

LCQ15: Strengthening tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

As pointed out in a research publication released by the Legislative Council Secretariat this month, Seoul, South Korea, Tokyo metropolis, Japan and Singapore have implemented different new facilitative services and/or tourist-friendly initiatives that provide visitors with a fresh post-pandemic travel experience. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will, by drawing reference from Seoul's initiatives, provide free high-speed public Wi-Fi services in all public places and introduce local culture and heritage through free guided tours at popular tourist attractions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will, by drawing reference from Japan's experience in building a network of "hands-free travel" service (i.e. a delivery service initiative to relieve tourists of the burden of carrying heavy luggage when travelling between destinations), set up tourism counters at the airport, MTR stations, shops and hotels to provide delivery services for tourists, so as to encourage them to stay longer; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it knows if the new courtesy campaign to be launched by the Hong Kong Tourism Board will, by drawing reference from Singapore's territory-wide courtesy promotion, systematically build a city and cultural identity with niceness and courtesy, and keep track of the courtesy and customer satisfaction trends through conducting regular surveys, thereby enabling the identification of service gaps in different tourism-related sectors; if the campaign will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it has further explored other tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to providing visitors with high quality tourism services and enriching their travel experience, leaving them with good impression and memorable experience during their stay in Hong Kong. In respect of the questions raised by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai, after consultation with the relevant policy bureaux and departments, the replies are as follows:

(1) According to the information provided by the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Government launched the common brand of "Wi-Fi.HK" in 2014 in collaboration with public and private organisations to facilitate the public and visitors to locate and access the free public Wi-Fi hotspots across Hong Kong offered by over 190 public and private organisations. Users can connect to the free Wi-Fi service for at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours per day without registration. As of April 2024, the number of hotspots under the "Wi-Fi.HK" brand was about 45 000 with an extensive coverage of locations such as the airport, all land and sea boundary control points, numerous promenades, tourist attractions, food and beverage venues, stores, shopping malls, museums, parks, etc. Besides, the "Wi-Fi.HK" service has been further extended to some 3 600 buses and taxis as well as the Airport Express as mobile hotspots to facilitate the public and visitors' access to free Wi-Fi service at anytime and anywhere. The Government has published such information through different channels (including in collaboration with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB)) and put up "Wi-Fi.HK" brand in the venues concerned so as to let the public and visitors know about the service availability.

â€‹In terms of local culture and tradition promotions, the HKTB has been showcasing Hong Kong's unique culture through different promotional activities and channels to offer new tourism experience by consolidating a series of itinerary guides and information on different activities on DiscoverHongKong.com website and setting up visitor centres at Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point and Tsim Sha Tsui to provide tourists with practical travel information, guidebooks, maps, etc, and recommend attractions, major events and different cultural and festival celebrations in Hong Kong to tourists in planning their visit.

Guided tour services are mainly provided by operators of tourist attractions. For individual attractions such as Tai Kwun, M+, Hong Kong Palace Museum, Hong Kong Museum of Art, etc, free guided tour services are available to allow visitors to have a more in-depth understanding on the exhibits and the architectural design of the attractions. Tourism Commission (TC), in collaboration with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, has launched the "Hong Kong Young Ambassador Scheme". Young ambassadors promote Hong Kong to visitors and demonstrate hospitality spirits through their participation in mega events (such as Hong Kong Cyclothon and Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival) and stationing at tourist attractions (such as Ngong Ping 360 (NP360) and Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP)).

(2) The Hong Kong International Airport provides baggage delivery service from the airport to downtown or from a designated location downtown to the airport, so as to let passengers travel hassle free in Hong Kong.

Besides, baggage delivery services are provided on selected homeport ship calls at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (KTCT). The services enable debarking cruise passengers to send their baggage to the airport or other locations in Hong Kong before exploring the city hassle-free. Hotels in general will offer their guests free baggage storage services and assist them to arrange baggage

delivery services.

(3) The Government acknowledges the importance of quality tourism services in Hong Kong and has been promoting enhancement of service quality by all sectors of the community. Members of the public are also encouraged to extend warm hospitality to visitors. We will mobilise the resources and network in 18 districts to promote courtesy at district level. Besides promotion, education is also of utmost importance. In collaboration with schools, we will reinforce courtesy education to school children. The HKTB will continue to encourage the trade, the community and the public to put good hospitality into action as excellent hosts, so as to enhance visitors' experience in Hong Kong. According to HKTB's survey, visitor satisfaction was 8.7 points out of 10, exceeding pre-pandemic level. The HKTB has since January 2024 enhanced the "Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme" by revising the scheme's assessment criteria for merchants, hence increasing the weighting of staff performance to recognise the importance of service quality and further enhance the service quality. Following the "Professional Quality Tourism Services Pledge" launched last year, the HKTB will produce a series of training videos to demonstrate professional and quality services, helping the trade to train frontline staff. The HKTB also worked with a local broadcaster to present a reality show, which put Hong Kong's service quality to test with a view to showcasing the spirit of professional quality tourism services.

Besides, the HKTB and the QTS Association will continue to organise "Outstanding QTS Merchant and Staff Awards" to commend QTS-accredited merchants and staff for their outstanding performance in promoting quality tourism services in Hong Kong.

At the community level, the HKTB is expanding the "Hong Kong Pals" volunteer programme to recruit more volunteers with a passion for tourism, especially the youth, to become an excellent host for our visitors and share with them knowledge and advice on travelling in Hong Kong. The HKTB will also launch a series of new promotions to encourage the public to demonstrate good hospitality.

(4) The Government and the trade attach great importance to offering pleasant travel experience to visitors so as to attract more visitors to come. Since 2001, the TC has been collaborating with the HKTB in implementing the "Visitor Signage Improvement Scheme" with a view to providing a co-ordinated and easily identified system of signage for visitors to Hong Kong. In addition, visitor signages are installed on travel routes to facilitate visitors' journeys from public transport hubs, such as MTR stations, bus terminals, etc, to nearby major tourist attractions to promote visitor convenience.

The TC, in collaboration with the Transport Department, has been erecting direction signs with brown background for some major tourist attractions since 2019, including Ocean Park, Hong Kong Disneyland Resort, the Peak, HKWP, NP360, etc, for easy recognition by drivers and to direct them to tourist attractions.

The Government has included various tourist-friendly and facilitation initiatives when taking forward tourism projects. For example, all the artworks and signages of the "Yim Tin Tsai Arts Festival" from 2019 to 2021 and the "Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival" from 2022 to 2024 were provided with QR codes connecting to the websites of the Festivals. Besides, QR codes were also embedded in the upgraded facilities of the Wong Nai Chung Gap Trail and Wisdom Path, as well as the artworks along the Sun Yat Sen Historical Trail, to help visitors understand the history along the trails. Real-time weather panels and interpretation panels with QR codes linked to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department's "Enjoy Hiking" thematic website and TC's website were also introduced under the Enhancement of Hiking Trails to facilitate visitors in getting more information.

The Government is also dedicated to improving the facilities of public toilets at major tourist attractions. From December 2020 to February 2024, after taking into account the TC's view and the respective utilisation rates of the public toilets, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department had completed the refurbishment/facelifting works for eight public toilets, such as the public toilets at the Peak Tower, Stanley Municipal Services Building, Hoi Ha, Kat O Chau Pier and Sha Kiu (Leung Shuen Wan), etc.

We also encourage tourist attractions to provide more tourist-friendly initiatives. Popular tourist attractions including Ocean Park Hong Kong, Hong Kong Disneyland, the Peak Tram, NP360 and museums all accept online reservations and ticket purchasing, accepting different types of digital payment to facilitate visitors to make online payment and reservations. Individual attractions also provide audio guided tour, baggage storage and/or self-service lockers services to facilitate tourists.

We are devoted to providing more tourism facilities to enhance tourists' experience. For example, the HKTB will organise briefing sessions for the trade on the needs of Muslim visitors in terms of food and beverage, accommodations and attraction facilities, so as to foster development of Muslim-friendly tourism facilities to fulfil demands of Muslim visitors and enhance their travelling experience in Hong Kong.