

## LCQ22: Promoting immersive and in-depth tourism

Following is a question by the Hon Benson Luk and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (January 22):

Question:

The Financial Secretary has indicated in the 2024-2025 Budget that, regarding the work of energising tourism in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Tourism Board will promote immersive, in-depth tourism with themes like Citywalk, and promote young-adult focused activities such as hiking, cycling, stand-up paddle-boarding, trail running and stargazing in the wilderness, which is part of an energising effort to soft-sell Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has projected the relevant data on tourist participation in the aforesaid five urban outdoor activities; if so, of the respective numbers of activities that will be organised by the Government and other organisations, as well as the estimated number of participants; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has drawn up specific plans and publicity strategies to promote such outdoor activities to tourists; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) regarding the promotion of such outdoor activities to overseas tourists, whether the Government has consulted, communicated and collaborated with the relevant local industries, stakeholders and host organizations in order to assist the Government in formulating promotional plans that better suit the needs of promoting in-depth tourism with the theme of Citywalk; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it has devised plans to increase the number of overnight visitors through promoting in-depth tourism with the theme of Citywalk; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong's breathtaking great outdoors are minutes away from the urban hustles, making it an integral part of Hong Kong's tourism appeal. According to the findings of the Departing Visitor Survey of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb), around a quarter of the overnight visitors in Hong Kong in 2024 stated that their reasons for visiting were to explore Hong Kong's culture and arts, enjoy the natural scenery or have a relaxing experience. The

Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme, which was set up with funding from the Government earlier, aims at encouraging the travel trade to develop travel itineraries and products with distinctive themes including those with city walk elements in order to enrich Hong Kong's tourism offerings. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department also organises courses or activities such as hiking, cycling and trail running. In addition, the Government and the HKTB have been leveraging the city's scenic nature and outdoor activities for tourism promotion on various channels to provide an enriched experience to visitors.

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Benson Luk, in consultation with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), the reply is as follows:

The AFCD's "Enjoy Hiking" thematic website provides the public with detailed information on hiking trails and attractions. The website provides features of various hiking trails, as well as information on attractions and transportation; and promotes featured attractions, facilitating visitors' planning of hiking activities to experience Hong Kong's natural beauty and cultural history. In 2024, there were around 0.4 million pageviews at the thematic website.

Through its year-round promotional platform "Hong Kong Great Outdoors", the HKTB introduces in detail and promotes Hong Kong's unique natural scenery and countryside experiences under the themes such as hiking, beaches and outdoor activities (including trail running, cycling, stand-up paddling, stargazing), sightseeing and island hopping. It actively promotes Hong Kong's nature-based green tourism products and countryside, including the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark, country parks, marine parks, hiking trails and itineraries featuring outlying islands, as well as guided tours and green tourism products organised by the travel trade and other organisations, so as to encourage visitors to appreciate Hong Kong's mesmerising natural landscape. The HKTB will launch a series of thematic videos this year on the Robin's Nest Country Park, which was established last year, as well as Po Toi Island, Stanley, Aberdeen, etc., in southern Hong Kong. These videos will be uploaded to the HKTB's official website and social media platforms to inspire visitors to make plans for countryside and outdoor itineraries.

The HKTB also fully supports various trail running races, including "TransLantau", "Oxfam Trailwalker", "Hong Kong 100 Ultra Marathon", and has partnered with the organisers of "TransLantau" and "Hong Kong 100 Ultra Marathon" to produce captivating footages of the race trails on Lantau Island and in Sai Kung to showcase the city's scenic nature. Besides, the HKTB has worked with international media such as CNN and The Telegraph to promote Hong Kong's outdoor experience to international visitors through inviting the director and producer of "Four Trails" to share Hong Kong's natural beauty and trail running as Hong Kong outdoor enthusiasts.

Meanwhile, the HKTB rolls out different promotional campaigns according to the interests of different source markets (such as the Mainland, Southeast Asia, Korea, Japan) and the increasing demand for in-depth experiences by

visitors.

In the Mainland markets, the HKTB joined hands with video-based social platform Bilibili and launched a promotional campaign on outdoor travelling by promoting Hong Kong's outdoor tourism experiences with user-generated videos. These videos introduce the TransLantau race, stargazing and camping experience in Cheung Chau, street skateboarding, cycling routes and water activities in Sai Kung. The promotion also featured a series with recommendations from popular users, which suggested itineraries in Cheung Chau, Sai Kung, Lantau Island and Shek O.

In Japanese market, the HKTB jointly published an e-guidebook with the Japan Association of Travel Agents to promote the natural attractions on Lantau Island. As regards South Korean market, the HKTB released a promotional video on Hong Kong's summer experiences, featuring three young Korean talents embarking on an energetic tour to Hong Kong, showcasing the city's exciting outdoor fun, such as sunshine and beaches, island hopping and outdoor trekking to raise travellers' interests in visiting Hong Kong. The video will be available on the Korean version of the HKTB's official website and social media platform; and will be aired in certain metro stations in Seoul to maximise the publicity effect.

In Southeast Asian markets, the HKTB curated a list of hidden attractions that are worth visiting to encourage visitors to explore Hong Kong's hidden culinary, natural, entertainment and cultural experiences. The HKTB invited more than 30 travel media representatives from Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines to a familiarisation trip to Lai Chi Wo, Ping Chau, Mui Wo, Tsz Shan Monastery and others secluded summer oases in Hong Kong, flagging up the idea of "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong".

Besides, the HKTB drives MICE (i.e. Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions and Exhibitions) tourism to bring in high-yield visitors to Hong Kong. In April 2024, the HKTB unveiled the "Hong Kong Incentive Playbook", a travel guide with more than 100 tourism experiences, including green tourism experiences such as hiking and kayaking with both mindful and active elements, that are suitable for incentive travel groups, with a view to deepening the understanding of Hong Kong's diverse MICE tourism assets among trade partners, and hence attracting more visitors to Hong Kong through their promotions in respective source markets.

Meanwhile, the HKTB has launched the "Hong Kong Neighbourhoods" to encourage visitors to experience Hong Kong's local characteristics in depth from different perspectives. So far, the promotion has included "Old Town Central", "Sham Shui Po" and "West Kowloon". By promoting local neighbourhoods beyond traditional tourist attractions and showcasing the culture, characteristics and history of local communities, the promotion could extend visitors' length of stay and their footprints in Hong Kong.

We will continue to pay attention to visitor source markets and promote more immersive and in-depth itineraries according to the conditions of

different markets to attract visitors to Hong Kong.