

# Press conference remarks on announcing calendar of mega events in Hong Kong (first half of 2025)

The Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, and the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, held a press conference today announcing the calendar of mega events in Hong Kong (first half of 2025). The Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Mr Dane Cheng, also attended. Following are the remarks made at the press conference:

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Reporter: Some events were being cancelled this year, such as the drone shows, which obviously disappointed tourists and affected Hong Kong's reputation. So for next year, what plans do you have to avoid these situations to happen again? And the second question is for Mr Cheng. Because you mentioned we can't just focus on the number of participants of an event, so what kind of focus will the Government and the Tourism Board put when organising events in 2025?

Deputy Financial Secretary: If I may take the question on drone shows. Some events are dependent on weather, so wherever you have those events is the same. I think you're referring to (the drone shows scheduled) around October 1. Even in Shenzhen, if I remember correctly, they did have some of the drone shows cancelled as well. For other shows, what they do is they have this called "ç ´éçç%". They don't have an official English translation, and my translation will be "Braving the Winds" edition. What they do is they lower the density of the drones involved. For example, for some of the shows, the original plan was to have 2 000 drones in the show, and they lowered the density to around 400, so that allowed the show to continue to be carried out. We've learnt from them, so for some of the shows in the future, that would be one of the alternative options that we will be prepared for, including the shows to be organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board: First of all, any event, whether it is mega or not mega, we'd very much like to have the sufficient number of local participants as well as tourists. And for the tourists, it depends on whether they are from the Mainland or from overseas. But of course, we would like to have events that would attract more people to attend. A lot of the times, the organisers would be speaking to us and they hope that the catchment area for the participants is not just for locals but for tourists as well. In that sense we will support them with the publicity and promotions outside of Hong Kong.

Secondly, we mentioned that the importance is to have these events that could positively promote Hong Kong, and strategically promote Hong Kong as the Events Capital of Asia, so these are the considerations that we have.

But I think the Deputy Finance Secretary made a very good point. A lot

of the times we have to be bold enough to attract events to come to Hong Kong for the first time. But we will be looking at, for example, their IP, and their past record. For example, this horse show from London, it is something that has been organised for the last 50 years, and it's the first time they have the event outside of London and to be held in Hong Kong, so these are the things that we proactively pursue.

Reporter: First, for Mr Wong, how do you evaluate the economic values and other benefits of the mega events held this year? Is it satisfying? And also the second question, as this year's Policy Address has proposed to attract more visitors from Middle East and Southeast Asian countries, so any plans or measures the Government is going to launch next year to increase the attractiveness of mega events to these two groups of tourists?

Deputy Financial Secretary: Thank you for your first question. In terms of numbers, (for mega events), we are estimating that by the end of this year – we still have a few more weeks to go before year-end – the number of tourists will reach 2 million, which is about 17 per cent higher than the original estimate of about 1.7 million. In terms of value added, we are talking about \$4.5 billion, and the total consumption, \$7.5 billion. Both of them are higher than our original estimates. But as our Chief Executive said, "never the best, always the better". Of course, we would continue to work hard to push the figures higher. I think during the press conference, we have talked about the various impacts, and also we understand the difficulties and challenges our retail sector has been going through. Also, in my presentation, I did make the point that economic contribution is important, but it's not the only thing. There are also all the invisible or intangible benefits, like positioning Hong Kong positively in the world. Those are very important as well. And I do believe that the mega-event campaign we started last year has been playing a very positive role on this front.

Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board: I don't think we would want to particularly pursue any particular event that would attract, for example, visitors from Southeast Asia or the Middle East.

But the important thing is, as long as we bring in good-quality mega events in different sorts of categories and natures, in particular those with international appeal, then there will be visitors and local residents who would want to attend. I think that would be the key thing.

In my view, I'm quite optimistic because the whole air capacity will be increasing progressively towards the first quarter next year. By that time the Middle East and the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries would have sufficient air capacity flying into Hong Kong. That would be very useful and helpful for us to bring in more tourists.

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: May be I just add one more point. As outlined in the Chief Executive's Policy Address, to attract tourist from the Middle East and Southeast Asia, we will also be convincing the sector to provide more Halal friendly services. So that when the people come, they feel more at home and there will be services that suit their needs. That is also one strategy that we will be looking at.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the remarks.)