

## LCQ8: Developing multi-destination tourism

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

Question:

It is learnt that the country's tourism industry has developed rapidly in recent years, benefiting from facilitation policies such as visa-free transit. Statistics of the National Immigration Administration show that from January to November 2024, a total of 29.21 million inbound foreign visits were recorded at various boundary control points of the country, representing an increase of 86.2% compared to the same period in 2023. There are views that Hong Kong, as an international tourism hub and core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism, is able to assist the country in promoting tourism, including jointly developing new multi-destination travel itineraries and tourism products with more Mainland cities, and leveraging Hong Kong's international connections to step up promotion in overseas countries. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of international visitors entering or leaving the Mainland via Hong Kong in the past two years and, among them, the number of overnight visitors and their average length of stay in Hong Kong; whether it has assessed the opportunities that the development of the country's tourism industry will bring to Hong Kong;

(2) given that the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0 (Blueprint 2.0) proposes continued development of multi-destination tourism, and there are views that the proposal can enhance the attractiveness of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to international tourists, as well as promote tourism integration in GBA, how the Government promoted multi-destination tourism in GBA in the past year, and of the specific results; and

(3) whether it will seek cooperation with the country's Ministry of Culture and Tourism to develop nationwide multi-destination tourism together with major Mainland cities, so as to achieve the synergy of integrated development?

Reply:

President,

The State Council promulgated the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in February 2019. In December 2020, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT), the Office of the Leading

Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the People's Government of Guangdong Province jointly promulgated the Culture and Tourism Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (the Plan). The Plan sets out the directions guiding the overall culture and tourism development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA), aiming to develop the GBA into a world-class tourism destination. Both documents explicitly support Hong Kong in developing into an international tourism hub and a core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism. The Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry published in 2017 by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and the Blueprint 2.0 released on December 30, 2024, are in line with the guiding principles of national planning documents. The HKSAR Government will, in accordance with the strategies outlined in Blueprint 2.0, leverage Hong Kong's position as an international metropolis and tourism hub to promote the development of multi-destination travel itineraries and products with the GBA and other mainland cities.

In consultation with the Immigration Department (ImmD), the consolidated reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon So Cheung-wing is as follows:

(1) In the past two years, the non-Mainland visitor arrivals entering or leaving the Mainland via Hong Kong are set out in the table below:

	Non-Mainland visitor arrivals entering the Mainland via Hong Kong*	Non-Mainland visitor arrivals leaving the Mainland via Hong Kong*	Non-Mainland visitor arrivals entering or leaving the Mainland via Hong Kong*
2023	1.17 million	1.10 million	2.27 million
2024	1.86 million	1.81 million	3.67 million

Note: \*The above figures do not include non-Mainland visitor arrivals entering or leaving the Mainland via e-Channel service at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point, nor transit visitors entering or leaving the Mainland via Hong Kong.

ImmD does not maintain information of the proportion of overnight visitors and their average length of stay among the above non-Mainland visitors. Of the inbound non-Mainland visitors to Hong Kong in 2023 and 2024, 4.79 million and 7.15 million were overnight visitors and their average length of stay in Hong Kong was 3.8 and 3.3 days respectively.

Hong Kong has long been the gateway for overseas visitors to enter the Mainland, as well as a "super connector" and "super value-adder" linking up the Mainland with the world. The HKSAR Government has been closely monitoring the visa-free policies introduced by our country. We will make good use of the Central Government's measures benefitting Hong Kong and further leverage Hong Kong's role as a hub for bringing overseas visitors into our country.

(2) and (3) The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) has been working in collaboration with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) to promote multi-destination tourism of the GBA under a multi-pronged strategy. We are grateful for the Central Government in implementing Hainan's 144-hour visa-free policy for foreign tour groups from Hong Kong and Macao, and expanding the stay area of 144-hour visa-free policy to the entire Guangdong province as well as proposing optimisation measures to facilitate Mainland travel agents in receiving tour groups at West Kowloon Station of the High Speed Rail through the Second Agreement Concerning Amendment to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) Agreement on Trade in Services (Amendment Agreement II) last year. These measures will facilitate the co-operation between the travel trades from Hong Kong and the Mainland for developing more convenient, flexible, and diversified multi-destination travel itineraries, and capitalising on Hong Kong's comprehensive cross-border infrastructure for attracting overseas visitors to embark on multi-destination tourism in the GBA.

In terms of cruise tourism, the country announced in May 2024 the implementation of visa-free policy for foreign tour groups boarding cruise ships at provinces along the country's coastline, and in the Amendment Agreement II the policy of allowing Mainland visitors to travel to Hong Kong in transit to join international cruise itineraries involving port-of-call in Mainland cruise ports. These measures brought new opportunities for Hong Kong to attract cruise lines to launch more itineraries covering Hong Kong and Mainland ports, thereby diversifying the itinerary options, and attracting cruise passengers to visit Hong Kong and the Mainland through multi-destination tourism. CSTB will, together with HKTB, continue to meet with Mainland ports operators and attend major cruise conferences organised in the Mainland, with a view to promoting the development of multi-destination cruise tourism and enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness as Asia's cruise hub.

In terms of external promotion, further to focusing effort to enhance promotion in Thailand in 2023, HKTB launched various promotional campaigns targeting the Indonesian market in 2024, which included a collaboration with other cities in the GBA in late July 2024 to invite Indonesian media to film a travel programme "Celebrity on Vacation" in the GBA to promote the diversified tourism resources of the region. The programme was broadcast on Trans TV, an Indonesian television channel, in late September 2024 to attract local visitors to visit the GBA through multi-destination tourism. In September 2024, HKTB joined hands with the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province (DoCT of Guangdong) and representatives from tourism departments of GBA cities, to launch a promotional activity themed "GBA – Connecting Great Experiences" in Jakarta, Indonesia, showcasing the diversified tourism resources and tourism developments of the GBA to the local tourism trade and local media. At the same time, HKTB entered into strategic co-operation with the local travel trade to launch various GBA tourism offers and promotions to continuously attract local visitors to embark on multi-destination tourism in the GBA. HKTB also launched a version in Bahasa Indonesia at its one-stop GBA tourism portal last year, enabling Indonesian visitors and trade partners to keep themselves abreast of

information of as well as explore the attractions and experiences in the GBA.

In respect of mega events, HKTB incorporated GBA elements into various mega events and collaborated with other GBA cities to mutually promote mega events in the region, with a view to attracting domestic and overseas visitors to participate in mega events held in Hong Kong and the GBA through multi-destination tourism. For instance, HKTB featured the GBA Championship in the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races in June 2024 and invited 11 elite teams from each city in the GBA to compete in Hong Kong. During the Hong Kong Cyclothon held in October 2024, HKTB invited 56 participants from the GBA to take part in the City Cycling Challenge around the GBA (Hong Kong). Popular food items from the GBA were also introduced in the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival in October 2024.

As for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) tourism, HKTB continued to attract overseas exhibitors to use Hong Kong as a bridgehead to align with market in the Mainland under the theme of "Meet HK & Meet GBA" in 2024, while assisting Mainland exhibitors to use Hong Kong as a springboard to gain access to the international market. Moreover, HKTB expanded the Hong Kong Convention Ambassador Programme in 2024, inviting trade leaders in the Mainland to serve as HKTB's Hong Kong Convention Ambassadors to assist in connecting Mainland conventions with the international market.

Regarding the promotion of trade collaboration, HKTB has been partnering with travel agents to launch 10 multi-destination GBA tourism products in the US and Canadian markets since March 2024, and organising familiarisation trips to Hong Kong and the GBA for the travel trade overseas. These programmes allow the travel trade overseas to better understand the tourism resources and potential in the GBA, thereby encouraging them to roll out more multi-destination tourism products. The HKSAR Government provided funding support to the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) for organising trade visits to bring the travel trade to the GBA in October and November 2023 after the pandemic with a view to promoting the redevelopment of business co-operation between the travel trade of Hong Kong and GBA. In 2024, the trade visits were extended to cities outside the GBA. In 2025, TIC will continue to utilise Government funding to organise more trade visits to facilitate business matching among the travel trade for developing multi-destination tourism products. We will continue to encourage the travel trade to leverage various measures of the Central Government in facilitating overseas visitors to enter the Mainland via Hong Kong and seize the opportunity to develop multi-destination tourism.

The HKSAR Government will continue to discuss with the relevant ministries of the Central Government the arrangements to facilitate international visitors to enter the Mainland via Hong Kong, with a view to attracting more international visitors to take Hong Kong as their first stop or transit point in their multi-destination travel itineraries to our country. Moreover, CSTB will continue to discuss with the MoCT, the DoCT of Guangdong, as well as tourism departments in GBA cities Hong Kong's participation in national and regional tourism development, and engage in

close liaison on issues such as joint market supervision, promotion, tourism planning alignment, and innovation in tourism policies through the established communication and co-operation mechanisms. We will also negotiate with different provinces and cities in the Mainland to sign more tourism co-operation agreements, with a view to deepening co-operation and attracting more residents from different provinces and cities in the Mainland to embark on multi-destination travel itineraries which include Hong Kong.