

HKSARG warmly welcomes increase of duty-free allowance for luggage articles for visitors who are Mainland residents

A Government spokesman said today (June 28) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) warmly welcomed and expressed sincere gratitude for the Central Government's active response to the HKSARG's proposal, announcing that the duty-free allowance for luggage articles brought into the Mainland from Hong Kong by visitors who are Mainland residents will be increased from the current level of RMB5,000 to RMB12,000, while retaining the measure of allowing for additional duty-free goods at the value of RMB3,000 purchased at port entry duty-free stores, bringing the total amount of allowance to RMB15,000.

The new measure will be applicable to six land ports, including Lo Wu, Futian (Lok Ma Chau Spur Line), Shenzhen Bay, West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and more, starting from July 1, and then be implemented at all ports starting from August 1.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said, "I am very grateful for the care of the Central Government and the introduction of various measures to promote Hong Kong's economy. The current measure of increasing the duty-free allowance for luggage articles brought into the Mainland from Hong Kong by visitors who are Mainland residents, implemented under the framework of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, shows the Central Government's support for the HKSAR's economic development. The new measure will enhance the shopping experience for Mainland resident visitors in Hong Kong and allow them greater flexibility when shopping, which is beneficial for Hong Kong in attracting more visitors and boosting the development of diversified tourism. Additionally, the measure can help stimulate the retail atmosphere in Hong Kong and bring vibrancy to the local economy."

The number of visitor arrivals has continued to increase in the first five months of this year. As of end-May, the total number of visitor arrivals reached 18 million, representing an increase of around 78 per cent compared to the same period last year. Of this, 13.8 million were Mainland visitors, an increase of around 74 per cent compared to the same period last year. The average length of stay for overnight Mainland visitors was 3.1 nights in the first quarter of this year, with an average per capita spending of HK\$5 400. The new measure will provide Mainland visitors with more shopping choices in Hong Kong to cater to their consumption needs, allow them to enjoy the pleasure of shopping and enrich their travel experience in Hong Kong.

Under the new arrangements, it is roughly estimated that this will bring

an additional HK\$8.8 billion to HK\$17.6 billion in shopping expenditure to Hong Kong, generating value-added of about HK\$2.7 billion to HK\$5.4 billion to the Hong Kong economy.

The various measures introduced by the Central Government in support of Hong Kong, including adding 10 more Individual Visit Scheme cities, extending the period of stay for holders of an exit endorsement for business visit travelling to Hong Kong, and launching the Express Rail Link sleeper train between Hong Kong and Beijing/Shanghai, will further support Hong Kong's tourism and economic development and ensure the long-term prosperity and stability. Hong Kong's tourism and related industries are in the process of complementing the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" through innovation and transformation, and developing more diversified tourism resources and vibrant travel itineraries in Hong Kong, with a view to adding vitality to the city's economy.

The HKSARG will carry out promotional efforts to inform Mainland visitors and related trades about the new policy arrangements. In addition, the Hong Kong Tourism Board will launch a new summer promotional event, Summer Chill Hong Kong, on July 11 to coincide with the peak season of visitor arrivals during the summer holidays. This will involve distributing 500 000 sets of offers worth more than HK\$100 million, covering sightseeing and transport, dining and consumption discounts. Full support will also be given to various large-scale consumption and promotion activities, including the second edition of the Hong Kong Shopping Festival organised by the Hong Kong Retail Management Association, to collaborate with the trade in attracting more overnight visitors to Hong Kong and encourage them to increase consumption.