

**Reception to launch the Hong Kong Programme in the Riga International
Film Festival
15 September 2008**

**Welcoming remarks by Miss Sarah Wu,
Director-General
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London**

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm delighted to be here today at the International Centre of Cinema to launch the Hong Kong film programme, and I'd like to thank our friends at Arsenal for their hard work in pulling this programme together. It is always a pleasure to visit Latvia and see friends new and old.

We are delighted to support this film season, in fact I'm rather envious as you'll be able to see some of my favourite films over the next few days!

The films you will be able to see here present a fantastic overview of new Hong Kong cinema at its best, with films made over the past few years by some of our most challenging and innovative directors. These films showcase the dynamic development, talents and unique characteristics of Hong Kong's film industry. We hope that through this film season, you will come to know Hong Kong through its films and stars.

As you know, Hong Kong has been a film-making, TV production and movie centre for many decades. Though the Hong Kong film industry has had its ups and downs, it has gained a global reputation with many Hong Kong actors, directors, cinematographers and producers becoming household names around the world. They are winning acclaim for their unique style, incisive direction and sometimes off-beat storylines.

Hong Kong is the third largest film production centre in the world, and Hong Kong actors and directors have been successful in Hollywood - and some Hollywood directors are inspired by the work of their counterparts in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Government has been playing its part behind the scenes to encourage the film industry. We're promoting 'Hong Kong on location' as a film centre with the facilities, expertise and support for every type of movie. Last year we formed the Film Development Council to advise us on the policy and strategy for the promotion and development of the film industry, and we also injected €22 million into the Film Development Fund to help finance film production and overcome the shortage of talent. It will provide all-round support to the local film industry, including training and overseas promotion,

and we have expanded its scope to finance the production of small-to-medium budget films.

Hong Kong continues to thrive as Asia's world city, a centre for financial and professional services, trade, shipping and tourism. 'One Country, Two Systems' also meant that Hong Kong has been able to maintain its lifestyle and continues to enjoy prosperity and stability. As a cosmopolitan city where east meets west, Hong Kong has been the place for talented people to unleash their creativity and pursue their dreams.

Finally I hope you will enjoy this film season, and that you enjoy this evening's film 'Ashes of Time: Redux.' Again I would like to congratulate the Arsenal's Team for putting all this together, and thank you for inviting me here to speak.

Thank you.