



**Message from Mr Simon Wong, JP, Chairman of the Hong Kong Brand Development Council at the Presentation Ceremony of the 2016 Hong Kong Top Brand Awards, Hong Kong Top Service Brand Awards, Hong Kong Emerging Brand Awards & Hong Kong Emerging Service Brand Awards**

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As the global economy enters the “New Normal” of slowing growth, it also brings about a plethora of unprecedented challenges — prolonged weakness in the international market, increasing foreign exchange risks, changing consumer mindsets and the “paradigm shift” in business operation ensuing from technological advancements, coupled with heightened volatilities in the political and social arenas. All these have imposed escalating pressure on our industries. For Hong Kong enterprises that have always managed to thrive on adaptability, however, challenges and opportunities often come hand in hand. Seen from a different perspective, pressure is a source of motivation and a “reverse stimulus” that fosters innovation and progress.

While the industry is striving against the current, we also see new and promising prospects for the development of Hong Kong brands. More and more Hong Kong enterprises are using branding as a game plan to seize opportunities that arise from challenging circumstances. Building brand competitiveness is a flexible strategy that could both advance and consolidate a company’s business; it is an “aggressive” means of expanding business and of tapping into new markets, as well as a “defensive” vehicle for strengthening customers’ sense of belonging amidst low tides.

By dint of the extended efforts and accumulating experience of our industries, “Hong Kong Brand” has nowadays become a symbol of quality, trendiness, credibility, value for money and outstanding services. Amidst gloomy market sentiments, consumer attitudes are navigating towards being more practical, rational and focused on price-performance ratio. With positive images and diverse strengths, Hong Kong brands are able to ride on the latest trends in consumer culture; in particular, they have adapted to the changing consumption patterns of Mainland residents, opening up new horizon for development.

With the support from the HKSAR Government, Hong Kong Brand Development Council has hosted “Hong Kong Brand Festival” serial activities in a number of Mainland cities including Wuhan, Chongqing, Harbin, Xiamen, Tianjin and Dalian. And the Council has also voyaged out to take part in fairs in Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Middle East to promote Hong Kong’s quality brand products. We are deeply encouraged by the positive response and eager participation from the industries.

From Central China, Southwest China to Bohai Bay and Northeast China, Hong Kong brands are carving out their path across the nation and making their way towards “One Belt One Road” countries. Many “brand entrepreneurs” are stepping up efforts in establishing sales channels in different regions, expanding client base and enhancing brand profile. Others work to attract target customers through consolidating their business in selected market segments, cultivating greater brand loyalty by providing more localised products and tailored services. Many enterprises have incorporated innovative technology and

management into their business, as they employ creative marketing tactics to target emerging consumer groups and revamp their brand image. There are also enterprises that seek to merge online and offline through well-thought-out combination of new media and traditional media, with a view to creating a distinctive brand experience.

In a difficult time of changing market environment and ongoing economic restructuring, Hong Kong enterprises remain steadfast in investing resources and energy into branding as they always have. Such long-term vision and dedication is a manifestation of the “Hong Kong Spirit”, and the most important factor underpinning the continued success of “Hong Kong Brand”.

Indeed, “Hong Kong Brand” is much more than its long-standing acclaim; it is a grave responsibility that has been passed into our hands. We must safeguard, nurture, deepen and promote it continually to enhance its value.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to congratulate and pay tribute to the winners of 2016 Brand Awards. As you would agree, the 46 new laureates are paragons of “Hong Kong Brand”, as they are outstanding builders and gatekeepers of Hong Kong brand culture. Among them are household names that have grown together with generations of Hong Kong people over the last century, as well as trendsetters and drivers of the New Economy. There are industry leaders which seize the spotlight in overseas markets and have made Hong Kong proud, and the next generation brands that have burst onto the scene with boundless creativity and innovative spirit.

Like the some 330 predecessors over the past years, the 2016 Awardees have showcased the latest developments of Hong Kong industries. These winners, from different fields though, share the same philosophy of creating value through branding; and their success stories all embody the message of “branding to win”, which is an inspiration for countless companies that are striding forward through challenging times.

On behalf the Organisers, let me express our deepest gratitude to today’s officiating guest the Financial Secretary. We are grateful to all Government departments, organisations and individuals that have contributed enormously to the 2016 Awards. In particular, our thanks go to the Judging Panels respectively led by Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Mr Philip Yung, Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Mr Godfrey Leung, and Director-General of Trade and Industry Ms Salina Yan; the Official Honorary Auditor-cum-Event Sponsor KPMG; and the Trophy Sponsor Lukfook Jewellery. Likewise, we sincerely thank the the media for their valuable assistance in promoting the Awards.

Once again, please join me again in congratulating all winners of the 2016 Awards.