

**Congratulatory Remarks by Miss Eliza Lee,
Director-General of Communications,
at the Asia Submarine-cable Express ("ASE")
Cable Landing Ceremony in Hong Kong
30 November 2012**

Mr Lee, Mr Tan, Mr Mok, Mr Harada, Mr Takase, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

2. It is a great honour for me to be here with you today on this important occasion of commemorating the landing of the Asia Submarine-cable Express ("ASE") in Hong Kong. Today's ceremony represents a significant milestone not only for NTT Communications ("NTT") but also for the development of submarine cables in Hong Kong.

3. As we draw near to the festive season, some of us would probably still remember what happened on the Boxing Day in 2006, when the submarine cable systems in the Asian region were severely disrupted by a major earthquake in the Taiwan Strait. It dawned on us then the strategic importance of enhancing the resilience and diversity of this extremely important infrastructure of submarine cables. And in this regard, with a designed capacity of over 15 terabits per second, the ASE will not only boost significantly our external telecommunications capacity, but will also contribute to the overall network resilience of both Hong Kong as well as the Asian-Pacific Region against similar natural disasters.

4. As a hub of new submarine cables in the region, Hong Kong possesses a number of strengths:

- We are located in the central part among Japan, Korea and SE Asia, making Hong Kong a natural geographical hub for these economies.
- We serve as a natural gateway for the Mainland. We are connected with the Mainland by high capacity overland cable systems, with on-going connection with the other submarine landing stations in the Mainland, and overland cable systems in Russia and Central Asia and on-wards to Europe. These further enhance the resilience of our external communications capability.

- Submarine cable system which lands in Hong Kong is able to interconnect readily with the existing systems for exchange of transit traffic and mutual system backup.
- With our stable and pro-business environment, free market approach, and transparent regulatory and judiciary systems, investors can be given assurance in respect of their huge investments in the submarine cable systems, which have a typical life span of 20 years or more.
- Hong Kong is world renowned as the financial centre in the region, for its high density of regional corporate headquarters and the confluence of key technology segments (such as data centres and content service providers) which drive the growth of the submarine cable industry in Hong Kong. Indeed, if you have followed the recent media reports, a number of heavy weights in the ICT industry have either decided or are planning to set up data centres right here at Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate, just next door to or across the street from NTT. In fact, the Industrial Estate is fast becoming the cluster of submarine cable systems and data centres for Hong Kong.

5. The Hong Kong government recognizes the importance of submarine cables to the economy of Hong Kong, and encouraging and facilitating the landing of submarine cables is accorded high priority in the policy agenda. Since 2010, my office - the Office of the Communications Authority - has been providing a single-point-of-contact and coordination service to assist interested parties in applying for the necessary statutory approvals to land their submarine cables in Hong Kong.

6. We are gratified that NTT has identified the business potential at the early stage, and the ASE is indeed the first submarine cable that comes to Hong Kong after the commencement of our single-point-of-contact service. We have been working closely with the local office of NTT, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, and colleagues of both Mr. Lee and Mr. Tan to bring the ASE project to fruition. With the installation of the new submarine cable and co-location of its data centre at Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate, NTT will be well placed to provide large capacity, high speed and ultra-low latency connectivity to the business community in Hong Kong and the region.

7. Let me take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to the cooperation and collaboration of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and relevant government departments which has been instrumental in making the landing of the ASE system in Hong Kong a reality and a great success. Last but not least, I wish to thank NTT for their confidence in us and applaud their decision in making their long-term investment in Hong Kong. I also thank you all for your effort and contributions to bring Hong Kong's external telecommunications facilities to a new height.

Thank you very much.