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MOVIE INDUSTRY SEEKS HONGKONGERS' HELP TO COMBAT MOVIE CAMCORD THIEVES

Theatre Owners, MPA and IFACT-GC Step Up Public Awareness Campaign to Stem Increase in Illegal Camcordings in City's Cinemas

Hong Kong – The International Federation Against Copyright Theft - Greater China (IFACT-GC), representing the Motion Picture Association (MPA) in Hong Kong together with Hong Kong Theatres Association (HKTA) today announced two further measures to discourage the illegal camcording of movies in Hong Kong cinemas:

- 50,000 anti-camcording stickers to be fixed on the back of seats inside all cinemas in Hong Kong. These stickers highlight to cinema patrons that camcording is a crime with severe penalties and promote the reward scheme of HK$2,000 (US$256) for anyone reporting illegal camcording to cinema staff.

- The screening of a new anti-camcording trailer that will be shown in Hong Kong cinemas prior to feature movies.

"The vast majority of cinemagoers are decent, law abiding people wishing only to have a few hours entertainment," said the HKTA's President Vicky Wong. "We call on that majority to help us protect Hong Kong's movie industry by preventing criminals stealing movies from cinemas – if you see anyone camcording a movie in a cinema, please report it to one of our staff."

"Illegally camcorded movies cause significant harm to the economic success of movies, the industries that distribute them and the jobs these industries create," said Sam Ho, IFACT-GC's Executive Director and General Manager. "With excellent support from Hong Kong Customs, copyright holders and theatre owners are fighting camcording pirates. With help from the theatre-going public we can ensure that Hong Kong cinemas remain free of camcorder thieves."

This campaign was first launched last year on June 26. Several measures including the training of cinema staff, the establishment of the anti-camcording reward scheme and the deployment of Customs officers to patrol in cinemas were announced then and are currently in place. Despite these steps, there have been six cases this year.

Under Hong Kong law a person commits an offence if they have in their possession (without lawful authority or reasonable excuse) any video recording equipment in a place of public entertainment. Anyone breaking the law may be fined up to HK$50,000 (US$6,410) and imprisoned for up to three months.

Hong Kong Customs takes strict enforcement action against the illegal camcording of movies. Under the Copyright Ordinance, making of an infringing copy of a film for the purpose of trade and business is a serious offence which attracts a heavy penalty, namely, imprisonment for 4 years and a fine of HK$50,000 for each infringing copy.

In Asia Pacific, the number of successful unauthorized recordings has risen exponentially. In 2007, there were 33 from this region. This is a 65% increase as compared to 2006 when there were 20. It is particularly damaging because it occurs at the very start of the distribution cycle, affecting the economic opportunities for the film throughout the rest of its existence. Films are camcorded in the first few days of their release, then distributed in digital form worldwide on peer-to-peer file-sharing networks and other online outlets. Optical disc-replication labs use the pirated films to create illegal DVDs and other optical discs, and then sell the physical copies to bootleg dealers around the world.

On May 23, IFACT-GC joined the MPA's ***Operation Takedown***, an aggressive enforcement and outreach initiative scheduled to run through till July 31. ***Operation Takedown***, supported by 13 countries and territories across the Asia-Pacific region focuses on the prevention of illegal camcording of newly released titles in cinemas, Internet piracy, and the production, distribution and sale of pirated DVDs.

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About the MPA: *The Motion Picture Association and Motion Picture Association – International (MPA) represent the interests of major motion picture companies in the global marketplace. On behalf of its member companies, the MPA conducts investigations around the world, assists with the criminal and civil litigation generated by such cases, and conducts education outreach programs to teach movie fans around the world about the harmful effects of piracy. The MPA directs its worldwide anti-piracy operations from its headquarters based in Los Angeles, California and has regional offices located in Brussels (Europe, Middle East and Africa), São Paulo (Latin America), Montreal (Canada) and Singapore (Asia-Pacific). The MPA's anti-piracy activities have helped to transform entire markets from pirate to legitimate, benefiting video distributors, retailers, and foreign and local filmmakers alike. The MPA member companies include: Buena Vista International, Inc.; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Releasing International Corporation; Twentieth Century Fox International Corporation; Universal International Films, Inc.; and Warner Bros. Pictures International, a division of Warner Bros. Pictures Inc. For more information about the MPA, please visit www.mpa-i.org.*

About the IFACT-GC: *The International Federation Against Copyright Theft – Greater China was established in 2006 by the Motion Picture Association to protect the film industry in the Greater China region from the adverse impact of copyright theft. IFACT-GC works closely with its supporters, government and enforcement authorities to protect the Greater China film and television industry, retailers and movie fans. For more information about the IFACT-GC, please visit www.ifact-gc.org.*

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