

1 July Reception, Speech by George Ammerlaan, Chairman of the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands

Dear Eddie, Chris, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of Hong Kong.

Today not only marks the 14th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China but also the first birthday of the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands.

I am delighted that so many of you are joining us on this festive occasion. We have guests from Hong Kong, from mainland China, from Brussels, from Wells near Bath in the United Kingdom and from all over the Netherlands.

A year ago I also had the pleasure to speak to you here in Sea Palace restaurant.

A lot has happened since. Our small team has worked very hard to build up a chamber that can play a useful role in promoting bilateral trade between the Netherlands and Hong Kong.

A chamber that can help businessmen to find the information or the contacts they require quickly and affordably.

A chamber that reflects all that HK stands for: hard working, flexible, reliable, friendly, enthusiastic, service oriented and independent.

We have achieved a lot in the last 12 months.

Our membership has grown from zero to 64 and we are hopeful we can reach 100 members by the end of this year.

We have organized or co-organised events in The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Hoogeveen.

We travelled to Hong Kong and China and signed an MOU with the Federation of Hong Kong Industries.

We wrote research reports for clients in the Netherlands as well as in – really - the Czech Republic and we even assisted an incoming Korean trade mission (although we are doing our very best to forget this).

We also built a very nice website. Do have a look yourself at hongkongkvk.nl!

We can also be found on linkedin and news about Hong Kong is twittered in Dutch around the world.

Not everything went according to plan though.

Our friend and partner Selina Chan had to decide to leave the team for personal reasons after only a few months.

We have achieved only a part of what we are still planning to do.

Lack of time and – let's be honest – resources, made it difficult for us to organise more seminars and to organise missions to HK and the Pearl River Delta.

We would also like to receive and assist missions from Hong Kong in the Netherlands, as this country still is one of HK's most important trading partners in Europe **and** a major investor in Hong Kong.

Many hundreds of Dutch companies have offices in HK and this number is still growing every month.

Did you know, for instance, that APG Asset Management Asia in Hong Kong is one of the four APG offices managing pension assets worth around € 277 billion? The other three are in Heerlen, Amsterdam and New York.

Robeco, ING, ABN AMRO, Rabobank and Aegon have offices in Hong Kong too.

I always wonder why Dutch media are daily quoting the stock exchange of Tokyo and not the much more relevant stock exchange of Hong Kong.

HK is the place where many Chinese companies raise money for their overseas ambitions. Most Chinese investments in the Netherlands came via Hong Kong.

And to be even more exact: the biggest Chinese investments in the Netherlands are HK Chinese investments such as the ECT terminal in Rotterdam, the Ceres Terminal in Amsterdam, the Kruidvat retail stores and the ICI Paris perfumery stores.

We are delighted that ABN AMRO Bank has decided to re-launch merchant banking in Hong Kong later this year. Proof that this bank has realized that HK still plays a very important role in trade with China, especially when it comes to finance.

Dear guests, I realize that I stand between you and the networking reception so I will end quickly but not before thanking the sponsors of this reception:

- Mr Karel Bosschier of ACS Filters, our very first member.
- Kendrick Ko of Cathay Pacific Airways, HK's number one airline
- Mr Eddie Lee of The Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office Brussels
- Mr Siegfried Verstappen of InvestHk
- Ms Chen Meng of China Lawyers
- Mr Ramon Frankfort of De Nerée Tuinman en van Woensel advocaten
- Mr Marc de Roo of Link Design
- Mr Kaji But of Sea Palace
- Ms Suzanne Pijper of Zonnehoekje Consultancy
- Mr Tin Kwan Man of Dukdalf

I'd also like to thank a number of other persons and companies who supported us in the past period:

- Mr Raymond Pappot of VMP & Partners
- Mr Arjan Zweep and Mr Elmer Zwols of Kentfort and Adbeco
- Ms Karin Kooij of Anko Tours
- Mr Gert van Beek of Meelis & Partners

- Mr Rob Beekwilder of the company Frans Beekwilder
- The Hong Kong Trade Development Council
- Mr Tao Wang, who wrote this **beautiful calligraphy** and counseled us that the Chinese characters of our original name were not correct.
- Furthermore the members of our advisory board:
- Pieter Remstedt, Chairman Advisory Board
- Jennifer Chan. Director ANT-Sinova, Member of the Advisory Board
- Rob ten Heggeler, Member Managing Board NIBC Bank and Member of the Advisory Board
- Wijnand Tutuarima, Chairman Netherlands HK Society, COO Private Banking ABN AMRO Bank and Member of the Advisory Board
- Alexander de Neree tot Babberich, Partner DNTW and Member of the Advisory Board

I would like to say a big thank you to our special guests and speakers Mr Eddie Lee, Deputy Representative for Hong Kong Economic and Monetary Affairs to the European Union and

Christopher Jackson, former Senior Representative of the HK SAR in Brussels and Washington DC and Director Corporate Development of the HKTDC.

Finally, I would like to urge all of you who are not yet a member to sign up immediately! You can find the registration forms on the registration table.

Now it is time to hand over to my colleague Ling Hu for the lucky draw of an economy class return ticket Amsterdam – Hong Kong sponsored by Cathay Pacific Airways.

Thank you very much!