

**Information Paper for
LegCo Panel on Commerce and Industry**

**Reports on the Work of the Overseas
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices**

This paper informs Members of the work of the eleven overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETO) since our last report in June 2008. The work reports of individual ETOs are set out in the following Appendices -

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Report on the Work of the Geneva ETO

The main function of the Geneva ETO is to represent Hong Kong, China (HKC) as a Member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It also represents HKC as a Member in the International Textiles and Clothing Bureau (ITCB)¹ and the Advisory Centre on WTO Law (ACWL)², and as an observer to the Trade Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris.

Commercial Relations

2. In the WTO, the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations (also known as the “Doha Development Agenda” or DDA) entered an intensive phase in late 2007 and the first half of 2008. The target was to reach an early agreement on the key aspects (or “modalities” in WTO parlance) of the negotiations on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) so as to enable the DDA to be concluded by the end of 2008. The Geneva ETO worked closely with other WTO Members in narrowing down differences on various issues, particularly on NAMA.

3. In late July 2008, following successive revisions to the draft texts by the Agriculture and NAMA Chairs, which helped provide a basis for decision-making at the political level, the Director-General of the WTO (DG/WTO) invited Ministers from some 40 economies, including HKC, to attend an informal ministerial meeting to finalise the modalities on agriculture and NAMA. The Geneva ETO provided support to the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) at the meeting. Together with a number of other like-minded Members, we tried very hard to promote a middle-ground solution for tariff reductions in industrial goods. The proposal was constructive and led to convergence on a number of major issues among the majority of participating Members. We also closely monitored developments in the agriculture negotiations and repeatedly urged Members to show flexibility. In services, we supported SCED’s participation in a Signalling Conference held during the ministerial meeting and exchanged indications with Members on possible market access commitments to be made in the DDA. We also contributed to the drafting of the Chair’s report on the elements required for concluding the services negotiations, and participated actively in the negotiations on developing possible disciplines on domestic regulations.

4. Unfortunately, although consensus was achieved on many issues, major differences remained among some key Members, particularly on agriculture. Without agreement on all issues, full modalities could not be achieved. Despite the setback at the ministerial meeting, the Geneva ETO as well as many other Members remained committed to the DDA and tried to move the negotiations forward over the ensuing months. In agriculture and NAMA, the progress made so far was captured in the latest draft texts and we continued to work on the remaining issues. In the anti-dumping negotiations, we repeatedly raised our systemic concern over the previous negotiating text, which in our view had tilted towards the users of anti-dumping measures. Such concern was echoed by many Members and eventually the Rules Chair issued a revised text in December 2008, which formed the basis for further

¹ The ITCB is an international governmental organisation based in Geneva, currently comprising 19 developing, exporting members of textiles and clothing products.

² The ACWL is an international governmental organisation based in Geneva providing legal assistance and legal training concerning WTO law to its developing and least-developed country members.

discussion. In trade facilitation, we worked with some other Members to help consolidate various proposals in preparation for an eventual trade facilitation agreement. In dispute settlement, we monitored WTO dispute settlement cases closely and participated as third parties in the disputes concerning anti-dumping measures and tariff treatment of information technology products.

5. Apart from the DDA, the Geneva ETO also participated in other work of the WTO. Since the start of the global economic crisis in late 2008, trade financing and anti-protectionism have taken the centre stage in the WTO besides the DDA. On the former, Permanent Representative, Geneva (PRG), in his personal capacity, chaired the WTO Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance and attended the meetings of the Expert Group on trade finance convened by the DG/WTO. At meetings of the Working Group, the Geneva ETO shared HKC's experience in providing assistance to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in securing loans in the face of tightening trade credit, and in obtaining greater export credit insurance cover for their exports when credit risks in overseas markets are generally rising. As for the work on anti-protectionism, the Geneva ETO supported the enhancement of the existing WTO surveillance system to monitor trade-distorting measures taken by Members. We also submitted to the WTO details of our trade facilitating assistance to SMEs. Further, the Geneva ETO is playing a co-ordinating role among a group of Members in exploring other specific initiatives against protectionism amidst the current economic downturn.

6. In addition to the above, the Geneva ETO continued to participate in the work of regular WTO committees and bodies. In particular, we took part in the regular trade policy reviews of many other Members. Our participation, as well as our comments in the meetings, were appreciated by other Members.

7. Outside the WTO, the Geneva ETO supported SCED and the Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in their attendance respectively at the Trade Session of the annual Ministerial Council Meeting of the OECD held in Paris in June 2008 and the informal ministerial meeting held in the margins of the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009. At these meetings, we discussed with other participants the latest economic developments and the way forward for the WTO negotiations. In addition, the Geneva ETO participated in the work of the Trade Committee of the OECD throughout the past year. We continued to work closely in the ITCB with other developing countries exporting textiles and clothing products to defend our export interests against persistent protectionist pressures. PRG, who led a task force to review the role and functions of the ITCB in 2008, is steering the ITCB to implement the initiatives for the textiles and clothing industry as Chair of the ITCB Council. We also participated actively in the work of the ACWL.

Looking Ahead

8. In the coming year, the Geneva ETO will continue to advance and defend the commercial interests of HKC, and to support the multilateral trading system. In particular, we will contribute to the fight against protectionism and seek to advance the DDA in the WTO. We will also continue to participate actively in the work of OECD, ITCB and ACWL.

Report on the Work of the Washington ETO

The main functions of the Washington ETO are to monitor political and economic developments of the United States (US) and to represent Hong Kong's interests in the US capital. The Washington ETO keeps a close watch on legislative proposals, executive actions and general sentiments in the US capital that may affect the interests of Hong Kong and promotes Hong Kong's image as an international city with a vibrant and free economy, and a diverse and law-abiding community under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

US Political Landscape

2. Mr. Barack Obama's victory in the US Presidential election in November 2008 brings the curtain down on eight years of Republican control of the White House. At the same time, the Democratic Party gained significant number of seats in both the Senate and the House of Representatives in the Congressional elections, thus enabling the Party to gain control of both the legislative and executive arms for the first time since 1995.

3. The 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections were held against the backdrop of the most serious economic downturn faced by the US since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The onset of the sub-prime housing mortgage crises had triggered a credit crunch in the US financial markets, which culminated in the collapse of a number of major financial institutions and the need by the US Government to roll out a massive rescue package to bail out other institutions in September 2008. The rescue plan was however unable to prevent the US economy from sliding into an economic recession. Economic recovery has now risen to the top of the political agenda in the US.

Commercial Relations

4. The Washington ETO helps foster HK-US commercial relations through engaging federal agencies, Congressional offices and other opinion-formers to discuss matters of common concern, facilitating bilateral trade consultations, and monitoring developments that would affect Hong Kong's trade and economic interests.

5. The Washington ETO continued to keep a close eye on and report significant developments in the US which might potentially affect trade between the US and its key trading partners including Hong Kong. These issues included proposed legislations to enhance enforcement of US trade laws and US trade agreements with its trading partners; major anti-dumping and countervailing cases against China; negotiations on free trade agreements involving the US; food and product safety issues; tax enforcement bills; climate change bills; key developments in the US market and the US economy; as well as major trade disputes of the US. With respect to negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda, the Washington ETO closely monitored the stance of different stakeholders and liaised with the US Administration and the business community with a view to gaining a better understanding of the US's position and explaining Hong Kong's stance.

6. Over the past year, Hong Kong continued to assist the US in the latter's pilot scheme in scanning importing cargoes to the US. The Washington ETO maintained close contacts with key interlocutors in the US Administration, Congress and think-tanks to share with them practical experiences we attained from the pilot so as to help them formulate future policy directions. The Washington ETO continued to update the US on Hong Kong's counter-terrorism efforts and to promote Hong Kong's contribution to global security while facilitating legitimate trade.

Public Relations

7. The Washington ETO engaged its interlocutors on a regular basis to update them on the political and economic situation in Hong Kong. In particular, interlocutors were assured that Hong Kong continued to enjoy a high degree of autonomy under the “One Country, Two Systems” principle. The Commissioner, USA also made trips to different states and cities to call on state and municipal officials, corporate America, academia, think-tanks; to conduct talks at chambers of commerce and universities; and to attend interviews with the media to explain Hong Kong’s latest developments and to present to them the opportunities Hong Kong offered for US business community and tourists.

8. During the reporting period, the Washington ETO organised a number of events to raise the profile of Hong Kong. In July 2008, the Washington ETO, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution’s Freer Gallery of Art, presented the 13th Annual Made in Hong Kong Film Festival, and hosted a reception-cum-premiere for the Film Festival. In February 2009, the ETO held its annual Spring Reception, which attracted over 800 guests from the Administration, Congress, think-tanks, and diplomatic circle. In addition, receptions were held for Congressional staffers and various organisations (e.g. the World Affairs Council, the Washington Governmental Professional Group, and the Congressional Legislative Staffers Association) to convey the Hong Kong messages to the professional and international community in Washington, DC.

9. In November 2008, the Financial Secretary (FS) and the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (CE, HKMA), as members of the Chinese delegation led by President Hu Jintao, attended the G20 Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy held in Washington, DC. The Washington ETO hosted a press briefing and a press conference by FS and CE, HKMA for the media during their stay in Washington, DC. In April 2009, the Secretary for the Environment visited Washington, DC to meet with senior representatives from the US Administration, Congress, and business leaders to share experience on environmental protection; and to give speeches and conduct media interviews on Hong Kong’s efforts made on and future plans for environmental improvement.

Looking Ahead

10. Amidst growing concerns about job security and worsening economic conditions, there are increasing signs that interest groups are trying to fuel protectionist sentiments in the US with a view to stepping up pressure on the US Administration and Congress. Given its role as a major contributor to the US’s huge trade deficit, China will be one of the most prominent targets, and will likely bear the full brunt, of any protectionist measures taken by the US. Notwithstanding Hong Kong’s healthy economic and trade relations with the US, the Washington ETO will maintain vigilance to guard against any uncertainties in US-China political and trade relations affecting Hong Kong. We will also closely monitor any new policy initiatives by the Obama Administration/Congress which may impact upon Hong Kong. With the emergence of H1N1 Influenza A, the Washington ETO would keep in close contact with relevant agencies to convey to them our vigilance and concrete measures in containing the infection.

Report on the Work of the New York ETO

The New York ETO promotes economic and trade relations between Hong Kong and the 31 states in the East Coast region of the United States (US) through building partnership with major think-tanks and business/professional bodies. Moreover, the New York ETO maintains its outreach to its interlocutors through e-newsletters and various public relations efforts.

2. New York and Chicago are among the cities with the largest number of confirmed H1N1 cases in the US. Daily reports are compiled to keep Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government abreast of the developments and the plans and actions of US health and government authorities. Public reactions reported in the media and intelligence gathered from community and government sources are also covered.

Commercial Relations

3. The New York ETO organised a series of business events and speaking engagements to promote the rule of law in Hong Kong, as well as our strengths as a major financial and trading centre and the gateway to Mainland China and the rest of Asia.

4. Since June 2008, the New York ETO assisted six official/trade delegations to Hong Kong. These include political leaders, state officials, businessmen and prominent academics. It also arranged visit programmes for six individual visitors from think-tanks, academics and government agencies, including two sponsored visitors.

5. In November 2008, the Secretary for Home Affairs conducted a two-day visit in New York City to officiate at the launch of the “New York celebrates Hong Kong 2008” Festival. He also visited various community and art institutions to exchange views and experiences with the interlocutors. In the same month, the Secretary for Development (SDEV) visited New York City to officiate at the “Creative Hong Kong in New York” Forum in Asia Society and was the keynote speaker at the Conference on “Vertical Cities: HK/NY”. Both events were organised under the auspices of the “New York celebrates Hong Kong 2008” Festival. SDEV also met with major authorities in planning and preservation in New York City and visited a number of major landmarks in the City. In May 2009, the Secretary for the Environment met with interlocutors, including senior officials at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs of the State of Massachusetts (MA) and City of Boston, professors at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), to discuss with them Hong Kong’s initiatives in promoting green economy. He also visited several green building projects in MA.

6. During the reporting period, the Commissioner for Economic and Trade Affairs, USA (C,USA) and the Director of New York ETO (D(NY)), visited eight states, namely Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island to call on Governors and meet with opinion leaders in the academic, business and political communities to foster and strengthen economic and trade ties.

Public Relations

7. The New York ETO organised two month-long Hong Kong festivals during the period under review, namely, the “New York Celebrates Hong Kong” festival in October 2008 and the “Hong Kong comes to Chicago 2009” festival in May 2009. Both festivals showcased Hong Kong’s economic vitality and cultural diversity through a host of programmes of art, films, exhibitions, concerts and educational symposiums. The New York ETO partnered with major organisations and government agencies in organising the programmes. They included the Asia Society in New York, the New York Skyscraper Museum, Parson’s New School of Art, Pace University, the Chicago City Government, the Chicago Cultural Center, the Chicago Commission of Human Relations. The collaboration with NBC created a high visibility for the New York festival with the screening of a short promotional film on Hong Kong on the TV monitors of all New York taxi cabs and on NBC’s Times Square Jumbo Tron. Hong Kong film-makers and Hong Kong art and cultural performances troupes were invited to participate in the two festivals.

8. The New York ETO continued its outreach efforts through various public relations activities across the 31 states in the East Coast region. It hosted spring receptions in New York, Boston, Chicago and Atlanta in February 2009 for its academic, business and media contacts. The New York ETO continued to be the major sponsor of the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festivals in Boston in June 2008, New York in August 2008, Atlanta in September 2008, and Miami in May 2009. Moreover, the New York ETO provides regular update on Hong Kong through its electronic newsletter to more than 4,000 contacts of the office.

Investment Promotion

9. The Investment Promotion Unit (IPU) in New York pursued an intensive investment promotion programme targeted at those sectors on the East Coast and Midwest with high outward investment potential. From May 2008 to April 2009, the IPU met with 290 companies and assisted 20 companies to establish business operations in Hong Kong. This was a relatively strong performance in view of the onset of the US recession which sharply curtailed business outlays for new and existing expansion projects. Weakness in the financial services sector was offset by strong activity in business and professional services, information technology and the consumer retail sector. The IPU also took advantage of visits by the senior officials of Invest Hong Kong to organise promotional events and focused on investment recruitment through high-profile networking meetings with key executives of selected companies.

Looking Ahead

10. The New York ETO will maintain its drive to promote Hong Kong’s strengths. To this end, discussion forums and publicity events will be organised. C,USA and D(NY) will continue to visit the East Coast states.

Report on the Work of the San Francisco ETO

The San Francisco ETO is responsible for promoting the economic and trade interests of Hong Kong, and strengthening economic ties and network between Hong Kong and the 19 states west of the Mississippi River in the United States (US).

Commercial Relations

2. During the reporting period, the San Francisco ETO continued to reach out to the business community, political and government leaders, academic institutions, think tanks and media in US west to promote Hong Kong as an international financial, trading, logistics, convention and exhibition and tourism hub, as well as the two-way platform for overseas corporations to access the Mainland market and for Chinese companies to go global.

3. In November 2008, the San Francisco ETO received the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) in Los Angeles (LA), California. SCED addressed a business luncheon which attracted over 200 guests, emphasising Hong Kong as an ideal city for doing business and the best gateway to Mainland China. She also visited The Walt Disney Company and met with its senior executives; and hosted a dinner for members of the Committee of 100. SCED was accompanied by the Commissioner for Tourism in the visit to LA.

4. A gala dinner was hosted by the San Francisco ETO in honour of the Financial Secretary (FS) for some 200 business leaders and local dignitaries in April 2009 in San Francisco (SF), California. At a business luncheon in Napa Valley, California, FS promoted Hong Kong as a wine storage and trading hub to over 150 winery/vineyard owners. He announced that Hong Kong would sign a MOU on Cooperation in Wine-related Business with the US. FS also attended breakfast roundtables hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank in SF and the LA Town Hall to exchange views with the financial circles. While in LA, FS spoke at a business luncheon attended by over 200 business executives and senior officials to showcase Hong Kong as an international financial centre and trading hub. FS concluded the visit to California with a meeting with Bob Iger, President and CEO of The Walt Disney Company on Hong Kong Disneyland.

5. In May 2009, the San Francisco ETO arranged for the Commissioner for Tourism to visit Santa Monica and LA, California; and the Government Chief Information Officer and delegation to visit San Diego, California.

6. Apart from receiving senior government officials, the San Francisco ETO also organised a media session for the Hong Kong delegation which took part in the 42nd International Children's Games held in SF in July 2008; and lined up meetings and visits for the Hong Kong Harbourfront Enhancement Committee delegation in SF in April 2009.

7. The San Francisco ETO continued to invite US influentials to visit Hong Kong so that they may see firsthand our latest developments. These included, in 2008, the visits of Brian Krolicki, Lt. Governor of Nevada in June; Michael Klowden, President & CEO of Milken Institute in September; C.L. Butch Otter, Governor of Idaho in October; Jack Wheeler, Board Chair of Colorado BioScience Association of Advance Colorado Center in October; Scott Waugh, Executive Vice Chancellor of UCLA in November; and Marco Lopez, Chief of Staff

to Secretary for US Homeland Security Janet Napolitano in December. Prominent visitors to Hong Kong in 2009 included Professor Henry Rowen, Senior Fellow of Hoover Institution of Stanford University in January; Dr. Jon Goodman, President of Town Hall Los Angeles in March, and Dr. John Goodman, President & CEO of National Center for Policy Analysis in March.

8. As part of our ongoing efforts to spread the Hong Kong message, the Director of San Francisco ETO (D(SF)) visited key cities in US west to speak to government officials, think-tanks, business communities, academia and media. The cities included Sacramento, Silicon Valley, Napa Valley and LA, California; Reno, Carson City and Las Vegas, Nevada; Boise, Idaho; Salt Lake City, Utah; as well as Seattle and Olympia, Washington. D(SF) also conducted talks in renowned universities such as UC Berkeley and Stanford University to encourage students to pursue careers and further studies in Hong Kong.

Public Relations

9. To promote Hong Kong as the host for the Olympic Equestrian Events, the San Francisco ETO partnered with NBC (US official broadcaster of the Beijing Olympics) on a national publicity campaign. A 30-minute TV program was aired in SF Bay Area, New York and Washington DC, and received excellent rating. The publicity campaign also included three 30-second vignettes and an online campaign on NBC's website, and was launched by the Chief Executive (CE) in June 2008 at the "HK – The Perfect Choice!" event at the historic Ferry Building in SF. Over 250 senior officials and dignitaries including Mayor Gavin Newsom of SF and George Shultz, former US Secretary of State joined the CE. Other promotions included screening of the 30-minute program and the setting up of a Hong Kong booth at the Beijing Olympic Viewing Celebration in San Jose, Northern California; the manning of a Hong Kong booth at the 2008 Dressage Festival of Champions Olympic Selection Trials in San Juan Capistrano, Southern California; and organising a poster design competition in collaboration with the San Francisco Chronicle in SF.

10. In January 2009, CE officiated at the "HK – A City where East meets West" gala reception cum mini-concert in the LA Music Centre to promote Hong Kong's unique vibrant culture. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa of LA, together with 250 business leaders, senior officials and consuls general attended the event. In February 2009, the San Francisco ETO hosted a Spring Reception at the Asian Art Museum in SF for 350 distinguished guests.

Investment Promotion

11. During the reporting period, the Investment Promotion Unit in SF visited 226 companies and arranged for the executives of 38 companies to visit Hong Kong. The Unit also organised a speaking forum for Director-General of Investment Promotion (DGIP) in San Diego, California in September 2008 and another speaking forum for Acting DGIP in Milpitas, California in February 2009.

Looking Ahead

12. The San Francisco ETO will receive SCED in SF and Silicon Valley, California; and Seattle, Washington in June 2009, and organise a major business conference to showcase Hong Kong's latest developments on the technology front. The San Francisco ETO will also arrange for the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, DGIP, the CEOs of HK Science & Technology Parks, Applied Science & Technology Research Institute, and Nano & Advanced Materials Institute to meet with high-tech companies and academic institutions in California in June 2009 to identify areas for collaboration. To continue to promote Hong Kong as a free wine port, the San Francisco ETO will partner with CNBC to produce a 30-minute episode for its "Wine Portfolio" program which will be aired in major cities in the US and Asia in the latter half of 2009.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, San Francisco
June 2009

Report on the Work of Brussels ETO

The Brussels ETO represents Hong Kong's economic and trade interests in the European Union (EU), European Commission (EC) and European Parliament; as well as promotes Hong Kong's bilateral economic and trade relations with 15 countries, namely Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey.

Commercial Relations

2. The Brussels ETO develops Hong Kong's commercial relations with the EC, EU Member States and other European countries seeking accession to the EU. Apart from maintaining a regular dialogue with the EC on various trade, customs and trade-related subjects that are of interest to Hong Kong, the Brussels ETO also monitors new legislation and administrative rules originating in the EU which may have an impact on the commercial interests of Hong Kong and Hong Kong companies.

3. The second annual structured dialogue meeting between EC and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government was held in Brussels in December 2008. Both sides had an extensive exchange on issues in trade, competition policy, customs co-operation, environmental protection, food and product safety, education exchange and public health. It was also agreed to continue to strengthen co-operation in these areas.

4. The Brussels ETO also monitored developments in the textiles trade between the EU and China in the past year. Whilst the quota arrangement for Chinese textiles exports to the EU already expired in end 2007, exports of Chinese textiles to the EU were still subject to a "double surveillance licensing system" for the year of 2008. Even though the EC abolished this system with effect from January 2009, the Brussels ETO will continue to monitor how the EC and the European textiles trade would handle textiles issues in future.

Public Relations

5. The Brussels ETO organised Chinese New Year Receptions across Europe in January and February 2009. To showcase the cultural facet of Hong Kong, we invited Miss Colleen Lee, one of the most brilliant pianists from Hong Kong who is now studying in Europe, to perform during the Chinese New Year receptions in four cities (namely Brussels, the Hague, Paris and Zurich). The performance was highly acclaimed by our guests.

6. The Brussels ETO also continued its efforts in promoting Hong Kong films in Europe. The Hong Kong Film Panorama 2008/2009 was held in five cities (Antwerp, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels and Madrid). Apart from showing recent Hong Kong films in the Film Panorama, a repertoire of past productions of the famous Hong Kong director, Ann Hui, was also screened.

7. The Brussels ETO arranged visits to Europe for a number of Hong Kong senior officials. These visits helped to promote Hong Kong and to facilitate further cooperation with the EU countries. For example, during the visits of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development to Spain in October 2008 and to Italy in May 2009, a Memorandum of Understanding on wine-related business were signed respectively with the Spanish and

Italian government. The Brussels ETO also organised the visit by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury to Brussels in May 2009 to exchange views and experience with the EC and the Belgian Government on the regulatory regime of the financial services sector in Belgium.

Investment Promotion

8. The Brussels ETO and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council organised a number of business seminars in different cities to promote Hong Kong and our role as a gateway to the Mainland and Asian markets, as well as the business opportunities and support that can be offered by Hong Kong to foreign companies. The cities include Barcelona, Bucharest, Dublin, Lisbon, Luxembourg and Sofia. The seminars were well attended and firms in Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and Spain displayed strong interest in exploring the Mainland market through business partners in Hong Kong and to find new markets in Asia.

9. The Brussels ETO's Investment Promotion Unit (IPU) assisted in the preparation for the joint investment promotion seminar with the Guangdong province in Madrid on 28 October 2008. A number of pre-seminar events were organised in September and around 300 attendees participated in the workshop organised by Invest Hong Kong during the seminar.

10. The Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement (DTA) between Hong Kong and Belgium is perceived as a useful arrangement by many European firms with plans for Hong Kong. Moreover, the DTA with Luxembourg signed in November 2007 has rekindled Luxembourg firms' interest to establish business in Hong Kong. Over the last 12 months, the IPU has identified at least 5 Luxembourg firms that were either already established in Hong Kong with our help, or were in the process of doing so in the next few months.

Looking Ahead

11. The Brussels ETO will continue to maintain close liaison with interlocutors in various EU institutions and strengthen bilateral ties with European countries covered by the ETO. We will also continue to monitor developments in the EU that are of interest to Hong Kong and organise various kinds of publicity events to further promote Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Brussels
June 2009

Report on the Work of the London ETO

The London ETO is responsible for promoting Hong Kong's economic and trade relations with nine European countries, namely Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (UK).

Commercial Relations

2. The London ETO maintains close liaison with contacts in the governments, business and media sectors in countries under its purview, and updates them on the latest developments in Hong Kong through regular exchanges, visits and seminars.

3. In collaboration with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), Invest Hong Kong and local trade associations, the London ETO organised and supported 13 business seminars in Helsinki, London, Malmo, Manchester, Oslo and Stockholm to promote the advantages and business opportunities of Hong Kong as a springboard to the region.

4. High-level official exchange helps strengthen bilateral ties and commercial relations. During the reporting period, the London ETO arranged seven visits for six Principal Officials, including the Chief Executive's visit to the UK in November 2008; Financial Secretary's visit to the UK in June 2008; Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury's visit to Russia in June 2008 and to the UK in May 2009; visits by Secretary for the Environment, Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, and Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption to the UK in June, July and October 2008 respectively. In addition, the Financial Secretary visited London to join the G20 Finance Ministers' Meeting as part of the Chinese delegation in March 2009, and the Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services) and the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority attended the G20 London Summit as part of the Chinese delegation in April 2009. We also arranged visit programmes for the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs in November 2008, the Permanent Secretary for Education in March 2009, the Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services) in April 2009 and the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food) in May 2009.

Public Relations

5. To raise the profile of Hong Kong, the London ETO supported and organised major PR and promotional events throughout the year. A highlight of the reporting period was the "Creative Hong Kong in London" programme, which represented a collaborative effort of the Hong Kong Design Centre, London ETO and HKTDC in June 2008 to showcase Hong Kong's unique branding of combining creativity and business ideas through product display, design exhibition and business forum.

6. Hong Kong is featured in several high-profile events in London. The London Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival held in June 2008 attracted over 40 teams and 20 000 visitors. In November 2008, the London ETO organised its fourth entry to the Lord Mayor's Show in London that featured a musical acrobatic display by a flying lion team in front of the Lord Mayor's residence at Mansion House, combined with a colourful float and procession on the theme of transport with roller-skaters dressed in iconic transport modes such as the street

tram, the peak tram and the Star Ferry. In February 2009, we organised the 'Hong Kong in Shaftsbury Avenue' event as part of the Chinese New Year celebration in London.

7. As part of our annual PR programme, the London ETO hosted 11 Chinese New Year receptions in six countries from January to March 2009. In the run-up to the Beijing Olympic Games, the London ETO promoted extensively the Equestrian Event hosted by Hong Kong on various occasions. We also supported and organised a number of cultural events to portray Hong Kong through art, film and music. These included: three art exhibitions in London and Manchester (May – September 2008); the Riga Arsenal Film Forum in Latvia (September 2008); the Stockholm International Film Festival in Sweden (November 2008); and two spring concerts featuring Hong Kong pianist Colleen Lee and cellist Alvin Wong in Birmingham and Liverpool (March 2009).

8. During the reporting period, we sponsored five journalists and five VIP to visit Hong Kong. The London ETO also maintained regular liaison with the media, and arranged interviews for visiting senior officials from Hong Kong and the Director-General of the London ETO.

Investment Promotion

9. The Investment Promotion Unit in London met 152 companies and successfully assisted 32 companies to set up in Hong Kong in 2008. The unit continues to be active both in its participation of high profile business seminars organised by this office or outside organisations, and in organising meetings between senior officials of Invest Hong Kong and senior business executives of companies.

Looking Ahead

10. Hong Kong's bilateral relations with the UK, Russia and the Nordics have been growing from strength to strength. Our focus of work in the coming months would be to reinforce the message about Hong Kong as a financial, trading and logistics hub, especially opportunities available amid the turbulent times; and to highlight Hong Kong's long-term development. The visa-free arrangement between the Russian Federation and Hong Kong, which will come into force in mid-2009, will boost travel and business ties between the two places. Two delegations to Russia in June, one led by the Financial Secretary and another by the Hong Kong Tourism Board, will help raise Hong Kong's profile in Moscow and St. Petersburg and enhance understanding about Hong Kong. Visits by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development to the UK and Finland in late June, and the Chief Secretary for Administration to the UK in November will foster our close ties with the UK and the Nordic countries. We shall continue to promote Hong Kong through high-profile PR and cultural events showcasing Hong Kong's artistic talents such as film festivals and exhibitions.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London
June 2009

Report on the Work of the Berlin ETO

Upon the promulgation of an ordinance (*Verordnung*) specifically passed by the Upper House of the Federal German Parliament (*Bundesrat*) on 28 February 2009, the Berlin ETO has commenced operation in Berlin since 9 March 2009, representing and promoting the economic and trade interests of Hong Kong in eight central and eastern European countries, namely Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland.

2. Prior to operating from the base in Berlin, the designated four-member team of the Berlin ETO was attached to the Brussels ETO.

Commercial Relations

3. The Berlin team continued to build up good connections and lay the ground for its promotion work, in addition to preparing for the opening of the Berlin ETO. During the last 12 months, over 40 duty visits in 17 cities in the region were conducted. More than 10 seminars and workshops were also conducted or sponsored in the major cities, including Bratislava and Kosice (the Slovak Republic); Brno (the Czech Republic); Debrecen (Hungary); Katowice (Poland); and Zurich (Switzerland). More than 240 meetings/briefings on Hong Kong were made in Frankfurt, Berlin, Hamburg and Munich (Germany); as well as seven other countries under the purview of the Berlin ETO. We also extended and consolidated our commercial networking by issuing newsletters to various leading business enterprises and chambers of commerce, as well as joining major local business events including the Hamburg Summit, the Libesmahl dinner hosted by the German Asia-Pacific Business Association, and the International Tourism Bourse.

4. At these seminars, workshops, briefings and events, the Berlin ETO explained the significance of the Basic Law and the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” while promoting Hong Kong as an international trading and service centre as well as the gateway to Mainland China. Opportunities were also taken to update interlocutors on latest developments and topical issues in Hong Kong, including the Policy Address, the Budget, and the measures to address the impact of the recent global recession.

5. In addition, the Berlin ETO helped plan, coordinate and execute reciprocal visits made by senior officials in the various governments and the public sectors. In November 2008, the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs. Carrie Yau, leading a cultural delegation of Hong Kong, made a visit to Budapest (Hungary). She met with her counterparts and visited major museums and performance venues to share experience in the management of cultural facilities and explore further ways of cultural exchange and cooperation. She also delivered a keynote speech on the latest developments on Hong Kong, including those of the West Kowloon Cultural District, which received encouraging regional and local media coverage.

6. Visitors to Hong Kong included those made by Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, Ms Katalin Szili, in June 2008; President of Slovenia, Dr. Danilo Türk in October 2008; State Secretary for International Economic Relations, Mr. Abel Garamhegyi, and Director-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hungary in October and November 2008 respectively; and President of the Czech Bar Association, Dr. Vladimír Jirousek, leading a

28-member delegation to attend the Opening of the Legal Year in January 2009 and meet with Hong Kong's legal profession and various government officials.

7. From Germany, visitors included the then Federal Minister of Economics and Technology, Mr. Michael Glos (September 2008); Minister of Economic Affairs of the State of Brandenburg, Mr. Ulrich Junghanns (March 2009); Former member of the German Parliament, Dr. Walther Kiep (April 2009); Director-General of the Federal Foreign Office, Ambassador Hans-Henning Blomeyer-Bartenstein (April 2009) and Federal Minister of Justice, Ms Brigitte Zypries (April 2009).

Public Relations

8. The Berlin ETO organised various kinds of public relations activities to promote Hong Kong. For example, we sponsored a Hong Kong film panorama in Vienna (Austria) in August 2008 to promote Hong Kong's creative industry, and the Asian Food Festival in September 2008 to promote Hong Kong as a gourmet destination and wine distribution centre. We also conducted briefings in Vienna and Prague (the Czech Republic) in June and July 2008 on the Olympic Equestrian Events.

9. In collaboration with Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and the local chambers of commerce in the respective countries, the Berlin ETO hosted nine Chinese New Year receptions between January and February 2009 in Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, Frankfurt, Prague, Bratislava, Ljubljana (Slovenia), Budapest and Warsaw (Poland). Key interlocutors from the federal and local government ministries, as well as private business enterprises, trade related organisations and the media attended these receptions. Cultural performances were staged in eight of the receptions, including piano recitals by a Hong Kong award-winning pianist, Miss Colleen Lee, and performances of traditional Chinese culture.

10. Since the commencement of operation in Berlin, the ETO has stepped up publicity efforts to promote the image of Hong Kong and the mission of the new office through different channels including media interviews and briefings (in particular two press briefings for the German media in Berlin and Düsseldorf and several individual briefings with the press in March and April 2009). A special feature supplement and other booklets on Hong Kong were published and distributed in Germany. Advertisements promoting Hong Kong were placed in national newspapers and trade related magazines.

Investment Promotion

11. During the reporting period, the Berlin ETO has continued working with Invest Hong Kong to promote inward investment in central and eastern Europe and follow up on enquiries expressing interest in investing in Hong Kong.

12. In March 2009, we jointly promoted Hong Kong as an investment destination and the mission of the new ETO office in a direct mailing campaign in Germany. Recruitment for the investment promotion unit of Berlin ETO completed in April 2009. The unit would be in place from July 2009.

Looking Ahead

13. With the relocation from Brussels to Berlin and the formation of a full local team, the Berlin ETO will continue to explore new grounds and strengthen economic and trade ties in the region, with a view to enhancing mutual understanding, as well as promoting the attributes and competitiveness of Hong Kong and attracting inward investment. To this end, we will also continue to work closely with HKTDC and Hong Kong Tourism Board, as well as other members of the Hong Kong family in the region.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin
June 2009

Report on the Work of the Tokyo ETO

The Tokyo ETO is responsible for promoting Hong Kong's economic and trade interests in Japan and the Republic of Korea (Korea).

Commercial Relations

2. The Tokyo ETO continued to foster Hong Kong's commercial relations with Japan and Korea through actively engaging politicians, government officials, business leaders, academics, think tank leaders and opinion formers in the two countries, and keeping them informed of the political and economic situations in Hong Kong. For this purpose, in addition to activities in Tokyo, the Principal Hong Kong Economic and Trade Representative (Tokyo) also conducted 17 duty visits to other cities in Japan and Korea.

3. A number of promotional events were organised by the Tokyo ETO to inform the audience of the latest developments in Hong Kong. Large scale business promotion seminars (with audience sizes of about 150-200) were held at Sendai (Japan) and Daegu (Korea). Smaller scale exchange sessions targeting senior government officials and business leaders (30-50 participants on each occasion), were organised in cities such as Osaka, Okinawa and Iwate. Other promotional and liaison activities included, for example, a lunch reception for leading Chinese professors in Japan, and lectures to University students. Key messages conveyed through these activities included Hong Kong's unique strengths as an international financial and business centre, opportunities that Hong Kong offers to overseas businesses and talent, and Hong Kong's responses to the global economic downturn.

4. To help political and economic leaders and opinion formers in Japan and Korea understand more about Hong Kong, the Tokyo ETO invited some of the most influential persons from Japan and Korea to visit Hong Kong under the Sponsored Visitors' Programme, and also lined-up meetings and visits for a number of Japanese and Korean delegations to Hong Kong. During the period under review, seven politicians, five senior officials and three think tank leaders, among other people, from the two countries have visited Hong Kong under this programme.

5. The Tokyo ETO also made arrangements for visits to Japan and Korea by 17 Hong Kong delegations during this period. The highlight was the Chief Executive's visit to Tokyo and Seoul in February 2009, during which he met with Japan's Prime Minister Taro ASO and Korean President LEE Myung-bak and other political and business leaders. He delivered speeches on the latest economic developments in Hong Kong at several large scale receptions organised by the Tokyo ETO and others. Other important visits included the Secretary for Security's visit to Tokyo and Seoul in November 2008, the Secretary for Development's visit to Tokyo in February 2009, and the Secretary for the Environment's respective visits to Tokyo and Seoul in April and May 2009. During these visits, the Tokyo ETO organised various events to raise the profile of Hong Kong. We also assisted in the visit programme for the Convenor of Non-official Members of the Executive Council who visited Tokyo in October 2008 as a sponsored guest of the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Public Relations

6. Following the agreement between the governments of Hong Kong and Japan to designate 2009 as the Hong Kong-Japan Tourism Exchange Year, the Tokyo ETO worked in conjunction with the Hong Kong Tourism Board's Tokyo office to organise a series of public

relations activities, including a Gala Dinner for senior political and economic leaders and travel industry players in February 2009 that featured the Chief Executive as the guest of honour.

7. Hong Kong's role as an Olympic co-host city for the Olympic Equestrian Events featured prominently in our promotional work up to August 2008. In this connection, the Tokyo ETO sponsored the 54th annual international dressage competition held in Tokyo in June 2008, during which one of the most prestigious competition events was designated as the "Hong Kong Cup". We also hosted a reception for members of the Japan Olympic Committee and the Japan Equestrian Federation as well as Japanese athletes competing at the Olympic Equestrian Events in Hong Kong.

8. During his visit to Japan, the Chief Executive held a press conference at the Japan National Press Club in February 2009. The Secretary for the Environment and the Secretary for Security also gave press interviews to journalists from major newspapers and electronic media in Japan and Korea respectively to update them on the latest socio-political and economic developments in Hong Kong, covering areas such as our strategy to create a quality living area in the Pearl River Delta, and our liberal policies towards entry of foreigners for employment and study.

9. On the cultural front, the Tokyo ETO staged a comics and Chinese paintings exhibition entitled "Creative Hong Kong in Yokohama" in October 2008 in conjunction with the "Yokohama Asian Cultural Wave 2008" festival. The ETO also hosted the second "Hong Kong Cup All Japan University Students English Speech Contest" in 2008 and continued to sponsor the annual "International Dragon Boat Race" in Yokohama.

Investment Promotion

10. During the reporting period, the Investment Promotion Unit (IPU) of Tokyo ETO conducted five investment promotion visits to regional cities in eastern Japan to brief local chambers of commerce and relevant government offices on the investment environment in Hong Kong, and to visit potential investors. It also participated at the Hong Kong-Shenzhen joint promotion seminar organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Shenzhen city government in Osaka. In this reporting period, the IPU assisted 16 Japanese companies to set up offices or expand operations in Hong Kong.

Looking Ahead

11. The Tokyo ETO will continue to publicise Hong Kong's strengths and foster closer bilateral relations with both Japan and Korea. In addition, we will conduct focused promotion activities to highlight Hong Kong's attractions to Japanese visitors in the context of the Tourism Exchange Year, and promote the Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games and our credentials as a major location for international sports events in Asia, as well as Hong Kong's strengths as an asset management centre.

12. The Tokyo ETO will also continue to monitor political and economic developments in Japan and Korea and assess the impacts (if any) of such developments on Hong Kong.

Report on the Work of the Sydney ETO

The Sydney ETO is responsible for promoting Hong Kong's economic and trade relations with Australia and New Zealand.

Commercial Relations

2. Promotion of Hong Kong as a wine trading and distribution hub remained an important theme of the Sydney ETO in this period. During the Financial Secretary's visit to Australia in August 2008, arrangements were made for him to meet senior government officials and representatives of the wine industry to promote bilateral wine trade. Wine writers of popular publications in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia visited Hong Kong under the Sponsored Journalists' Programme. The strength of Hong Kong as a wine hub was also promoted in activities organised in collaboration with the Hong Kong Australia Business Association.

3. The Sydney ETO ensured that our interlocutors were kept abreast about the economic situation in Hong Kong. During his official visit to Australia, the Secretary for Financial Services and Treasury briefed the business, academic and media communities about the latest economic and financial developments in Hong Kong, in particular, the measures taken by the Hong Kong SAR Government to bolster its economy amidst the global economic downturn. Following the announcement of the 2009/10 Budget, we held Budget briefings to explain the potential of Hong Kong arising from its further economic integration with the Pearl River Delta Region.

4. Following the New Zealand National Party's success in the election in November 2008, the Sydney ETO has established contact with the new government. The Sydney ETO also monitored closely policies introduced by the new government, particularly those on the trade and economic front, which might affect Hong Kong. In February 2009, Hong Kong and New Zealand formally resumed negotiation on the Closer Economic Partnership Agreement.

Public Relations

5. Promotion of the Basic Law and the successful implementation of the One Country, Two Systems in Hong Kong remained an important promotion theme of the Sydney ETO. During his official visit to Australia, the Secretary for Justice briefed leading legal and judiciary practitioners on how the "One Country, Two Systems" arrangement enhanced Hong Kong's strength as an international city and bridge to Mainland China. Furthermore, during the visits by the Secretary for Environment and the Secretary for Development, Hong Kong's efforts to enhance its quality living environment and heritage conservation as a modern world city were highlighted.

6. On cultural promotion, Sydney ETO staged the "Focus on Jonnie To" in collaboration with the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne. The Sydney ETO also participated in five major film festivals in Australia and New Zealand at which a selection of Hong Kong films were screened. The Sydney ETO also participated in the Lantern Festival, a very popular festive event in Auckland, to promote Hong Kong.

Investment Promotion

7. The Investment Promotion Unit of Sydney ETO continued to identify and assist potential Australian and New Zealand companies to establish and/or expand their business presence in Hong Kong. Following the Budget initiative to remove wine duty, specific efforts were made to identify and approach wine producers and other related companies. In addition to general investment promotion activities, specific events were organised by Invest Hong Kong, including the “Hong Kong – Foshan: Your Winning Choice in China” seminar held in Melbourne and the “Hong Kong – Guangdong: Your Winning Choice in China” seminar held in Sydney. Since July 2008, 25 new projects have been generated and 12 projects completed, of which ten and two are Australian companies and New Zealand companies respectively.

Looking Ahead

8. The Sydney ETO will continue to reach out to political leaders, government officials, the business community and academics to promote Hong Kong as a base for Australian and New Zealand businesses to tap into the markets in the Mainland China and the Asia Pacific region. It will also continue to monitor developments in Australia and New Zealand that are relevant to Hong Kong. Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Wine between Australia and Hong Kong in April 2009, the Sydney ETO will sponsor promotional activities to update the business community on related trade and investment opportunities.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney
June 2009

Report on the Work of the Singapore ETO

The Singapore ETO is responsible for promoting the economic and trade relations between Hong Kong and the 10 member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)¹. It also serves as a point of liaison with the Secretariats of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) located in Singapore.

Commercial Relations

2. During the past year, the Singapore ETO conducted over 30 duty visits to 11 cities in the region, covering all ASEAN member countries except Myanmar². Through these visits, we seek to strengthen working relations with government ministries/agencies (particularly those responsible for foreign trade, commerce, industry, finance and investment promotion), embassies, trade/industry organizations, think tanks and economic research institutes in the region. Business talks and meetings were conducted to update our contacts on the latest economic developments in Hong Kong, including new liberalization measures under the Mainland-Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and the series of initiatives undertaken by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government to tackle the challenges posed by the global financial crisis and the ensuing economic downturn.

3. To explore investment and trade opportunities in Vietnam, the Financial Secretary (FS), Mr. John Tsang, led a business delegation on a visit to Hanoi, Vietnam in December 2008. FS and the business delegates met with the Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, Mr. Nguyen Sinh Hung, among other senior officials from the Industry and Trade, Planning and Investment and Finance Ministries as well as the State Bank of Vietnam and the State Capital Investment Corporation. FS also represented the HKSAR Government in signing a Comprehensive Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation between the HKSAR and Vietnam. In addition, he spoke at a business seminar organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and a gala dinner celebrating the new passenger service between Hong Kong and Hanoi launched by Dragonair in October 2008.

4. In her capacity as the Chairperson of the Hong Kong Maritime Industry Council, the Secretary for Transport and Housing (STH), Ms Eva Cheng, led a business delegation to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, Vietnam in February 2009 to promote Hong Kong's shipping and maritime services. The delegation met with the Vice Minister of Transport and the Chairman of Vietnam Maritime Administration, among others, and visited the port facilities of Vietnam. STH also gave an opening remark at a seminar in Ho Chi Minh City.

5. As part of the efforts to promote the development of Islamic finance in Hong Kong, Singapore ETO invited Dr Rozali bin Mohamed Ali, Chairman of the Governing Council, International Center for Education in Islamic Finance, and Professor Rifaat Ahmed Abdel Karim, Secretary-General of the Islamic Finance Services Board (IFSB), to visit Hong Kong under the Sponsored Visitors' Programme in October 2008 and February 2009 respectively.

1 The 10 ASEAN member countries are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

2 A visit to Myanmar is being planned for the coming year.

6. The Singapore ETO co-organised with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) receptions in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Singapore in December 2008 to introduce the newly established Meetings & Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) Office and Hong Kong's strengths as Asia's premier centre for meetings, incentive travel, conventions and exhibitions.

Public Relations

7. The Singapore ETO organised and sponsored a range of public relations functions throughout the year to engage our contacts from various sectors. For instance, we hosted a spring dinner for the APEC Secretariat, PECC Secretariat and the ASEAN Missions in Singapore, and co-organised with HKTB Chinese New Year dinners in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines in January and February 2009.

8. To further promote exchanges in arts and culture between Hong Kong and Singapore, the Singapore ETO sponsored a piano recital by Hong Kong's prodigy Aristo Sham in December 2008, and hosted a reception for "Zuni Icosahedron" and guests from the cultural sector of Singapore in February 2009.

9. The Singapore ETO staged its first Hong Kong Film Festival in Malaysia in March 2009, presenting eight Hong Kong movies produced by new generation directors and producers. A joint press conference was held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2009 to promote the Film Festival and the "Hong Kong Film: New Action" project of the Hong Kong Film Development Council (HKFDC). It was attended by the Chairman of HKFDC, Mr. Jack So, and a delegation of about 20 members of the Hong Kong film industry. The press conference was followed by a film workshop where Malaysian film students and media had the chance to exchange views with new generation film directors and producers from Hong Kong.

Investment Promotion

10. The consultant engaged by InvestHK continued to spearhead inward investment promotion activities in the region to promote Hong Kong as an investment destination. In 2008, the team reached out to 100 companies, and assisted 16 companies to set up in Hong Kong, representing a 60% increase compared to the previous year.

Looking Ahead

11. Taking advantage of the visits of Hong Kong senior government officials and their attendance in APEC meetings which will be held in Singapore in 2009, the Singapore ETO will organise various functions to update the business community in the region on trade and investment opportunities arising from CEPA and new initiatives to diversify our economy. We will also work closely with HKTB and HKTDC to promote the Hong Kong Food & Wine Year and HKSAR's participation in Shanghai's World Expo 2010.

Report on the Work of the Toronto ETO

The Toronto ETO promotes Hong Kong's economic and trade interests in Canada through close partnerships with major business bodies and think tanks, and raises the profile of Hong Kong through various public relations efforts.

Commercial Relations

2. During the reporting period, the Toronto ETO organised/supported a series of business events and speaking engagements to promote Hong Kong as a major financial and trading centre and the gateway to Mainland China and the rest of Asia. Visits and presentations were also made to universities across Canada to attract talents to Hong Kong.

3. In September 2008, the Director-General of Investment Promotion spoke to 200 business leaders in Toronto on the advantages of Hong Kong. In November 2008, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development addressed an audience of 250 in Vancouver on Hong Kong's economic plan to tackle the global financial crisis and the development of innovation and technology in Hong Kong. In April 2009, the Secretary for Environment visited Toronto and Ottawa to promote Hong Kong's environmental initiatives and corresponding business opportunities for foreign business, reaching out to major environmental technology companies, concerned groups on environmental issues, and relevant government officials. In May 2009, the Financial Secretary visited Vancouver and spoke on Hong Kong's competitiveness and opportunities to over 500 business and community leaders, heads of think tanks, editors, and student groups. In Ottawa, the Toronto ETO co-organised with the Hong Kong-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group and the HKCBA a breakfast seminar in Parliament Hill with Mr David Emerson, the former federal Foreign Minister and Minister of International Trade, serving as the keynote speaker. The event attracted over 150 Members of Parliament, senators, business leaders and government officers.

4. The Toronto ETO organised a seminar in Burnaby in April 2009 for the Chairman of Hong Kong Science Park in which he promoted the facilities of the Park. Another forum was arranged for the former Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong Mr Lee Cheuk Fun to give an update on Hong Kong to the Hong Kong community in Vancouver. We also arranged for the Government Chief Information Officer and his delegation of Hong Kong Information Technology Federation/Hong Kong Software Outsourcing Alliance to speak in Vancouver.

5. During the reporting period, to update our interlocutors on Hong Kong's latest developments, the Director of Toronto ETO visited Vancouver, Calgary, Alberta, Montreal and Halifax to call on Members of Parliament, parliamentary secretaries and policy advisers for different Ministers, Mayors, Presidents and CEOs of major business associations; heads of universities and think tanks as well as other opinion leaders in the academic, business and political fields. She also spoke at business seminars organised by the Hong Kong Canada Business Association (HKCBA) in Calgary, Edmonton and Halifax.

6. To update Canadian students on Hong Kong's economic development and career opportunities in the medium and long term, the Toronto ETO staged career-related exhibitions and organised student information sessions in some 20 Canadian universities across Canada.

7. The Toronto ETO promoted the Basic Law through various activities. We staged roving photo exhibitions at universities, and co-organised a debate event on the theme of Basic Law with a Chinese student debate group representing students of Ontario universities. Discussions and promotional activities on the Basic Law were also arranged when the Chairman of the Working Group on Overseas Community under the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee visited Vancouver in May.

8. The Toronto ETO assisted over 20 Canadian groups/individuals, including sponsored visitors and journalists in their visits to Hong Kong. We also assisted the Harbourfront Enhancement Committee in their visit to Vancouver to study the Canadian experience in harbour development and enhancement.

Public Relations

9. Between June and August 2008, the Toronto ETO continued the promotion of the Olympic Equestrian Events by working with the English and Chinese media in Canada, including the CBC network, Canadian horse magazines and online publications. The Dragon Boat festivals in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal were also used as platforms for promoting Hong Kong and the Equestrian Events.

10. The Toronto ETO jointly organised with the Hong Kong Tourism Board in Canada (HKTBC) promotional dinners for members of the media in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal to cultivate closer relations with them. Targeting the food and wine media and people from relevant industries, we also teamed up with the HKTBC to organise special promotional events to publicize Hong Kong as a meeting and convention centre, an international wine hub and a culinary capital, as well as the 2009 Hong Kong Food & Wine Year.

11. The Toronto ETO supported various film festivals in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal where over twenty Hong Kong films were shown. We also made use of the visits of Hong Kong movie stars to promote Hong Kong's film industry and Hong Kong Filmart.

12. The Toronto ETO continued to provide information on the latest development in Hong Kong through its electronic newsletter as well as a special website co-presented with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. We also launched a special bi-weekly e-Bulletin on Hong Kong business news and stories. In addition, we worked with the Canadian Business, the largest business magazine in Canada, to produce a special supplement entitled "Hong Kong – Canada's China Connection" to highlight Hong Kong's advantage and its role as a business platform to Mainland China and the surrounding region.

Investment Promotion

13. The Investment Promotion Unit (IPU) in Toronto reached out and provided services to over 100 Canadian companies in the targeted sectors of information technology, communications, business and financial services industries. During the period, 13 additional Canadian companies have successfully set up operations in Hong Kong with the services of IPU.

Looking Ahead

14. The Toronto ETO will continue to promote the business opportunities in Hong Kong and in Mainland China through Hong Kong. Activities will be organised to promote Hong Kong's participation theme in the Shanghai's World Expo 2010 Expo and the 2009 Food & Wine Year. We will also strengthen the linkages between Canada and Hong Kong in the cultural and educational aspects, with a view to increasing the profile of Hong Kong in Canada.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Toronto
June 2009