

# Calendar of Events in 2009

## January

- 8 The Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, orders an immediate review to improve the regulatory structure and enhance investor protection after receiving reports from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Securities and Futures Commission examining the Lehman Brothers Minibonds incident.
- 9 Hong Kong scientists receive a first-class and six second-class awards in the 2008 State Science and Technology Awards organised by the State Council.
- 12 The Secretary for Justice, Mr Wong Yan Lung, speaking at the opening of the 2009 Legal Year, says amid the global financial crisis, Hong Kong should take the opportunity to strengthen its international competitiveness in the legal services market.
- 13 The Heritage Foundation names Hong Kong as the world's freest economy for the 15th consecutive year.
- 19 Hong Kong hosts the Asian Financial Forum to discuss the opportunities and challenges faced by Asia in relation to the financial crisis.
- 20 Hong Kong and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees sign a Memorandum of Understanding on enhancing co-operation.
- The Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, announces the appointment of five new members to the Executive Council: Mr Lau Wong-fat, Professor Lawrence Lau, Ms Anna Wu, Ms Marjorie Yang and Mr V Nee Yeh.
- The People's Bank of China and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority sign a currency swap agreement to provide short-term liquidity support to the Mainland operations of Hong Kong banks and the Hong Kong operations of Mainland banks in case of need.
- 22 The Chief Executive announces a series of measures to deal with expected job losses and company closures caused by the global financial crisis.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina grants visa-free entry for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport holders.

## February

- 7 The Chief Executive attends a ceremony in Shenzhen to mark the start of construction on the eastern section of the Second West-East Natural Gas Pipeline to supply Hong Kong with clean energy.

- 16 The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority appoints 21 members to its consultation panel effective from March 1.  
The Chief Executive starts a five-day visit to Japan and Korea to call for closer economic collaboration.
- 17 Six projects proposed by non-profit-making organisations are selected to preserve and revitalise the first batch of historic buildings under the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme.
- 19 Hong Kong hosted the first Hong Kong-Guangdong-Macao Tripartite Meeting to discuss implementation of the 'Framework for Development and Reform Planning for Pearl River Delta Region' promulgated by the National Development and Reform Commission in January.
- 25 The Financial Secretary introduces his 2009 Budget, which gives priority to creating jobs and preserving employment.  
As a new initiative, \$100 million is earmarked to establish a 'Mega Events Fund' to further promote Hong Kong as an events capital of Asia.

## March

- 3 The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, begins a four-day visit to Sydney to foster closer economic ties.
- 5 The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, visits France to see how the country nurtures and promotes its creative industries.  
The Secretary for Development, Mrs Carrie Lam, visits Singapore to learn about the country's urban planning and heritage conservation.
- 9 The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Berlin commences operation. It will foster closer economic and trade ties with Germany and other central and eastern European countries.
- 12 The People's Bank of China and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority sign a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of multi-currency cross-border payment arrangements between the Mainland and Hong Kong.  
The Financial Secretary leaves for London to attend the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting as a member of the Chinese delegation.
- 17 The Secretary for Security, Mr Ambrose Lee, attends the 'Global Security Asia 2009' conference in Singapore.
- 19 An assessment of the heritage value of 1 444 buildings, which includes proposed gradings, is submitted to the Antiquities Advisory Board.

## April

- 1 The one-year multiple-entry Individual Visit endorsement for eligible Shenzhen permanent residents to visit Hong Kong was implemented by the Mainland to facilitate Shenzhen residents to make frequent visits to Hong Kong.
- 3 The Chief Executive announces that six economic areas where Hong Kong enjoys clear advantages will be developed to realise their potential in full. They are testing and certification, medical services, innovation and technology, cultural and creative industries, environmental industry and educational services.
- 6 The Chief Justice, Andrew Li, opens the 16th Commonwealth Law Conference in Hong Kong, the first time the conference is held outside a Commonwealth jurisdiction.
- 9 The Chief Executive welcomes the State Council's decision to introduce a pilot programme for using RMB for cross-border trade settlements.
- 15 Hong Kong hosts the first Hong Kong-Taiwan Inter-City Forum to strengthen exchanges and interaction with Taiwan's cities and counties.  
The Secretary for Justice, Mr Wong Yan Lung, visits Beijing to enhance co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong in trade arbitration.
- 17 The Chief Executive attends the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2009 in Hainan.
- 20 Hong Kong and Vietnam sign a Memorandum of Understanding on education collaboration to promote shared development in education and research.
- 23 Hong Kong and Russia sign an Agreement on Mutual Exemption of Visa Requirements in Beijing.  
The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Henry Tang, leads a business delegation to Guangzhou, starting a series of visits to the nine PRD municipalities to be carried out over two months.
- 25 The Chief Executive attends the Expo Central China 2009 in Hefei and holds bilateral meetings with provincial leaders.
- 27 Swine Influenza is declared a notifiable disease under Hong Kong law.
- 28 The Executive Council approves the implementation of the Government Bond Programme to further develop and sustain the local bond market.
- 29 China's *Yuanwang-6* space tracking ship arrives in Hong Kong for a six-day visit.  
Ocean Park unveiled a new attraction under its Master Redevelopment Project, the Amazing Asian Animals. This is the world's first integrated indoor and outdoor multi-Asian-species exhibit, including four rare red pandas from the Mainland.

## May

- 1 The Financial Secretary visits San Francisco, Los Angeles and Vancouver to update business leaders on Hong Kong's latest developments and to foster closer bilateral links.  
Hong Kong confirms the first case of human swine influenza A (H1N1) brought in from outside.
- 3 The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury begins a four-day visit to Brussels and London to promote Hong Kong as an international financial centre.
- 7 The Secretary for Development launches 'Operation Building Bright', a programme for repairing private old buildings and creating jobs.
- 9 Supplement VI to The Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) is signed, further liberalising various service sectors in the Mainland.
- 10 Senior government officials join district councillors and local organisations for a 'Clean Hong Kong Day' urging citizens to maintain a healthy environment in the fight against pandemic disease.
- 12 Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, an international information specialist in higher education, lists three Hong Kong universities among the top five in Asia in its Asian University Rankings.  
The Chief Executive and the Chief Secretary for Administration in Hong Kong and in Yingxiu, Sichuan respectively, attend commemoration activities to mark the first anniversary of the Wenchuan earthquake disaster.  
The Financial Secretary launches a trial run of a Japanese electric car to be introduced to Hong Kong.
- 15 A Legislative Council delegation undertakes a three-day visit to see economic development and environmental protection measures in the Pearl River Delta Region.
- 18 The Secretary for Food and Health, Dr York Chow, attends the 62nd World Health Assembly in Geneva.
- 25 The Noah's Ark in Ma Wan, the world's only full-size replica, was opened to the public.
- 26 The Executive Council approves funding for the Mass Transit Railway West Island Line.  
The Financial Secretary announces a further package of relief measures worth \$16.8 billion to reduce the financial hardships caused by the global economic downturn and the human swine flu outbreak.
- 29 Hong Kong and Denmark sign a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in science and technology.

The Secretary for Education, Mr Michael Suen, introduces diversified Medium of Instruction arrangements for Secondary One schools for the 2010-11 academic year.

## June

- 1 A new 'Create Hong Kong' office is set up to promote the development of creative industries in Hong Kong.
- 2 The Financial Secretary leads a high-level business delegation to Russia for six days, followed by official visits to Sweden and the UK.
- 5 The Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Stephen Lam, visits Taiwan at the invitation of the Mainland Affairs Council to strengthen trade and economic co-operation.
- 9 The Chief Executive attends the Fifth Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Co-operation and Development Forum and Trade Fair in Nanning, Guangxi.
- 11 The Hospital Authority announces the activation of a territory-wide network of Designated Flu Clinics from June 13.
- 21 The Secretary for Justice officiates at the 'No Drugs No Regrets' pledge ceremony as part of the Campaign Against Youth Drug Abuse.
- 23 The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development leaves for Paris to attend the 2009 Ministerial Council meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- 26 Hong Kong and Germany sign a Declaration of Intent on a working holiday scheme for young people, effective from July 1.
- 29 The Task Force on Tree Management led by the Chief Secretary for Administration releases its report on ways to improve tree management.

## July

- 1 The Chief Executive praises the resilience of Hong Kong and its people in a speech marking the city's 12th anniversary as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.  
A smoking ban goes into effect at six types of establishments: bars, clubs, nightclubs, bathhouses, massage establishments and mahjong and Tin Kau premises.
- 2 The Chief Secretary for Administration officiates at a ceremony marking completion of foundations for the Hong Kong Pavilion at 2010 World Expo to be held in Shanghai.  
Hong Kong and Finland sign an agreement on investment promotion and protection.
- 3 The Legislative Council approves the third injection of funding to the 'Trust Fund in Support of Reconstruction in the Sichuan Earthquake Stricken

- Areas', bringing to \$10 billion Hong Kong's total contribution to the fund which includes a \$1 billion commitment by the Hong Kong Jockey Club.
- 6 The Secretary for Education leads a Hong Kong delegation to Singapore for an International Education Round-table meeting.
- 7 The levy on plastic shopping bags goes into effect to encourage people to switch to reusable shopping bags to protect the environment.
- The Hong Kong delegation to the 1st Asian Youth Games in Singapore returns with 18 medals — five gold, eight silver and five bronze.
- 8 The Minimum Wage Bill is introduced into the Legislative Council.
- 10 The Legislative Council's Finance Committee approves an increase in the Government's equity in Hongkong International Theme Parks Limited for the expansion and operation of Hong Kong Disneyland.
- The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approves the first stage of the territory-wide patient-oriented eHealth Record Development Programme for healthcare providers to share data, and the setting up of a new dedicated eHealth Record Office to co-ordinate the development of the Programme.
- 17 The Financial Secretary announces the appointment of Mr Norman Chan as the new Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority with effect from October 1.
- 21 The Chief Executive and the Chief Secretary for Administration attend the Forum on the Implementation of 'The Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the Pearl River Delta Region' in Hong Kong.
- 22 The Financial Secretary welcomes an agreement among the Securities and Futures Commission, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and 16 distributing banks to buy back the Lehman Brothers Minibonds from Hong Kong investors.
- The Chief Executive officiates at the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre atrium link expansion, adding an additional 19 400 square metres of exhibition space capable of accommodating about 1 000 standard exhibition booths.

## August

- 8 The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury leaves for Kuala Lumpur to attend the World Capital Markets Symposium and to meet Malaysian officials and business leaders to discuss matters related to the Islamic financial market.
- 19 The Chief Executive and the Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Huang Huahua, co-chair the 12th Plenary of the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference in Hong Kong.
- 28 The Government launches a three-month public consultation on the Personal Data (Privacy) review.

- 29 The Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games torch is relayed by 65 runners across Hong Kong, to coincide with the 100-day countdown to the event.
- 31 The Chief Secretary for Administration officially opened several schools in Sichuan, marking the commissioning of the first batch of HKSAR-funded reconstruction projects.

## September

- 1 The New Senior Secondary Curriculum in Academic Structure begins from Secondary 4.  
Small class teaching starts to be implemented in public sector primary schools for Primary 1 classes.
- 3 The Financial Secretary leaves for London to attend the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting as part of the China delegation.  
The first institutional tranche under the Government Bond Programme, which involves 2-year bonds totalling \$3,500 million, is issued.
- 8 China's Ministry of Finance and the HKSAR Government jointly announce the issue in Hong Kong of Renminbi sovereign bonds worth RMB 6 billion.
- 14 Hong Kong and India sign an agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- 18 The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development releases the World Investment Report 2009 reaffirming Hong Kong's position as one of the world's leading destinations for foreign direct investment.
- 21-25 Hong Kong hosts the 60th Session of the World Health Organisation's Regional Committee of the Western Pacific Region.
- 22 The Government announces plans to enhance the services of Radio Television Hong Kong as a public service broadcaster.
- 25 The Government welcomes HSBC's decision to relocate the group's chief executive's principal office to Hong Kong, boosting Hong Kong's status as a global financial centre.
- 27 The Chief Executive visits various government ministries in Beijing ahead of attending National Day celebrations on October 1.
- 28 Acting Chief Executive, Mr Henry Tang, officiates at the launch of RMB Sovereign Bonds in Hong Kong.

## October

- 1 The Acting Chief Executive, Mr Wong Yan Lung, talks about the irreplaceable role Hong Kong has played in the Mainland's reform and opening up, at a ceremony in Hong Kong marking the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

- A Hong Kong float takes part in the National Day Parade in Beijing to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China.
- 2 The Government welcomes the inclusion of Yueju (Cantonese opera) in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- 6 The Chief Executive congratulates the former Vice-Chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Professor Charles Kao, on winning the Nobel Prize in Physics.
- The Secretary for Justice arrives in Canada for a three-day visit to Ottawa and Toronto to strengthen ties and to promote Hong Kong as a premier dispute resolution centre for the Asia Pacific.
- 8 The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Authority launches Phase 1 of an engagement exercise to collect public views on the planning of the WKCD.
- 14 The Hong Kong Police Force is among 16 winners in the 2009 Asian Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise study — the first HKSAR Government Department to win the accolade.
- The Chief Executive announces in his 2009-10 Policy Address strategies for Hong Kong to break new ground in economic development and sustainable growth and a series of projects for conserving and revitalising Hong Kong's Central District and enhancing the Central harbourfront.
- 20 The Chief Executive in Council authorises the building of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link.
- 27 Hong Kong and Japan exchange a Note Verbale to establish a working holiday scheme to benefit young people, starting from January 1, 2010.
- 28 China's State Council approves the feasibility report on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge project.
- 29 Hong Kong hosts the Regional Symposium on Management of Intellectual Capital, Intellectual Assets and Intellectual Property organised by the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the Central People's Government.
- 30 The Financial Secretary, speaking at the opening of Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival 2009, says the city's development as a regional wine trading and distribution centre has provided opportunities to showcase the city as a premier destination for gourmets and food lovers.
- Guam grants visa-free entry for HKSAR passport holders with effect from November 28.



## November

- 2 The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, attends the opening of the first APEC Port Services Network Conference on port development in Shenzhen.  
Hong Kong and Korean Customs sign the minutes of the 28th Customs Co-operation Conference in Jeju, Korea to foster closer co-operation.
- 3 The Chief Secretary for Administration visits London to promote Hong Kong's strategic position as a springboard for British companies to conduct business in the Mainland. He also visits selected arts and culture facilities.  
The Chief Executive opens the Hong Kong National Geopark in Sai Kung. The park's national status was granted by the Central Government.
- 10 The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, commends Hong Kong's athletes on their return from the 11th National Games in Shandong where they won seven medals — two gold, one silver and four bronze.
- 13 Hong Kong and New Zealand conclude negotiations on a Closer Economic Partnership Agreement.  
The Chief Executive attends the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Economic Leaders' Meeting in Singapore.
- 15 The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Edward Yau, leaves for Israel to attend WATEC 2009, an international exhibition and conference on water and environmental technologies.  
The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury begins a visit to Germany and Switzerland where he will address the Euro Finance Week Lead Conference.
- 18 The Government publishes a 'Consultation Document on the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012' to seek public views on how to introduce more democratic elements into the two electoral methods for 2012.
- 24 The Secretary for Justice addresses the Sixth ASEAN-China Prosecutors General Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam.  
Hong Kong and Macao sign a Memorandum of Understanding on immigration convenience.
- 30 The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development leads a delegation to the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation in Geneva.

## December

- 1 Hong Kong and Malaysia sign a Joint Declaration on Strengthening Economic Co-operation.

- 4 The Legislative Council's Finance Committee approves the recommendations in the three grade structure review reports on civil servants salaries, increments and allowances — which was accepted and refined by the Chief Executive in Council.
- 5 State Councillor Madam Liu Yandong officiates at the opening of the Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza. The Games are the first major, international and multi-sports event staged by Hong Kong.
- 6 Hong Kong and Canada sign a Memorandum of Understanding on a working holiday arrangement for young people, effective from March 1, 2010.
- 13 The Financial Secretary officiates at the ground-breaking ceremony for the expansion of Hong Kong Disneyland.
- 15 The Secretary for the Environment attends the Copenhagen Climate Summit for Mayors where he speaks about Hong Kong's expanding railway network and the promotion of energy efficiency and electric vehicles to lower carbon emissions.
- A ceremony in Zhuhai marks the start of construction on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.
- Hong Kong students win three gold and three silver medals at the Sixth International Junior Science Olympiad in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- 18 The Chief Executive commends the best-yet performance by Hong Kong athletes at an East Asian Games where they won a record 110 medals: 26 gold, 31 silver and 53 bronze.
- 21 The Government launches the Human Swine Influenza Vaccination Programme to provide free/subsidised vaccinations to target groups.
- 23 A ground-breaking ceremony marks the start of construction work on the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal.
- 28 The Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the ASEAN Members States, China, Japan and Korea and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority announce the signing of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation Agreement, which will strengthen the region's capacity to safeguard against increased risks and challenges in the global economy.