

## For Hong Kong, we will do our best!

### TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY FACILITATION SERVICES SECTION, FILM SERVICES OFFICE

*“At 6.30am on January 8, 2003, three traffic policemen visited the square in front of Two International Finance Centre with their motorcycles. They told us that they were fully aware of our operation and that they would do their best to help out. Before they drove away, one of the traffic policemen turned and said: ‘For Hong Kong, we will do our best!’”*

In his letter of thanks to the Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee Hwa, Philip Lee, the line producer of “Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life” said: “I am not trying to dramatise the situation at the time, but it was indeed very touching and encouraging.” Mr Lee wrote to pay tribute to the Hong Kong Government for its support throughout the location shoot in Hong Kong, which was co-ordinated by the Film Services Office under the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA).

*Promotion poster for  
“Lara Croft Tomb  
Raider: The Cradle  
of Life”.*

### Good co-ordination made filming in Hong Kong a success

Starring Academy Award winner Angelina Jolie, who described Hong Kong as “amazing”, the film had a budget of over US\$100 million. About 30% of location filming was carried out in Hong Kong. Major scenes include a parachute jump from the 83rd floor of the newly built Two International Finance Centre.

Ms Camy Mak, the Principal Entertainment Standards Control Officer (Film Services) with TELA, acknowledged that it was not always easy to meet the needs of the filmmakers. “It was a great challenge for us to accommodate all of their requests, especially those made at short notice,” she said. “Like the parachute jump scene – it was an unprecedented idea to film an international actress leaping from the tallest building in Hong Kong.”



Filming also took place at bustling Times Square in Causeway Bay, Victoria Harbour, Po Toi O village in the New Territories and Aberdeen Harbour. The combination of Hong Kong's tall buildings and rich cultural traditions provided a fascinating backdrop to the film's storyline.

"We were grateful that the government departments and parties from different sectors afforded us full co-operation," Ms Mak said. "We hope all members of society appreciate how beneficial foreign filming activities are to Hong Kong."

*The parachute jump at Two International Finance Centre.*

### Benefits brought to Hong Kong economy

"The intangible benefits to Hong Kong are enormous," Ms Mak said. "Imagine the 20-minute film-clip showcasing Hong Kong's magnificent cityscape being screened worldwide. By putting Asia's world city in the spotlight, the promotional boost to Hong Kong's image will be immense."



According to the Association of Film Commissioners International 1993 Member Survey, the ratio normally adopted to estimate the amount of money generated by location filming is 1:2.5. For every \$1 spent on production, \$2.50 goes into the economy. The filming of "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life" in Hong Kong brought in more than HK \$40 million to the economy in eight days.

Hollywood producer Paramount Pictures sent a letter of thanks to the Chief Executive for helping the studio to realise all of its complicated missions:

*"We reached for the moon and we believe we achieved it ... Needless to say, none of this would have been possible without your gracious support." – Director Jan de Bont and Producer Lloyd Levin.*

"It was worth the effort," Ms Mak said. "The film opened in fourth place at the US box office in late July with sales of US\$21.7 million in the first week. It is an honour to have contributed to the production of such a world-acclaimed film. The efforts of the government departments and the public in making the film a roaring success deserve recognition. We look forward to seeing Asia's world city soar in the international film industry."

### Film Services Office the first in Asia

The Film Services Office was established in April 1998 under TELA after the Chief Executive committed in his 1997 Policy Address to promote Hong Kong's film industry.

In 2002 alone, it offered assistance to 170 overseas and 128 local film crews shooting on location in Hong Kong. The office provides services for any film-related activities, both foreign and local. It has a film production resource



centre with a database of information about over 600 film and audio-visual production and post-production companies and a location library housing more than 10,000 slides and photographs showing possible sites for shooting.

*Photos at the library show the diverse locations Hong Kong can offer.*

*For Hong Kong, we will do our best!*

“We actively approach companies. We send promotional VCDs and publications to major film companies to keep them in touch. We also actively participate in the annual Locations Global Expo in Los Angeles,” Ms Mak said. “In 2002, we successfully invited 10 Hollywood celebrities to act as Hong Kong Film Ambassadors to promote Hong Kong in the United States as a great location for filming. Director Oliver Stone and action star Jean-Claude Van Damme are also our ambassadors,” she said.



*Oliver Stone (right) and Jean-Claude Van Damme were invited to be film ambassadors for Hong Kong.*

Hong Kong was the first place in Asia to establish a film services office. Singapore, Japan and Korea have now followed suit. Hong Kong’s Film Services Office has a clear mission to become a major player in the global audio-visual market and is enthusiastic about the future of Hong Kong’s film industry.

“Hong Kong has a rich cultural tradition of East meets West as well as the old meeting the new. We look forward to seeing Hong Kong’s vibrancy and uniqueness immortalised in more world-class films,” Ms Mak said.