

Business Facilitation Programme Part II
organised by the Hong Kong, China Secretariat
for ITU TELECOM WORLD 2006
China ICT Delegation Exchange with Canada (1-9 May, 2006)

**Welcome Remarks by Mrs Marion Lai,
Deputy Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology
(Communications and Technology)**

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. A warm welcome to you all.

First of all, on behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, I wish to express our thanks to you all for your participation in the Exchange programme today, and in particular, our sincere thanks to the Industry Canada for organising the Visit and the Ministry of Information Industry for leading the delegation of Chinese companies to Canada, to take part in this exchange programme.

As you may well be aware, the ITU TELECOM WORLD 2006 is taking place the very first time in China. It is indeed the honour of Hong Kong to have won the hosting right of this most prestigious Event.

Since ITU's announcement of Hong Kong as the hosting city for the Event, my team has been conducting numerous promotional activities overseas in support of the Event organiser, the ITU's marketing efforts, covering various cities in Europe, the United States and Asia, largely riding on major ICT events. Apart from presenting to potential participants the services and support offered by the host city to facilitate ITU's staging of the event, we have introduced a new element in the host programmes – which is the Business Facilitation Programme.

We trust you will agree that the Asia Pacific region has become the most important and fastest growing market in information and communications technology. And China is one of the focal points with greatest potential for future development. While some industry leaders have already established a foothold in the Mainland market, a large number of companies are exploring new opportunities there, and still more are eager yet to learn about the market, the policy issues, the technologies, where potentials lie, and the implications of recent progress in the Mainland ICT market on their own business development plans etc.

It was with this in mind that we developed the Business Facilitation Programme for event participants of ITU TELECOM WORLD 2006. Our main objective in organising business facilitation activities for event participants is to foster understanding of the Mainland market, assist event participants in establishing contacts with potential business partners in China, preparing for more fruitful participation of the event in December. The activities range from seminars, delegation visits, cross-promotion platforms and business networking services.

The Programme is divided into three parts: Part One was successfully kicked off on 22 March in Hong Kong during the time when some 250 international exhibitors came to Hong Kong to attend the Exhibitors' Meeting of the ITU TELECOM WORLD 2006 event.

This Exchange between the China ICT Delegation with Canada today is the Part Two of the Business Facilitation Programme. And Part Three, will represent the climax of the Programme created by Hong Kong, China for business and knowledge exchange during the event week in December amongst overseas and Mainland (including Hong Kong) companies.

The seminar today, entitled "Capitalising Upon the Development Opportunities", indeed works both ways.

This is a platform we are creating for international exchange, to enhance understanding between Chinese and overseas companies even before the ITU TELECOM WORLD 2006 event. It works both for overseas companies looking at going into China, and for Chinese companies looking at going global. It provides the opportunity for Chinese companies to speak firsthand about their latest developments, their outlook and development targets. It also allows us to learn from pioneers and industry leaders their experience in market and partnership development in China.

Moreover, in our discussions today, a major industry body, the WTIA of Hong Kong, will share with you their experience of partnering with Mainland companies. We will also be most ready to provide you with more information on how Hong Kong may help you best capitalise upon the numerous development opportunities.

With Hong Kong's strategic position as a main Gateway to China, our close ties with the Mainland, our experience and exposure to the international market, and active participation and support of the local industry, the Programme would serve to create a most favourable meeting ground amongst Mainland, overseas and local industry members before the WORLD event. Of course, we will continue to facilitate such exchange via our platform to be created at the Hong Kong, China Pavilion and related activities during the Event week in December.

Again, today's programme forms an important and integral part of our business facilitation programme to support WORLD 2006 event participants. Later on, we will be giving you more updates about the ITU TELECOM WORLD 2006, with details about The Interchange service, which has been in operation from Part One onwards, to help you promote your services, establish contacts before the ITU WORLD event, make appointments and meet with target business partners, and make the most of your participation in the event in December.

I thank you for your participation and wish you all a fruitful exchange today.