meetings and Incentive Travel, an internationally-acclaimed tourism publication, as the world's best convention centre. In a survey sponsored by Singapore's CEI Asia Pacific on exhibition venues in the Asia-Pacific Region, Hong Kong was rated the best exhibition centre as well as the best exhibition city in the region.

Why do I find it necessary to spend so much time providing Honourable Members with so many data instead of delivering my speech? This is because I wish to demonstrate to Honourable Members that, in the eyes of foreigners, Hong Kong has so many favourable conditions that support its claim to be "Asia's World City". We are not singing our own praises. It is the people from other parts of the world who give us this status.

In an interview by a foreign journalist this morning, I was confronted with the question that we can see a number of cities in China are constantly making progress and thriving. This is particularly so for Shanghai (we will naturally think of this city when we talk about matters concerning this) because there has been huge room for favourable development in Shanghai over recent years. When I was asked whether I feared that Hong Kong would be outshone by Shanghai, I replied that Shanghai, China's number one city, was totally different from Hong Kong, Asia's World City, in terms of status.

Why is it possible for Hong Kong to maintain its status? Besides its geographical strengths, what matters most is its software. I am talking about software, not hardware. Hardware refers to the infrastructure of a city. It depends very much on whether the infrastructure is built perfectly. Software is, in contrast, constituted by the people. This explains why I, when confronted by many with the question concerning Hong Kong's future, would say, as in the past, it is the people that matters. The success enjoyed by Hong Kong today is entirely attributable to Hong Kong people for their quality, maturity, tolerance and spirit of striving to make constant self-improvement. We must rely entirely on human resources if Hong Kong is to maintain its present status. The people of Hong Kong are not only required to determine the standards and levels of our culture, language, education, and so on, they are also responsible for attaining the goal they have set for themselves.

Thank you, Madam President.

