

In the Name of God, the Compassionate the Merciful

**Honorable John Tsang,
The Financial Secretary of HKSAR
Commissioner Lü Xinhua
Distinguished guests
My fellow Iranian Compatriots
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have the honor to celebrate the 29th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution in your esteemed presence this evening.

29 years ago these days, Iranian people created one of the most grass-roots and most significant revolutions of the 20th century right after which 99.8 percent of them voted for the Islamic Republic of Iran as the system of government.

Thanks to the Almighty God, perseverance of our people and great historical and cultural support, Iran is of the most progressive nations in the region in all aspects of politics, economy, science and culture, despite the economic and political hardships over the past 29 years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Politically, Islamic Republic of Iran celebrates its 29th anniversary while it has proudly held more than 30 parliamentary, Presidential, and city council elections.

From economic point of view, based on the statistics by the Economist, Iran is ranked World's 20th economy with a GDP of 222 billion US dollars in the year 2007 which is expected to reach 400 billion US dollars within a span of 5 years.

Given Hong Kong Government's new look at Islamic financial markets, in the presence of honorable John Tsang, I would like to quote the research findings by the Banker that put Iran at the top of the list of Islamic countries and financial institutions. According to the Banker, Iran is second to none in terms of Islamic financial reserves with 154 billion US

dollars. Two of Iranian banks with a total capital of 70 billion US dollars are respectively ranked first and second biggest Islamic Finance institutions in the world.

In the scientific arena, today's Iran is experiencing an immense software movement in producing science and reaching pinnacles of science. My country is currently holding the first place in the Middle East region in such scientific areas as mathematics, mechanics, polymer, chemistry, chemical engineering, nanotechnology and medical engineering.

Culturally, some thousand years of history and civilization have enticed the International Tourism Organization to put us among top ten countries in the world in terms of ancient and historical attractions, not to mention being introduced as among the top 5 countries in terms of natural beauty and four seasons climate by the same organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Iran's rapid development has necessitated the exploitation and diversification of our energy resources. And despite having the second biggest oil and gas reserves in the world, there is an increasing attention toward renewable energies and widespread measures have been taken up in this regard.

Tapping into renewable energy resources has fortunately started off for a long time (around 40 years ago). The reactors for research and other installations built by our western friends at that time as they were adamant about us developing its use, the initial grounds caught the attention of the Iranian scientists and experts so much so that today my country is self-sufficient in achieving the advanced technology of uranium enrichment and the peaceful advantages of this energy is on the agenda of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the trend has been accelerated most especially after the release of the reports by IAEA that attested to the peaceful purposes of our nuclear program.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The historical and expanded ties between Iran and China that have been intertwined with their old cultures through Silky Road are expanding at an accelerated rate. The volume of trade in 2006 between the two countries was 15 billion US dollars compared to the current figure in 2007 which has reached 20 billion US dollars and it is expected to reach 200

billion US dollars within the next decade. And the role of Hong Kong as an international gateway to Mainland China is therefore of great significance.

Based on our estimates, the volume of trade both direct and indirect between Iran and Hong Kong has reached 5 billion Hong Kong dollars in 2007, an increase of around 1 billion. It is interesting to learn that Hong Kong was the biggest importer of pistachios or what you call “happy nuts” from Iran.

Allow me to take this opportunity and also add that a 40 percent rise in the number of visas issued for Hong Kong citizens to Iran is another indicative of a positive trend for better realization of the economic potentials of my country. It is also a prelude to the ever increasing expansion of bilateral ties.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would also like to welcome our dear Iranian compatriots who are mostly of the accomplished academic and successful business figures in Hong Kong and South of China to this occasion.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I would like to conclude by expressing thanks once again for your esteemed participation in this ceremony and by expressing hope for the expansion of ties and links between the peoples of Iran and China. May God bless the Government and people of Hong Kong SAR with health, welfare and success in this brand Chinese New Year.

Kung Hei Fat Choi

Thank you.