

LCQ15: Promoting tourism through movies and television dramas

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

Question:

It has been reported that the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council indicated earlier that Hong Kong should establish the concept of "tourism is everywhere" and endeavour to develop novel travel itineraries and products by drawing reference from the successful experience of other cities. In addition, it is learnt that in recent years, South Korea and New Zealand have preserved the filming locations or sets of some popular local movie/TV works and developed them into tourist attractions to attract visits by tourists. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it has been reported that the movie "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" built the set of the Kowloon Walled City at Tat Tak Public School in Ping Shan, Yuen Long and Shing Fung Film Studio in Ho Chung, Sai Kung, whether the authorities have considered liaising with the relevant film production company to develop the movie set into a tourist attraction, or keep part of the set and props at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Film Archive and the Kowloon Walled City Park, etc. for exhibition to attract tourist visits; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether the authorities have plans to work with local film production companies to develop movie-themed tourism products or activities, such as guided tours, workshops or interactive exhibitions, to promote Hong Kong's film culture, increase the diversity of Hong Kong's tourism industry and enhance Hong Kong's image and presence as a tourism destination; and

(3) whether the authorities will study how to create synergies with the tourism industry through locally produced movies and television dramas, so as to make travelling to Hong Kong more attractive; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Regarding the question raised by the Hon Rock Chen, I reply as follows:

(1) and (2) The film sets of "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" built on vacant government lands have been demolished upon completion of filming before returning the sites to the Government. The Secretary for Culture,

Sports and Tourism has witnessed the film was well received by the international film industry and the appeal of Hong Kong films during the delegation of Hong Kong Film Development Council and film industry led by him to the Cannes Film Festival. The Government is in discussion with the film company to explore about the possibility of organising an exhibition of the film related materials, for example, stills, video footage and props of the film so as to attract the public and tourists to visit and learn more about the history of Kowloon Walled City and behind-the-scenes of the film production. It is hoped that the film integrating with relevant tourism programmes, can facilitate development of film tourism.

In addition, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will enhance the existing contents of and arrangements for the guided tours to the Kowloon Walled City Park by strengthening the introduction to the history of the Kowloon Walled City and highlighting its connection to the setting and scenes of the film. The LCSD and the Tourism Commission can also provide training for practitioners of the tourism industry to enrich their understanding of the history and attractions of the Kowloon Walled City so as to increase the appeal of local tourist spots. Create Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Film Development Council will consider to support relevant exhibitions and promotional activities for promotion of film culture and film-related IP through the Film Development Fund.

The Government will continue to actively look for suitable Hong Kong films for development of film thematic tourist attractions and promotion of Hong Kong film culture. The current blending of the elements of "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" with tourism will provide valuable experience in integrating film culture and tourism in the future.

(3) In addition to dedicating to the provision of assistance to all film and TV productions in Hong Kong, Create Hong Kong has also been actively organising and subsidising Hong Kong film programmes in Mainland and overseas international film festivals and cities in recent years so that audiences from around the world can watch Hong Kong films and know about the unique charms about Hong Kong from these films. In the long run, these film programmes can help promote tourism in Hong Kong. The film programme footprints cover all around the world including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Ireland, Czech Republic, Poland, Australia, United States of America, Mexico and Canada. Create Hong Kong took a step further in film promotion this year to lead film industry delegations and bring their films to the world's leading film festivals to promote Hong Kong films and their creative talents and to facilitate exchanges with our counterparts in the world through the Film Development Fund, so as to tell good stories of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong movies have long been highly appreciated internationally and are important tourism assets. Through the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), the Government has been promoting Hong Kong via local movies. In 2023, the HKTB partnered with Asia's top entertainment company and presented a micro-film

series, titled Hong Kong in the Lens by Asian Directors, with acclaimed directors from three of Hong Kong's major source markets in Asia, Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea, creating three micro-films showcasing Hong Kong's vibrant bar scene, authentic local characteristics, and arts and cultural attractions to inspire visitors from around the world to follow the movie scenes and come to experience Hong Kong's new offerings. The series was an official selection in the "Hong Kong Asian Film Festival 2023" and was premiered in Seoul, Bangkok and Manila. It is also available on TV and various online streaming platforms in Asia, broadcasting the city's tourism appeal captured by the acclaimed directors to different visitor source markets.

To pay tribute to classic Hong Kong movies and inspire movie lovers worldwide to experience Hong Kong in person, the HKTB has since 2022 partnered with the local movie industry to produce a brand-new docufilm, called Hong Kong Classics Reimagined. The docufilm unprecedentedly brought together numerous actors and movie makers, both veterans and rising stars, to recreate six short films from Hong Kong classics in a new 60-minute film, featuring Hong Kong's iconic tourism attractions. Hong Kong Classics Reimagined is now available on the HKTB's Discover Hong Kong official online streaming platform, and will be aired on major TV channels in Southeast Asia and the online platforms of Mainland media organisations to promote Hong Kong globally. Alongside the docufilm, a dedicated travel guide was launched on the HKTB's Discover Hong Kong website (www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/what-s-new/cinematic-hong-kong.html) to provide information on a curated list of experiences in Hong Kong to encourage visitors to immerse themselves in the city's cinematic charm and to attract worldwide audiences to the city for movie and cultural pilgrimages.

In addition to supporting local movie production, the Government has been supporting the production of films from other markets to be made in Hong Kong to showcase the city's unique culture and exciting tourism elements to audiences worldwide through the silver screen, thereby attracting them to visit Hong Kong and experience the diverse tourism appeal of the city, including recommending filming locations with characteristic and liaising with relevant venues, and injecting Hong Kong inspiration in international blockbusters, such as "Transformers: Age of Extinction" (2014) and "Godzilla vs Kong" (2021). Besides, the HKTB also worked with Mainland movie Lost in Hong Kong in 2015 to roll out thematic itineraries in sets of the movie in partnership with the production company, local attractions and travel agencies.

For promotions in Southeast Asia, the HKTB supported the filming of Filipino romcom "Hello, Love, Goodbye" in Hong Kong in 2019. The movie was a great hit in the market and successfully deepened viewers' understanding of Hong Kong and their interest in visiting Hong Kong. Last year, the HKTB supported the filming of Asian romantic film "Under Parallel Skies", starring popular Thai actor Win Metawin and Filipino actress Janella Salvador. The HKTB offered suggestions on set locations and content, and the movie incorporated some cultural elements of Hong Kong. The movie was set in Hong Kong's East-meets-West backdrop, nostalgic neighbourhoods, natural scenery

and outlying islands, and included some new attractions, encouraging viewers to explore the city's attractions found in both the urban landscape and great outdoors. "Under Parallel Skies" premiered globally during the 17th Asian Film Awards this year and was shown in cinemas in Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong.

The Government will continue to partner with the movie and tourism industries to leverage the influence of movies and make good use of the city's tourism elements for better promotional effects to attract more visitors to Hong Kong.