

LCQ8: Enhancing publicity of mega events

Following is a question by the Hon Sunny Tan and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

There are views that as the staging of mega events in Hong Kong faces challenges in terms of inadequate local publicity and insufficient public awareness, the Government needs to optimise the use of existing infrastructure facilities for promotional purposes, so as to create a city-wide vibe. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has studied ways to make good use of local publicity experience of the Information Services Department in its "work with organisers of high-profile local sporting, cultural and entertainment events to raise Hong Kong's profile globally", so as to step up promotion of mega events in Hong Kong through online and offline channels of the Government; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has plans to, by drawing reference from the current practice of letting out advertising spaces available in government premises for commercial advertising purposes, open up more government premises with advertising spaces, such as the curtain walls of venues under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, for launching publicity of mega events in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will, by drawing on the experience of departments such as the Registration and Electoral Office and the Hong Kong Police Force in renting advertising spaces along major trunk roads and of public transport systems (for example, the MTR and Hong Kong International Airport) for promotional purposes, look into specific measures to encourage operators to let out idle advertising spaces at a concession rate for launching publicity of mega events in Hong Kong, such as the offer of tax deductions; and

(4) as it has been reported that M+ and Art Basel have co-commissioned works for the M+ Facade to celebrate mega events of the Hong Kong Arts Month, whether the authorities will consider discussing the extension of such practice to other mega events in Hong Kong with the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Authority, so as to jointly promote good vibes for mega events and encourage both artists as well as members of the public to explore the relationship between visual arts and city space, while creating an additional income source for the WKCD; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has stepped up promoting the development of mega events since early this year. On top of proactively reaching out and attracting more world-class mega events to be staged in Hong Kong, strengthening the publicity of mega events is also one of the key priorities. The Mega Events Coordination Group (the Group) led by the Deputy Financial Secretary provides steer on the promotion of mega events, including the launching or consolidation of publicity campaigns. The Group will also offer advice for different policy bureaux and departments on strengthening publicity for mega events, with a view to enhancing the atmosphere of mega events and encouraging citywide participation. In consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Information Services Department (ISD) and the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), my reply to the question raised by the Hon Sunny Tan is as follows:

(1), (2) and (3) The ISD has been stepping up publicity and promotion of mega events through both online and offline means. A dedicated webpage has been set up on Brand Hong Kong (BrandHK)'s website by the ISD, featuring the mega events calendars, event highlights and press releases to provide relevant information of mega events to the public. The ISD issues posts on a regular basis across various social media platforms and produces a series of videos on mega events for further promotion across the city. Moreover, Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs) from the Mainland are invited to attend mega events for publicity on platforms such as Xiaohongshu, WeChat and Weibo. BrandHK also co-brands with individual mega event organisers to further promote Hong Kong as Asia's Events Capital through outdoor advertising, banner displays and print advertisements, etc.

The RTHK has launched a new multimedia magazine-style programme, "Mega Events Mega Hong Kong", to promote the latest updates and information about major events in Hong Kong through TV, radio, and online platforms every day. It helps the public stay informed about upcoming events, such as October's Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo, Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, the 4th Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival, and Prudential Hong Kong Tennis Open 2024; November's Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit, Link Hong Kong Open, and Clockenflap Music & Arts Festival; and December's Business of Design Week, Business of IP Asia Forum, Legends Assemble: Real Madrid Legends vs Barcelona Heroes, and Hong Kong WinterFest. Apart from the TV programme airing daily on RTHK TV 31 and TV 32, promotional messages are broadcast daily in different programmes on Channels 1, 2, 3, 5, and the Putonghua Channel on the radio. Hosts also introduce event details to create excitement across the city, and bring joy and lively vibes of mega events to the public.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has been publicising major international mega events held in Hong Kong through various channels. The HKTB has leveraged the global network to carry out publicity in the Mainland and overseas. The HKTB widely shares information about mega events on social

media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and the Mainland social media accounts, such as Xiaohongshu, Douyin and other official channels. The HKTB also invites the trade and KOLs to experience Hong Kong's mega events in person to help establish the reputation and further enhance publicity through their networks. For example, riding on Art Basel Hong Kong and other mega arts events held in March this year, the HKTB stepped up global publicity through its year-round promotional platform, "Arts in Hong Kong", boosting the city's arts atmosphere and fervour.

As for Cathay/HSBC Hong Kong Sevens 2024 held in March this year, the HKTB supported the organiser to introduce new elements and make the event a star-studded mega party with entertainment, food and beverage, and sports game all rolled into one. The HKTB and Hong Kong China Rugby jointly invited Oliver Phelps and James Phelps, who played the twins in the "Harry Potter" films, to enjoy the rugby game in Hong Kong and promote the city. Representatives of seven top-tier sports media firms from Korea were also invited to watch the game, experience outdoor events like horse racing in Hong Kong, and immerse in Hong Kong's charm as the Events Capital.

In addition, the HKTB has set up the Mega Event Development and Advancement Division (MEDA) since March 1 this year to serve as the first point of contact for mega events. The MEDA also works closely with stakeholders such as the event organisers to render all-round support, including assisting in publicity, to ensure smooth organisation of mega events in Hong Kong smoothly.

The Government has been utilising suitable locations in government premises for promoting mega events held in Hong Kong. In response to requests from departments hosting the events, the Government Property Agency has been making use of suitable government properties under its management (including joint-user government offices and boundary control points) for displaying large-scale advertisements at rooftop advertising spaces, external walls and/or prominent locations to publicise the relevant events as appropriate. Recent examples include the 15th National Games, Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, and Hong Kong WinterFest. The Government has provided advertising areas on suitable footbridges or pedestrian subways (such as the advertising areas at the Tsim Sha Tsui Interchange Subways and the Middle Road Subway) for use by government departments to promote and publicise their events. Government departments and organisations are also welcome to apply to the Highways Department (HyD) for hanging flags, buntings or decorative lights on the HyD's lampposts for event promotion.

Venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department also provide banner areas on external walls for promoting mega events organised in Hong Kong. For example, Chinese Culture Festival 2024 and Pokemon GO City Safari were advertised at Hong Kong Cultural Centre, which is a major performing venue, in Tsim Sha Tsui; A Path to Glory – Jin Yong's Centennial Memorial • Sculpted by Ren Zhe and Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo were publicised at Hong Kong City Hall in Central; Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival 2024 and 2024 Milwaukee Hong Kong Squash Open were promoted at Hong Kong Squash Centre which is a sports venue; and 2024 Hong Kong Snooker All-Star Challenge and

the 4th Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival were promoted at Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Wan Chai.

Apart from the Government's publicity of different mega events, organisers of mega events have their responsibility to promote their events in locations and with means appropriate to the nature and target audience of the events. In fact, organisers of mega events are welcome to approach public transport operators to discuss advertising or other forms of commercial co-operation. The Airport Authority Hong Kong provides discounts for organisers of mega events on renting advertising spaces at Hong Kong International Airport to promote the mega events. The advertising panels installed at government tunnels and control areas are also available for rent for the purpose of mega events publicity. Examples of advertisements displayed include the Chinese New Year Cup, the 15th National Games, the 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games.

We strongly encourage event organisers to allocate resources for promoting their events, such as through advertising and promotional campaigns. According to the prevailing tax arrangements, expenses on advertisement and promotional activities for promoting mega events are treated as marketing expenses and deductions can be claimed.

(4) Asia's first global museum of contemporary visual culture, M+ is dedicated to collecting, exhibiting, and interpreting visual art, design and architecture, moving image and Hong Kong visual culture of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. The M+ Facade is an important outdoor display space of the museum. Its functions align with the museum's galleries and showcase content related to arts and culture. All content displayed must be works commissioned by M+, moving image works from the museum's collections, the museum's artwork highlight videos, museum messages and brand videos. Since its launch, the M+ Facade has become a significant platform for presenting contemporary visual culture, offering the public and visitors innovative and engaging content that inspires intellectual reflection and moments of meditative contemplation. Since 2022, M+ has collaborated with Art Basel for four consecutive years and commissioned artists to present internationally representative visual culture programmes on the M+ Facade.