

LCQ22: Work on promoting Hong Kong to Mainland

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (February 15):

Question:

There are views that with the resumption of normal travel of persons between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the Hong Kong SAR Government should focus on engaging itself with the Mainland and telling Hong Kong's stories well to its Mainland counterparts while further enhancing the branding and image of Hong Kong, so as to facilitate the flows of people, goods and capital between Hong Kong and the Mainland to bring them back to the pre-epidemic levels as soon as possible. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the overall plan of the Hong Kong SAR Government this year to actively engage itself with the Mainland and tell Hong Kong's stories well to its Mainland counterparts, and how the Task Force on Promoting and Branding Hong Kong led by the Financial Secretary will play its role in this regard;

(2) whether the officials of the Hong Kong SAR Government have plans to visit various Mainland provinces and municipalities to give talks and presentations; if so, whether they have formulated detailed promotional plans and activities, so as to restore and strengthen the co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland cities in economic, humanities and other fields; and

(3) as it has been reported that the number of Mainland visitor arrivals to Hong Kong after the orderly resumption of normal travel of persons between Hong Kong and the Mainland in January this year fell short of expectation and was far from returning to the pre-epidemic level, whether the Hong Kong SAR Government has plans to step up publicity efforts targeting Mainland visitors?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong enjoys strong support of the Motherland while being closely connected to the world. Meanwhile, as Hong Kong is entering a new phase of advancing from stability to prosperity, and the epidemic has slowed down with everything returning to normal, Hong Kong is reconnecting to the world as well as resuming normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland fully. Under this circumstance, telling the good story of Hong Kong to the world with a view to reviving Hong Kong economy and the livelihood of people has become one of the top priorities of the Hong Kong Special Administrative

Region Government (SAR Government).

Regarding Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng's question, after consultation with the Financial Secretary's Office; the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau; the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau; the Transport and Logistics Bureau; and the Information Services Department, this Bureau's comprehensive reply is as follows:

(1) With the resumption of convenient cross-boundary movement, the SAR Government is going all out to promote the new potentials and opportunities of Hong Kong at full steam, and has planned a series of promotional activities, one after another, with a view to enhancing promotion of Hong Kong in the Mainland. The Task Force on Promoting and Branding Hong Kong (the Task Force), led by the Financial Secretary, has commenced the relevant work. With the focus on telling good stories of Hong Kong for the new situation, new potentials and new opportunities in Hong Kong under its new development stage, and through direct communication and public relations promotion, the Task Force will facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of Hong Kong's advantages and opportunities by people in the Mainland and overseas regions. With members comprising prominent individuals in diverse sectors, representatives of Hong Kong Inc. partner organisations and Government officials, the Task Force will provide valuable advice on the Government's overall promotional strategy and a series of promotional plans and activities in the Mainland and overseas regions. We believe that with concerted efforts, our promotional work in the Mainland and overseas regions will be more targeted, more in line with the actual objectives and more impactful in terms of further enhancing the branding and image of Hong Kong.

The SAR Government has also launched a large-scale publicity campaign "Hello Hong Kong". Through a series of publicity and promotional activities, the campaign will showcase Hong Kong's new attractions, new developments and new opportunities to the world. To welcome tourists from the Mainland and overseas to come and experience the hospitality of Hong Kong in person, the SAR Government will distribute 500 000 free air tickets through the campaign. In addition, a number of major new attractions have opened locally over the past few years, such as the Hong Kong Palace Museum and the M+ museum at the West Kowloon Cultural District, and the newly renovated Hong Kong Museum of Art, providing visitors with newer experiences. There are also a series of consumption vouchers, including transport, food and beverages, tourist spots and shopping, redeemable under HK Goodies and various special offers provided by merchants available to welcome visitors and enrich their itinerary in Hong Kong. A variety of large-scale events that will take place in the coming two to three months include Hong Kong Sevens, Trailwalker, Art Basel Hong Kong, Museum Summit, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival, Hong Kong International Jewellery Show, WOW Summit Hong Kong and Vis East Moot, etc. Also, large-scale MICE tourism related international conferences and exhibitions are also returning one after another, in order to bring in more high-spending tourists to Hong Kong.

(2) Since the implementation of the gradual resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland on January 8 this year, the Chief

Executive and the principal officials of the SAR Government have actively planned to visit various provinces and municipalities in the Mainland for high-level visits and exchanges, hosting and attending bilateral and multilateral co-operation meetings with provinces and municipalities in the Mainland, and participating in meetings and activities organised by the SAR Government Mainland Offices (Mainland Offices) and the relevant Mainland organisations in areas of business and trade, culture, art, tourism, sports, etc., so as to strengthen the co-operation with the provinces and municipalities in the Mainland comprehensively. The Mainland Offices will also take advantage of the opportunity when senior SAR Government officials visit the Mainland to arrange for officials to attend promotional activities, give speeches and accept media interviews in order to enhance the effectiveness of publicity and tell good stories of Hong Kong in the Mainland. In addition, the Mainland Offices and relevant organisations will also promote Hong Kong's advantages through diversified activities, encourage and support representatives of different professions and sectors to visit the Mainland, and deepen exchanges with various places.

The Mainland Offices will continue to play the bridging role, to organise visits to Mainland authorities and bodies, to attend speaking occasions, to conduct media interviews and briefings, as well as to participate in business and trade meetings. They will also make good use of the online and offline platforms, including digital and multimedia platforms, and mass media platforms such as television, radio, newspapers, etc. These platforms will also be used for disseminating information, short videos, interview programmes, etc., for promoting Hong Kong's advantages and opportunities in the Mainland.

At the same time, to complement the policy initiatives of "competing for enterprises" and "competing for talents", the SAR Government has expanded the functions of the Mainland Offices. The five Mainland Offices had each set up a "Dedicated Team for Attracting Businesses and Talents" in December 2022 to support the relevant work of the Office for the Attracting Strategic Enterprises led by the Financial Secretary, and the Talents Service Unit under the Labour and Welfare Bureau, including reaching out to target enterprises and talents in the Mainland proactively, liaising with the world's top 100 universities, discussing with target enterprises, and providing appropriate information and assistance, etc., with a view to attracting investments and talents from the Mainland to come to Hong Kong to pursue development.

In addition, this year, Invest Hong Kong will continue to work closely with the relevant ministries and commissions of the Central Government, commerce bureaux of Mainland provinces and municipalities, Mainland commercial and industrial organisations in organising a variety of investment promotion events of different scale, so as to assist Mainland enterprises to understand the distinctive advantages of Hong Kong enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems", and encourage more potential Mainland enterprises to set up in Hong Kong, or to make use of Hong Kong as a platform to go global and open up overseas markets.

Besides, bureaux and departments of the SAR Government are also reactivating various co-operation projects with the Mainland, including youth exchange, internship, activities promoting start-ups, etc., so as to further strengthen the co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland in different areas.

(3) As for the plans to step up publicity targeting Mainland visitors, the SAR Government has already devised an overall plan to welcome Mainland visitors proactively, as demonstrated by the Task Force and the large-scale promotional campaign "Hello Hong Kong" mentioned in Part (1) above. With the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland starting from February 6, Hong Kong is increasing its capacity in receiving tourists gradually. The Mainland will also resume the arrangement for tourist groups visiting Hong Kong in a gradual and orderly manner. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau of the SAR Government has already taken immediate action to get in touch with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to discuss the relevant issues.