

LCQ15: Attracting travellers to visit Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Benson Luk and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (December 6):

Question:

It is learnt that Hong Kong's neighbouring tourism competitors have proactively rolled out measures to revitalize the tourism industry after the epidemic, including stepping up publicity, facilitating visa issuance, and constructing or developing new tourist attractions and facilities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government has indicated in the 2023 Policy Address that it will publish the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0 next year, whether the Government will formulate specific strategies in the Blueprint for integrating major cultural and sports events into tourism projects; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has formulated new short, medium and long-term strategies to attract travellers to visit Hong Kong in the light of the campaigns launched by competitors in the region to boost the development of their tourism industries; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that, apart from M+ and the Hong Kong Palace Museum which opened in recent years, other local tourism facilities have already been in operation for quite some time since their commissioning, whether the Government has plans to construct new tourism facilities in the coming five years; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) of the mega events to be held in Hong Kong for the first time in the coming five years, and the details of such events?

Reply:

President,

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Benson Luk, the reply is as follows:

(1) and (2) Since the complete lifting of inbound travel restrictions in February this year, Hong Kong's tourism industry has been recovering steadily and is largely the same with that of other regions. However, there are many challenges, including the global economic conditions, competition from other neighbouring regions, changes in travel patterns of visitors, air capacity

limitation, etc. Under these challenges, we have launched the "Hello Hong Kong" large-scale global promotional campaign to send a welcoming message to the world and entice visitors to come and experience Hong Kong's diverse appeals in person. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), other than organising various large-scale events, has also distributed around two million "Hong Kong Goodies" visitor consumption vouchers, each with a value of \$100, to warmly welcome visitors.

In the coming year, the HKTB will make every effort to attract visitors to Hong Kong:

1. promoting tourism through mega events and reinforcing Hong Kong's position as the Events Capital of Asia by leveraging Chinese and Western festivals and year-round mega events, as well as integrating the development of culture, sports and tourism;
2. continuing to develop Hong Kong into an international tourism hub and core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism by leveraging the city's role as a "super-connector" and "super value-adder" connecting the Mainland with the rest of the world;
3. developing more special tourism products and experiences in collaboration with the travel trade focusing on potential markets and visitor segments, to attract visitors from different source markets to come to Hong Kong; and
4. attracting high value-added visitors and stepping up the development of cruise tourism to elevate Hong Kong's competitiveness as Asia's cruise hub by tapping into Hong Kong's advantage as the "World's Meeting Place".

Apart from the above strategies, the Government and the travel trade will continue to implement measures to enrich tourism resources in Hong Kong, with a view to attracting more visitors.

In recent years, we have launched a number of projects enriched with art, heritage, creative and green tourism characteristics, such as "Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival", "Design District Hong Kong", "City in Time" and "Enhancement of Hiking Trails", and we are working at full steam to roll out another phase of these projects. In addition, we continue to work with relevant government departments to diversify and promote green tourism in Hong Kong through upgrading the facilities in the Hong Kong Wetland Park, and exploring the development of a hiking hub at Pak Tam Chung.

For promoting the development of tourism, the Government has announced in the 2023 Policy Address that the Cultural and Heritage Sites Local Tour Incentive Scheme will be transformed into the Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme (CTIS) to provide more in-depth itinerary design, training, etc., with a view to encouraging the trade to develop more thematic tours. The CTIS will be rolled out in the first quarter of 2024.

Besides, the Tourism Commission (TC) and the HKTB have been reviewing the light and sound show, "A Symphony of Lights". We target to devise a plan

next year with a view to bringing a fresh experience to visitors. In addition, we will promote cultural and eco-tourism in Sha Tau Kok so that more locals and visitors can learn about the history, culture, and natural geological features of Sha Tau Kok and nearby outlying islands. In the long run, we will also explore with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the feasibility of establishing a Hong Kong Sha Tau Kok and Shenzhen Shatoujiao cultural tourism zone.

National planning documents promulgated in recent years provided guiding directions for tourism development of Hong Kong. The Culture and Tourism Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (the Plan) sets out the guiding directions for the overall cultural and tourism development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and guides the development of GBA into an exchange hub for culture of the East and the West and a world-class tourism destination. The Development Blueprint for Hong Kong Tourism Industry (Blueprint) promulgated in 2017 well echoed with the guiding directions laid down in the national planning documents.

The current-term Government has set up the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) to promote the in-depth integration of culture, sports and tourism and collaboration among the three parties. Some examples are set out at Part 4 of this reply.

The Government announced in the 2023 Policy Address the formulation of the Blueprint 2.0 for making enhancements in various aspects to complement tourism development. The Blueprint 2.0 will be published next year after trade consultation. In the process of updating Blueprint 2.0, the Government will consult the trade and strive to reflect their concerns with a view to implementing more measures to foster collaboration among culture, sports and tourism for promoting the development of the tourism industry.

(3) The Government and the travel trade have been considering adding culture, sports and tourism facilities, including the Kai Tak Sports Park to be completed by 2024, East Kowloon Cultural Centre to be opened by phases in 2024, Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre targeted to be opened in 2028, New Territories East Cultural Centre targeted to be opened in 2030, etc. We have also been striving to enhance the attractiveness of existing tourism attractions and facilities. Peak Tram has completed its upgrading plan and reopened in August last year. Ngong Ping 360 launched its "Crystal+" cabin last December, offering 360-degree panoramic view to visitors. Hong Kong Disneyland Resort (HKDL) has been actively taking forward its multi-year expansion plan under which the Castle of Magical Dreams as well as brand new daytime and nighttime shows have been rolled out progressively from 2020 to 2022. In addition, the world's first ever and largest World of Frozen was officially opened on November 20 this year. HKDL will continue to take forward the remaining "Marvel" super heroes themed area project under the Plan in an orderly manner, in tandem with the pace of tourism recovery.

As for Ocean Park, the all-weather indoor-and-outdoor Water World and the Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong were officially open in 2021 and 2022 respectively, creating synergy to enhance Ocean Park's appeal as a

resort destination. The Government and Ocean Park Corporation are actively implementing various initiatives under the future strategy for Ocean Park, including those relating to the development of new tourism facilities, like taking forward outsourcing arrangement for the Adventure Zone in the upper park of Ocean Park, conducting investigation and design studies for the pier projects at Tai Shue Wan and Deep Water Bay, etc.

The TC is also taking forward the Lei Yue Mun (LYM) Waterfront Enhancement Project which will improve the facilities along LYM waterfront and enhance its connectivity with a view to further enhancing the attractiveness of LYM as a popular tourist attraction. Works under the project include the construction of a public landing facility, and the development of a waterfront promenade and related improvement works. The first phase of the works have been open to the public since early 2023 and the remaining works are expected to be completed in phases by end 2024.

(4) In 2023, the CSTB organised and supported many large-scale events, many of which were held for the first time or re-organised in physical form after being suspended for many years. In addition, there were many commercial concerts, exhibitions and performances. To consolidate Hong Kong's position as the "Events Capital of Asia", we will continue to organise these events and explore different types of large-scale events in coming years, to draw more high value-added overnight visitors to Hong Kong, offer them new experiences, and present Hong Kong's charm to the world again.

The CSTB and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council will organise the first-ever "Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo" (HKPAX) in Hong Kong from October 14 to 18, 2024. The HKPAX includes international showcases, pitching sessions, talks, exhibitions and networking activities. It will promote collaboration and trading of the performing arts industry, while at the same time, gather world-class performing arts programmes in Hong Kong and attract visitors to Hong Kong. We estimate that around 800 to 1 000 artists from overseas and 500 local artists will participate in the HKPAX and the programmes will attract around 30 000 audiences (including visitors).

The CSTB and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will organise "Chinese Culture Festival" on a regular basis from 2024 onwards, with a view to providing audiences with more opportunities to enjoy special programmes on Chinese culture, which include Chinese Opera, selected performing arts programmes, outstanding local works recognised by the China National Arts Fund, and activities such as film screenings. In addition, the "World Cultures Festival" will be organised regularly to showcase the essence of culture and arts from different countries and regions. Programmes include stage performances, film screenings, exhibitions, etc., allowing participants to experience the unique style of each country or region.

In addition, Hong Kong will host the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival" for the first time in 2024. The LCSD will co-ordinate high-quality productions and selected programmes of local arts groups and artists of the 9+2 Greater Bay Area cities, ranging from music, dance, Cantonese Opera, theatre, arts exhibition, literature and film

screenings, to promote the integration of arts and culture. The "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival" will be held immediately after the "Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo" to achieve better synergy.

The Mega Arts and Cultural Events (ACE) Fund, officially launched by the CSTB in April 2023, aims to attract and support international and large-scale arts and cultural events to be held in Hong Kong, with a view to developing Hong Kong into an arts and cultural metropolis. As of now, six events have been successfully organised (including Art Basel Hong Kong 2023, Art Central 2023, etc.), and the remaining four approved events will be held in the coming months.

Meanwhile, the CSTB is committed to developing Hong Kong into a centre for major international sports events and supporting local national sports associations (NSAs) in hosting major international sports events through the provision of matching fund and direct grant under the "M" Mark System. Since April 2023, there are 13 major international sports events being awarded "M" Mark status, of which 11 events have been held, including the Aramco Team Series Hong Kong, the FIA World Rallycross Championship and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (Hong Kong Section) Half Marathon staged in Hong Kong for the first time. The WDSF Breaking for Gold World Series will be held in Hong Kong for the first time in mid-December 2023, whereas the Women's U20 World Lacrosse Championship and WBSC Baseball5 World Cup are being planned to be staged in Hong Kong for the very first time in 2024. We will continue to assist NSAs and other private or non-governmental organisations in launching more new major sports events.

For MICE events (i.e. Meetings, Incentive travels, Conventions and Exhibitions), the HKTB recently won IBTM, the world's leading MICE event brand, to organise its inaugural MICE trade show IBTM Asia Pacific 2025, in Spring 2025 in Hong Kong. The event is expected to attract more than 1 500 travel trade and MICE professionals to come to Hong Kong for attending it. Between April and October this year, the HKTB had successfully bid or subsidised the staging of over 430 international MICE events in Hong Kong, involving over 300 000 MICE visitors and showcasing Hong Kong's strengths and appeal as an international MICE capital. These events include high-end international conferences hosted by internationally renowned business media and attended by A-list speakers from around the world, namely Tatler Gen. T Asia Summit (Note 1), Technology for Change Asia (Note 2), and Fortune Innovation Forum (Note 3), as well as 42 large-scale international MICE events such as the Jewellery & Gem WORLD Hong Kong held in September, the upcoming Insurtech Insights Asia 2023 to be held in December and the 63rd Orient & Southeast Asian Lions Forum to be held in 2026.

We will continue to attract more international and large-scale cultural, arts and sports events, tourism happenings and MICE activities to be held in Hong Kong through the Mega ACE Fund, "M" Mark and other resources. We will announce once the events are confirmed.

Note 1: Tatler Asia will stage three editions of the Tatler Gen. T Asia

Summit in Hong Kong between 2023 and 2025. The first edition took place in November 2023.

Note 2: The Economist will stage three editions of the Technology for Change Asia in Hong Kong between 2024 and 2026 with the first edition taking place in February 2024.

Note 3: Fortune will stage the Fortune Innovation Forum in Hong Kong in March 2024.