

LCQ6: Developing tourism projects with local characteristics

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Fei and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

There are views that recently a film about the Kowloon Walled City, which receives critical acclaim and box office success, has once again demonstrated Hong Kong's strong cultural foundation, and given that Hong Kong enjoys the country's unequivocal support to develop into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, the HKSAR Government should draw on the experience and proactively develop tourism projects with local characteristics in order to pursue the concept of "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government indicated last month that it planned to support exhibitions and promotional activities related to the Kowloon Walled City through the Film Development Fund, how the Government allocates the relevant resources to ensure that they are used effectively and are able to continuously promote the internationalisation of Hong Kong films and the development of local cultural tourism;

(2) of the strategies or measures in place to enhance the international image of Hong Kong's characteristic cultural tourism and capitalise on the diversity of Hong Kong's culture in order to attract more international tourists to come to Hong Kong to experience its unique history and culture; and

(3) under the strategy of promoting "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", whether the Government has plans to introduce "educational tours" to further diversify Hong Kong's tourism industry and promote the characteristics of the HKSAR under "one country, two systems", so as to tell the good stories of Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong is positioned as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) has been driving cultural tourism based on the principle of "shaping tourism with cultural activities and promoting culture through tourism". The Government will join hands with the trade to implement the concept of "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong's tourism industry and fully explore and make

good use of Hong Kong's rich tourism resources.

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Tang Fei, the reply is as follows:

(1) The movie "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" has been very popular, rendering many visitors eager to know more about the story of Kowloon Walled City and the story behind the production of the movie. As such, the Government is in discussion with the film company to explore the possibility of displaying the film related materials such as stills, video footage and props of the film so as to attract visitors and drive tourism industry.

In fact, the Government has been supporting exhibitions and activities that promote film culture and film-related intellectual property rights through the Film Development Fund (FDF). We have also been actively promoting the internationalisation of Hong Kong films in recent years by participating in Mainland and overseas film festivals and organising and subsidising Hong Kong film programmes. These not only help to increase the exposure of Hong Kong films, but also enrich Hong Kong's tourism elements. For example, this year we have led delegations from the film industry, bringing their films to the world's leading film festivals to promote Hong Kong films and tell the good stories of Hong Kong. The Government will continue to strengthen support to Hong Kong film industry through the FDF, increase the exposure of the Hong Kong film industry in the Mainland and global film markets, and leverage the cultural influence of films to strengthen tourism promotion and attract more visitors to Hong Kong. Besides, the Government just launched the new phase of the "City in Time" tourism project, which also incorporates film elements, allowing locals and visitors to enjoy classic Hong Kong film clips at filming locations as well as past appearance of Hong Kong.

(2) Hong Kong is a cultural melting pot of East and West. Our traditional and foreign festivals attract tourists from all over the world. Hong Kong also has many rich and vivid resources of the intangible cultural heritage such as the Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade, Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance, etc., which all feature very unique characteristics. Riding on different festivals, we will organise various activities to attract visitors such as the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races this weekend (June 15-16), Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnival in September, and the International Chinese New Year Night Parade in the Lunar New Year, for visitors to experience the lively atmosphere of traditional festivals. Besides, we have different activities to celebrate foreign festivals, including the "Hallo" Hong Kong Halloween in Halloween, featuring themed decorations at various tourist hotspots; the Hong Kong WinterFest and the Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations at the end of each year, to celebrate the festive seasons with everyone. Through the "Pilot Scheme for Characteristic Local Tourism Events", we also provide funding support for arts, culture and festive events with local characteristics or unique appeal of Hong Kong such as Yu Lan Cultural Festival, Hong Kong Dragon and Lion Dance Extravaganza, etc., with a view to enriching travel experience in Hong Kong.

Cultural events could help promote the development of tourism. As the

East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, the Government has been committed to showcasing Hong Kong's cultural and artistic vibe and vitality to the world by curating distinctive and unique cultural activities that attract visitors. This year for the first time, the CSTB launches Art March as a brand to promote multiple events organised, funded, or supported by the Government, to provide citizens and visitors with an enriched artistic journey. Meanwhile, we strive to curate cultural programmes that highlight the distinctive culture of Hong Kong. For example, we have launched an annual Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival since 2023, to attract the participation of locals and visitors through pop concerts, thematic exhibitions, film screenings, outdoor activities and outreach events etc. Traditional Chinese culture is a great attraction around the world. Starting this year, we organise the annual Chinese Culture Festival between June and September, offering more opportunities for both locals and visitors to appreciate Chinese culture. This year, Hong Kong will serve as the host city for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival for the first time, allowing locals and visitors to experience the unique cultural charm of Hong Kong and different regions. Besides, the inaugural edition of Asia+ Festival was successfully held last year, with a focus on Asia and celebrating the cultural diversity of Asia and the Belt and Road regions.

In addition, the Government has also stepped up its efforts to promote characteristic tourism so that visitors can experience the unique local culture. We have launched the "Hong Kong Neighbourhoods" campaign in Old Town Central, Sham Shui Po and West Kowloon, and introduced quite some thematic walking routes to visitors. We also launched the Temple Street promotion last year to attract visitors to travel around local communities in Yau Ma Tei and Jordan to experience the most authentic side of Hong Kong. The Government has also been encouraging the trade to design more itineraries with different themes, covering cultural heritage, and has provided subsidies to the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong in 2023 to organise the "Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition". We will continue to stage signature creative arts and cultural tourism projects with local elements such as the "Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival", "Design District Hong Kong" (#ddHK).

Meanwhile, the Government will continue to organise "Hong Kong Week" in the Mainland and overseas to showcase the unique East-meets-West arts and cultural ambience of Hong Kong. Our Economic and Trade Offices in the Mainland and overseas will also strengthen their promotion work on arts and culture, deepening cultural exchanges and promoting people-to-people bonds.

(3) The tourism industry of Hong Kong is mature. There are travel agents in the market providing different inbound tourism products in the serve of study tours.

In the above-mentioned "Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition", some winning itineraries included study tour such as the Hong Kong Manufacturing Study Tour, the Archaeology&Tour in Cheung Chau. We will continue to promote the winning itineraries and encourage the trade to develop more unique tourism products covering study themes.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has also consolidated study-related information to provide inbound study tours with references on different learning experiences and activities. The HKTB is also planning to invite travel trade partners to visit Hong Kong in the second half of the year to learn more about the relevant tourism resources to help the trade develop more study tour products with Hong Kong characteristics.

We will continue to make best use of Hong Kong's characteristics as a cultural melting pot of East and West and proactively develop tourism projects with local characteristics so as to provide visitors with diversified travel experiences, and reinforce and strengthen Hong Kong's position as "the best tourism destination".