

LCQ10: Attracting the high-end consumer group to visit Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Nixie Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

It is reported that the State President made important remarks in an instruction on the 17th of this month on the work related to the tourism sector: "All regions and departments must effectively strengthen the sense of responsibility and mission in their work, do their share of work well and coordinate joint efforts to promote the high-quality development of the tourism industry with concrete actions and ensure its steady and sustainable growth." There are views that Hong Kong should promote the diverse development of the tourism industry (including tapping new areas of consumption growth) and proactively attract the high-end consumer group to visit Hong Kong, so as to achieve the high-quality development of its tourism industry. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows if there are sufficient service providers for custom-
designed tours in the market to offer personalized luxury travel experiences and plan tailor-made itineraries (e.g. guided shopping for famous-brand fashion and accessories, luxury sports events, rides on luxury yachts and helicopters, as well as high-end art experiences/auctions) for the high-end consumer group;

(2) as there are views that family-friendly tourism and pet-friendly tourism have great appeal to the high-end consumer group, whether the Government has plans to formulate targeted measures for such consumer group, such as putting in place special quarantine-free entry arrangements for their pets (e.g. introducing the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Pet Passport" by modelling on the European Union's practice of pet passports) and providing more babycare facilities at famous tourist attractions, so as to further enhance this consumer group's desire for and satisfaction from visiting and spending in Hong Kong, thereby achieving the high-quality integrated development of Hong Kong's tourism industry in terms of both software and hardware; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as there are views that organizing mega events is one of the important directions in attracting the high-end consumer group, whether the Government has conducted promotion targeting the high-end consumer group from specific countries/regions on mega events organized by Hong Kong; if so, of the following information on such promotional efforts (set out in the table below): (i) countries/regions targeted, (ii) form of promotion and details of strategies adopted, and (iii) effectiveness; if not, the reasons for that; and

Title of mega event	(i)	(ii)	(iii)

(4) as it is learnt that the life style and consumption pattern of the Muslim high-end consumer group carry distinct religious overtones, whether the authorities have considered adding more Muslim-friendly facilities in the 18 districts in Hong Kong and compiling a guidebook on Halal-certified food and dining, so as to enhance the awareness of and interest in Hong Kong's unique travel experience among the Muslim high-end consumer group, thereby attracting them to stay longer and extend the length of their overnight stay in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

We have been actively developing tourism products and projects with local and international characteristics and diversifying source markets, with a view to attracting high value-added overnight visitors and driving high-quality tourism development. In respect of the question raised by the Hon Nixie Lam, having consulted the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the reply is as follows:

(1) Hong Kong's tourism industry is mature with different types of travel agents in the market providing personalised themed itinerary planning and other services for high-spending clients or tourists from other source markets and with different characteristics. With reference to visitors' budget and preferences, travel agents tailor-make itineraries of different themes and contents, so as to provide tourists with high-quality travel experiences. For instance, to attract visitors having a preference in high-end tourism experiences and specially curated itineraries, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) collaborated with the travel trade and launched in May this year a new guidebook "Travel in Luxe¹/₄ Hong Kong" featuring a wide range of the city's distinctive lifestyle travel experiences, including thematic selections in family bonds offerings. Some examples of these experiences include whole-venue blocked-out theme park exploration, VIP-exclusive interactions in attractions, accommodation in luxurious suites in star-rated hotels, etc. The guidebook also introduces other exquisite services, which are of great interest to high-spending visitors, such as private jets, helicopters, yachts, VIP group reservation of the Peak Tram, exclusive shopping at luxury brand stores and more. The luxury travel experience guidebook enables high-spending visitors to plan their trip to Hong Kong. The HKTB will continue to adopt a multi-faceted strategy to attract high-spending visitors to Hong Kong to enrich their tourist experience, extend their stay and increase their spending in Hong Kong at the same time.

(2) As an international tourist destination, we have been working tirelessly to enhance Hong Kong's tourism facilities and supporting services for providing tourists with high-quality travel experiences. In terms of nursery facilities, many tourist attractions such as Hong Kong Disneyland, Hong Kong

Ocean Park, M+, Hong Kong Palace Museum, Hong Kong Wetland Park, Ngong Ping 360, Hong Kong Museum of Art, etc, have their nursery rooms open to visitors to facilitate their taking care of babies.

In respect of import of animals, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) currently regulates the import of live animals through a permit system, to prevent the transmission of animal diseases, including rabies, into Hong Kong. Rabies is a contagious disease that can cause human fatality and the incubation period can last several months. Rabies is almost always fatal once clinical signs appear and no specific treatment is available. Currently, cats and dogs imported from places that are considered rabies-free or where rabies cases are few and under effective control are exempt from quarantine, provided that relevant requirements are fulfilled. As for cats and dogs imported from places with higher or uncertain risk of rabies, they must undergo quarantine for not less than 120 days, to prevent the transmission of rabies into Hong Kong. In view of recent developments in biotechnology, the AFCD is conducting risk assessment to explore the feasibility of shortening the quarantine period for imported cats and dogs, by measures such as rabies vaccination and rabies antibody titer testing.

(3) Mega events can successfully showcase Hong Kong's strengths and charms, while creating more exciting experiences for global visitors, including high-spending segments. They will in turn boost the economic gains of tourism, hotel, food and beverage, retail, and other sectors. The Government announced on May 21 the calendar of mega events in Hong Kong for the second half of 2024. It is estimated that at least 210 mega events would be held throughout the year and approximately 1.7 million tourists would be drawn to participate in the mega events. Their spending is estimated to be about HK\$7.2 billion, bringing value-added of about HK\$4.3 billion to the Hong Kong economy.

The HKTB leverages different mega events and city happenings to launch global promotions in different source markets, followed by rolling out specific strategies and tourism products in respect of different markets. For instance, in light of the series of world-class art and cultural events during "Art March", including Art@Hravour, Art Basel Hong Kong and Art Central, together with another large-scale art event, French May, the HKTB partnered with Mainland travel agents to introduce travel packages featuring high-end local hotels and admission tickets to the exhibitions or arts and cultural attractions, to motivate visitors to come to Hong Kong for art and cultural tours. The HKTB also joined hands with Mainland airlines to organise an air ticket lucky draw campaign riding on "Art March" to attract visitors to Hong Kong and spend in town. On its Mainland social media platforms including WeChat, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Weibo, and in partnership with Xiaohongshu, the HKTB produced and launched art and cultural map and invited KOLs to visit the city, jointly promoting Hong Kong's art and cultural tourism appeal.

On the other hand, riding on the Hong Kong Sevens in April, the HKTB also rolled out overseas promotions targeting different segments, partnering with overseas travel agents to launch event-limited Hong Kong Sevens-focused

tourism products and media familiarisation experiences, so as to deepen overseas travellers' understanding of Hong Kong's mega event ambience. For mature rugby markets such as Australia and South Korea, the HKTb not only invited local media to visit Hong Kong to watch the games, but also worked with Australian travel agents to design Hong Kong Sevens-themed tourism products to target high-spending travellers.

With the positive responses received by the HKTb events among the public and visitors, the HKTb will continue to stage its six flagship events of various experiences including sports, gastronomy, and festivity, including the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, the Hong Kong Cyclothon, the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, the Hong Kong WinterFest, the Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations and the Hong Kong Chinese New Year Celebrations, while injecting new perspectives, elements and experiences to enrich the event content and further enhance their appeal. At the same time, the HKTb will step up promotions in the Mainland and overseas to attract visitors to visit Hong Kong repeatedly for participating in these events.

The HKTb also rides on various international Meetings, Incentive travels, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) events such as the 17th Asian Financial Forum, WOW Summit Hong Kong 2024 and Fortune Innovation Forum to offer the visiting participants with different art and cultural experiences, including complimentary tickets to M+ and Hong Kong Palace Museum, land and sea adventures on Chinese-style junk Aqua Luna, nostalgic tram and open-top sightseeing bus tour across the Victoria Harbour and among different landmarks and iconic attractions in the city. The experience let the participants take a journey beyond the conference halls and expose them to the brilliant night-time urban charm of Hong Kong, while promoting Hong Kong's tourism appeal and stimulating their spending.

(4) The Muslim is a tourism segment with great potential. The HKTb has consolidated a series of travel information for Muslim visitors on its website DiscoverHongKong.com, including cuisines, hotels and accommodations, local cultures and activities suitable for Muslim visitors, with a view to attracting them to travel to Hong Kong and enhancing their travelling experience in the city. In addition, the HKTb will co-operate with the trade to further enhance the publicity of the infrastructure with a view to promoting Muslim travel. The HKTb will invite credible Muslim accreditation organisation to collaborate with local accreditation organisation for helping trade partners in different sectors such as hotels, shopping arcades and attractions to be certified in order to develop Hong Kong as a Muslim-friendly destination. Local Muslim groups will be invited to organise briefing sessions for the trade on the needs of Muslim visitors in terms of food and beverage, accommodation and attraction facilities, so as to help the trade to better understand Muslim-friendly tourism. The HKTb will also produce different promotional materials and enhance the content of its website to attract more Muslim visitors to visit Hong Kong.

In terms of visitor source markets, the Middle East has become an emerging market drawing attention in recent years. In May this year, the HKTb launched a series of promotions targeting countries in the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC), including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, with a view to stepping up efforts to promote Hong Kong tourism to the Middle East source markets and attracting more visitors.

The HKTB also led the largest-ever trade delegation from Hong Kong with more than 30 representatives of the Hong Kong travel trade, including travel agents, attractions and hotels, to participate in the largest international travel trade show in the Middle East, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai, from May 6 to 9, 2024. The delegate networked with trade partners in the Middle East and discussed partnership opportunities. The HKTB set up a pavilion of Hong Kong at the event to showcase the city's novel experiences and offerings, deepening Arabian trade partners' understanding of Hong Kong in the tourism industry.

During the period of ATM, the HKTB signed two partnership memoranda of understanding (MoU) respectively, one with the leading airline in the Middle East Emirates and the other with leading online travel agent Dnata Travel Group to deepen exchange and partnership in promoting Hong Kong as an ideal tourism destination among Middle Eastern markets. The HKTB will partner with Emirates to organise familiarisation trip to Hong Kong for media, KOLs, travel trade and other stakeholders from GCC countries, allowing them to experience Hong Kong in person through specially curated itineraries. On the other hand, the HKTB and Dnata Travel Group will jointly promote Hong Kong tourism through the travel agent's online and offline platforms.

In addition to the promotions in the Middle East, the HKTB has invited more than 10 entrepreneurs, travel trade representatives and stakeholders from the Middle East to visit Hong Kong in May this year to experience the charm of Hong Kong. The group also visited Muslim-friendly facilities in Hong Kong to deepen their understanding of Hong Kong's cuisine, hotel accommodation, culture and travel experience for Muslim travelers so that they may in turn recommend Hong Kong to more travellers from the Middle East through their influence and networks.