

# Appointments to Women's Commission

The Government announced today (January 11) the appointment of Dr Eliza Chan Ching-har as the new Chairperson of the Women's Commission (WoC), as well as the appointment of three new members and the reappointment of five incumbent members. Their two-year term will take effect from January 15, 2024.

The three new members are Ms Ching Ngon Lai, Miss Juanita Mok Uen-ying and Ms Vivian Tsui Sau-yin.

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, welcomed the appointments and reappointments. She said, "Dr Eliza Chan is currently serving as a member of the Executive Council. She has rich experience in public affairs. I trust that under her leadership, the WoC will continue its dedicated efforts in advancing the interests and development of women in Hong Kong."

"We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing Chairperson Ms Chan Yuen-han for her invaluable contribution to steering the WoC in the past six years. We also thank the outgoing members, Ms Melaine Lee Kam-ha, Miss Sherry Tsai Hiu-wai and Mrs Viola Wong Ho Suk-ying, for their contributions to the WoC. The new term of the WoC comprises members from diverse backgrounds. I trust that they will give valuable advice on the work of the WoC," she added.

Since its establishment in 2001, the WoC has spared no effort in promoting the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong and advising the Government on policies and initiatives on women's issues.

The membership of the WoC for the new term is as follows:

## Non-official members

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Dr Eliza Chan Ching-har (Chairperson)  
Mrs Jennifer Cheng Yu Ngar-wing  
Ms Ching Ngon-lai  
Ms Rita Gurung  
Ms Mary Huen Wai-yi  
Ms Jin Ling  
Ms Lam Wai-ling  
Ms Helen Lu Hai  
Professor Lui Yu-hon  
Miss Juanita Mok Uen-ying  
Ms Winnie Ng Wing-mui  
Mrs Katherine Ngan Ng Yu-ying  
Ms Melissa Kaye Pang  
Ms Cindy Pun Siu-fung  
Professor Sham Mai-har

Dr So Wing-yee  
Mr Adrian Tam Kin  
Ms Ashley Tse Hiu-hung  
Ms Vivian Tsui Sau-yin  
Mr Walter Tsui Yu-hang  
Ms Vivian Wong Man-lei  
Dr Kitty Wu Kit-ying

Ex-officio members

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Permanent Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs or representative (Vice-Chairperson)

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs or representative

Director of Social Welfare or representative

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## **LCSD to launch “Multi-Arts: Fascinations of Synesthesia and Beyond” lecture series**

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will present a lecture series, "Multi-Arts: Fascinations of Synesthesia and Beyond", from February to March. The five-lecture series will be hosted by cultural researcher Dr Ian Fong and features a variety of films, paintings, performing arts and literary works to explore how people can appreciate different art pieces through synesthesia, bringing them new art experiences.

Details of each lecture are as follows:

Lecture 1: Literature, Music, Visual Art, Materiality and Food

Date: February 26 (Monday)

Venue: AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Content: To explore how multi-sensual elements can be heard, touched, smelt and tasted in words in order to examine the importance of the five senses in appreciating literature, art and film.

Lecture 2: Still and Moving Pictures and Beyond

Date: March 4 (Monday)

Venue: AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Content: To discuss how film elements can be seen in literature and painting.

Lecture 3: Opera, Play and Film

Date: March 11 (Monday)

Venue: AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Content: Uses Bizet's opera "Carmen" as an introduction to explore how theatrical-like performances can be presented in filmic content.

Lecture 4: Gallery, Concert Hall, Theatre, Cinema, Home, Social Media and City

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Date: March 18 (Monday)

Venue: AC1, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Content: Drawing on several literary works to explore the multi-sensual experience of art appreciation in different venues.

Lecture 5: On Rhythm: Dancing, Rapping, Kung Fu and Philosophy

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Date: March 25 (Monday)

Venue: AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Content: To discuss how the five senses change the way audiences appreciate and visualise works of dance, rap, kung fu and philosophy, as well as to keep pace with artistic rhythms through synesthesia.

Dr Fong received his PhD degree in Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong. He is currently teaching literary and cultural studies in various tertiary institutions and focuses on research topics including film and literary studies, psychoanalysis, deconstruction and more.

All lectures will be conducted in Cantonese and will start at 7.30pm. Tickets priced at \$60 for each lecture and \$240 for the five lectures (with free seating) are now available at URBTIX ([www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk)). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7323 or visit

[www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/multi\\_arts/programs\\_1652.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/multi_arts/programs_1652.html)

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## [Local pig samples test positive for ASF virus](#)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) yesterday (January 10) announced that samples taken from a pig farm in Yuen Long had tested positive for the African Swine Fever (ASF) virus. The present ASF case has been discovered with the implementation of the new proactive emergency measure on handling dead pigs on local pig farms since January 3.

AFCD staff inspected a licensed pig farm in San Tin, Yuen Long on January 9 and collected 32 samples from pigs. Upon testing, one of the

samples was found positive for the ASF virus. The AFCD has immediately suspended transportation of any pigs from the farm concerned until further notice according to the contingency plan on ASF. The AFCD is arranging culling of all pigs, totalling over 1 700 on the farm concerned, for the sake of prudence. The culling operation will commence this week.

Located within the 3-kilometre monitoring zone of a Yuen Long pig farm where ASF was previously detected, the index pig farm is adjacent to the farm where pig samples tested positive for the ASF virus in the end of last month. Upon AFCD's preliminary investigation and consultation with the international veterinary expert, it is believed that the pigs of the index farm were infected with the ASF virus earlier and now succumb to the disease as the incubation period can last up to 19 days.

The AFCD has implemented an emergency measure on handling dead pigs on local pig farms on the advice of an international veterinary expert since January 3. All farms are required to collect and submit to the AFCD nasal swab samples from pig carcasses for ASF virus testing. Disposal of carcasses can only be arranged by the farms upon confirmation of a negative result. The discovery of pigs infected with ASF on the index pig farm through the implementation of the new measure demonstrates that the measure can proactively curb the spread of the virus and effectively stop pigs infected with the ASF virus from leaving the farm, thereby interrupting the transmission of the virus among local pig farms.

An AFCD spokesman said, "Since the implementation of the enhanced measure, the situation of ASF on local pig farms has somewhat been alleviated. However, as the incubation period of the ASF virus can last up to 19 days, other pig farms locating within the 3-kilometre monitoring zone still present a higher risk of outbreaks. The AFCD will continue to closely monitor the situation of the pig farms and offer recommendations to enhance their biosecurity measures."

The spokesman further said, "The AFCD collaborated with the international veterinary expert to provide guidelines on biosecurity measures for local pig farms earlier. The AFCD will further explain and provide training to the industry to facilitate prompt implementation and strict observation of the biosecurity measures specific to their pig farms, thereby effectively containing the spread of ASF on local pig farms on different levels. Meanwhile, in order to strengthen the knowledge of local pig farmers of the clinical signs of ASF for early detection and reporting of abnormality of pigs, the AFCD has launched the Guidelines for Reporting Cases of African Swine Fever to assist pig farmers in identifying suspected cases for early reporting and to take appropriate follow-up. Sampling materials and protective clothing have been distributed to all local pig farms. Close communication is kept with pig farmers to update them on the latest situation of ASF via SMS groups."

The spokesman also said that positive cases should be seriously and promptly handled as the effect of ASF is very lethal to pigs. If the spread is not contained, a large number of pigs will die and hence seriously impacting pig farmers and the pig rearing industry. AFCD staff immediately

notified all local pig farmers of this incident and reminded them to alert the AFCD immediately if abnormal health condition is observed in pigs.

The AFCD has sent staff to inspect the eight pig farms within 3 kilometres of the index farm. Five pig farms among these have no pigs currently. As for the remaining three pig farms, pig samples have been collected for ASF virus testing with negative test results. For the sake of prudence, the AFCD has temporarily suspended movements of pigs on those pig farms until further notice. No reports of abnormalities from pig farms outside the 3-kilometre zone have been received so far. AFCD staff are conducting visits in phases to all local licensed pig farms to ensure good biosecurity measures have been properly implemented; and continued close surveillance to detect pigs with abnormalities and if a farm is infected as early as possible. Surveillance of wild pig activities in the vicinity of the index farm has also been stepped up.

The spokesman stressed that ASF is not a zoonotic disease and will not infect humans, hence does not present any human health and food safety risk. Regardless of whether the pigs are infected with ASF, pork cooked thoroughly is safe for consumption. Members of the public do not need to be concerned.

The present case does not affect the operation of local slaughterhouses nor the overall supply of live pigs. Since June 2019, a daily clearance arrangement whereby live pigs will be slaughtered within 24 hours upon admittance has been imposed in Sheung Shui and Tsuen Wan slaughterhouses. Under the arrangement, lairages in different areas of the slaughterhouses will be cleared out and undergo thorough cleaning and disinfection every day to further enhance the biosecurity and minimise the risk of infection among pigs in the slaughterhouses.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the AFCD will continue to stringently conduct cleaning and disinfection of Mainland live pig transportation vehicles and their counterparts for local pigs at slaughterhouses to minimise the risk of cross-infection of ASF. Mainland live pig vehicles and local ones should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected every time they leave the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH), and the respective designated positions for their cleaning and disinfection are separated. Manpower and equipment of the SSSH have been strengthened immediately for cleaning and disinfection of the vehicles. In light of these stepped-up measures, the slaughterhouses need not be closed and other pigs need not be culled.

As culling operation takes time, the AFCD will release updated operation information every day later on the departmental web page, [www.afcd.gov.hk](http://www.afcd.gov.hk), for the public.

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## LCQ12: Expanding the global economic and trade networks

Following is a question by the Hon Jeffrey Lam and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, in the Legislative Council today (January 10):

Question:

The Government has indicated in the latest Policy Address that it will expand the global economic and trade networks, promote regional co-operation, and expand the reach to the Belt and Road (B&R) markets, including those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. On the other hand, the Government set up the Belt and Road Office (BRO) in 2016, and established the Steering Group on Integration into National Development in 2022, with a sub-group on B&R development (B&R sub-group) set up thereunder. In addition, the Government has also organised the annual B&R Summit, exchange seminars for enterprises and project interfacing meetings, as well as business missions to visit the B&R related economies. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the resources (including expenditure and manpower) allocated respectively to BRO and the B&R sub-group by the Government for taking forward the B&R Initiative in each of the past three years; whether the Government will increase the manpower and estimated expenditure for these departments in the future; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it has assessed the effectiveness of the work of the departments mentioned in (1) in taking forward the B&R Initiative in the past three years; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; given that the Government has indicated in the latest Policy Address that it will set up additional offices for business and trade along B&R, of the relevant details (including their number, regions, locations, as well as the manpower and expenditure involved), and whether it will set performance indicators for the work of such offices; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) given that Hong Kong has signed free trade agreements (FTAs) with 20 economies (including ASEAN member states, Georgia and Australia), whether the Government has compiled statistics on the economic benefits brought by such FTAs to Hong Kong in the past three years, as well as the number of enterprises and capital brought in; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is an active participant, contributor and beneficiary of the Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI). We have been fully participating and contributing to the B&RI, and serve as the functional platform for the Belt and Road (B&R). On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the B&RI in 2023, President Xi Jinping announced the eight major steps to bring B&R co-operation to a new stage of high-quality development, namely building a multidimensional B&R connectivity network; supporting an open world economy; carrying out practical co-operation; promoting green development; advancing scientific and technological innovation; supporting people-to-people exchanges; promoting integrity-based B&R co-operation and strengthening institutional building for international B&R co-operation.

Hong Kong has the unique advantage of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world to play its role as a functional platform and make the best use of its experience accumulated in high-quality development to actively contribute towards these eight major steps. Apart from serving as a "super connector", we will also leverage our strengths to be the "super value-adder" for the next stage of our country's B&R development.

Our reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Since the set-up of the Belt and Road Office (BRO) in August 2016 and its establishment as a permanent full-fledged office under the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) in April 2018, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has been adopting a whole-government approach, under which the BRO is tasked with formulating policies and measures, as well as leading and co-ordinating the relevant work of the HKSAR Government to promote Hong Kong's participation in the B&RI, including working to strengthen the close liaison and co-operation with relevant Mainland authorities in respect of enhancing policy co-ordination.

Also, since December 2022, the Chief Executive (CE) has established the Steering Group on Integration into National Development (Steering Group) under his chairmanship to provide steer to bureaux and departments to actively dovetail with the national strategies including the B&RI. Under the Steering Group, the Working Group on Belt and Road Development (Working Group) was set up with the Secretary for Justice (SJ) and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development serving as its Chairperson and its Secretary respectively, while the BRO is responsible for its secretariat work.

In the past three years, the total expenditure and establishment of the BRO are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	BRO's actual total expenditure (\$'000) (Note 1)	Establishment (number of posts)
2020-21	26,018	20
2021-22	23,497	21

2022-23	29,413	21
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The relevant bureaux and departments of the HKSAR Government will continue to utilise existing funds and manpower to promote B&R development, with relevant resources already absorbed in the overall estimated expenditure and establishment of relevant bureaux and departments.

(2) The Arrangement between the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the HKSAR Government for Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the B&RI signed between the HKSAR Government and the NDRC in 2017 provides the direction and a blueprint for Hong Kong's full participation in and contribution to the B&RI. The Joint Conference mechanism was also set up to follow up on the implementation of the Arrangement, with meetings being convened at least once a year. Through the annual Joint Conference meetings, the HKSAR Government and relevant Mainland authorities will review the work in promoting Hong Kong's participation in and contribution to the B&RI in the previous year and discuss the HKSAR Government's strategies and future work priorities for the coming year. The sixth Joint Conference was held in July 2023 in Beijing. Mainland officials attending the meeting included representatives from the NDRC and 12 other ministries.

In addition, the SJ-led Working Group reviews the strategies and work progress of bureaux and departments in promoting Hong Kong's participation in and contribution to the B&RI, as well as reports to the CE-led Steering Group. Since its establishment in December 2022, the Working Group has convened a total of four meetings in February, May and August 2023, and January 2024.

In October 2023, the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held in high prestige in Beijing. In the Lists of Deliverables published thereof, the eighth Belt and Road Summit organised by the HKSAR Government was published as the first deliverable under the "International Conferences in 2023 and 2024" section of the List of Multilateral Cooperation Deliverables. The Summit attracted nearly 6 000 government and business leaders and representatives of enterprises from over 70 B&R-related countries and regions, including over 100 delegations, a record high over past editions; and signed/exchanged 21 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), also a record high over past editions. In addition, there were another six outcomes from Hong Kong being included in the country's Lists of Deliverables (Note 2).

The 2023 Policy Address announced that Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) will set up consultant offices along the B&R. Currently, InvestHK initially plans to open consultant offices in Egypt and Türkiye to strengthen efforts in attracting enterprises and investment in high-potential emerging countries in the Middle East and North Africa. InvestHK and the HKTDC will continue to study and actively carry out the relevant preparatory work, and follow the indicators for specific tasks in the 2023 Policy Address to each set up two consultant offices in 2024-25. The estimated annual expenditure of each consultant



office is around \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

(3) Hong Kong has so far signed eight free trade agreements (FTAs) (Note 3) with 20 economies, and is now negotiating an FTA with Peru.

We do not have statistics directly showing the economic benefits brought about by the FTAs forged between Hong Kong and other individual economies.

From 2020 to 2022, the total merchandise trade between Hong Kong and FTA partners, and the total foreign direct investment inflows to Hong Kong from our FTA partners are as follows:

	2020	2021	2022
Total merchandise trade (\$ billion)	5,472.1	6,881.0	6,164.8
Total foreign direct investment inflows to Hong Kong (\$ billion)	481.8	345.7	363.8

It is worth noting that the challenges to the global economy and supply chain caused by the pandemic in the past three years would have an impact on the above-mentioned figures.

Regarding the figures on companies being attracted, according to the 2023 Annual Survey of Companies in Hong Kong with Parent Companies Located outside Hong Kong, there were 3 327 companies in Hong Kong with parent companies located in one of the FTA partners of Hong Kong, reflecting an increase from 2021 and 2022 (2 960 companies and 3 259 companies respectively).

Note 1: Including salary expenses and other operational expenses of the BRO.

Note 2: The other six deliverables were namely launching the Green Investment and Finance Partnership; the NDRC signed the MOU on Supporting Cross-Border Financing by Chinese Enterprises and Promoting the Development of the Hong Kong Bond Market with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA); to establish the Belt and Road Joint Investment Platform with the HKMA; to develop a capacity-building centre for legal talents in domestic, foreign and international law; to establish the Meteorological Training Centre; and the HKSAR Government continues to implement the B&R Scholarship, and will jointly produce television variety programmes with participating countries of the B&RI and hold the "Asia+ Festival".

Note 3: Hong Kong has so far signed eight FTAs with 20 economies. The economies are Mainland China, the Macao Special Administrative Region, New Zealand, the European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), Chile, the 10 Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Georgia and Australia. All FTAs have entered into force.

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## LCQ6: Resuming the issuance of the “multiple-entry” endorsements to Shenzhen residents

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, in the Legislative Council today (January 10):

Question:

It is learnt that since the full resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong early last year, the number of Hong Kong travellers going north has increased significantly whereas the number of Mainland travellers coming south has decreased significantly, which has dealt quite a heavy blow to Hong Kong's consumption market. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council, given that the Individual Visit Endorsements for Shenzhen permanent residents visiting Hong Kong were changed a few years ago from "multiple-entry" endorsements to "one trip per week" endorsements in view of the problem of Hong Kong's capacity to receive visitors and in order to offer better experiences to visitors and reduce their impact on local residents, whether the Government has reviewed if Hong Kong's current capacity to receive visitors is sufficient to receive more Mainland visitor arrivals to Hong Kong; if it has not, of the reasons for that; if it has and the outcome is that Hong Kong has sufficient capacity to receive more Mainland visitor arrivals to Hong Kong without compromising the quality of their trips or creating too much impact on local residents, whether the Government will discuss with the Mainland authorities the resumption of the multiple-entry measure before the Lunar New Year next month; if it will not, of the reasons for that; if it will, whether the Government will consider, on the premise that Hong Kong has sufficient capacity to receive visitors, discussing with the Mainland authorities the further extension of the multiple-entry measure to other Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; if it will not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB)'s reply to the question raised by the Hon Michael Tien is as follows:

The tourism industry is an important pillar of Hong Kong's economy, accounting for 4.5 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product in 2018 and provided over 250 000 employment opportunities. Therefore, the HKSAR Government has been supporting its healthy development.

As normal cross-boundary travel resumed in February last year, Hong Kong's tourism industry began to recover at full speed with number of visitor arrivals gradually increasing. Based on preliminary statistics, the total number of visitor arrivals exceeded 34 million in 2023, which went far beyond the 25.8 million as estimated by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) in early 2023, and the number of visitor arrivals in the second, third and fourth quarters accounted for 59 per cent, 68 per cent and 62 per cent of the average of the same period in 2017 and 2018 when compared with pre-pandemic level.

During the period of the previous New Year's Eve and New Year holidays (i.e. December 30, 2023 to January 1, 2024), we recorded a total of around 430 000 Mainland visitor arrivals and a daily average of 140 000, which exceeded the daily average achieved during Labour Day and National Day Golden Weeks last year by 16 per cent and 6 per cent respectively and reached about 73 per cent of the daily average of the same period in 2017 and 2018, before the pandemic.

The Individual Visit Scheme has been implemented since July 28, 2003 in accordance with the main document of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement. Residents from a total of 49 designated Mainland cities can apply for the Individual Visit Scheme endorsements to visit Hong Kong in their individual capacity. At present, majority of Mainland visitors visit Hong Kong via the Individual Visit Scheme, accounting for 60 per cent of the overall Mainland visitor arrivals in 2023. The policy has broadened the source markets for the tourism industry of Hong Kong.

Since April 1, 2009, the Central Government allowed eligible Shenzhen residents to apply for "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements, the holders of which could enter and exit Hong Kong unlimitedly within the one-year validity period. In response to the concern of the community, the HKSAR Government comprehensively assessed the capacity of Hong Kong to receive visitors, covering the handling capacity of boundary control points, capacity of tourism attractions, receiving capacity of hotels, carrying capacity of public transport network, impact on the livelihood of the community, and economic impact, etc, and published the Assessment Report on Hong Kong's Capacity to Receive Tourists (the Report) in 2013. The Report does not recommend setting a limit on visitor arrivals. However, it acknowledges that with the continuous growth of visitor arrivals, Hong Kong should increase its capacity for receiving tourists on various fronts. After that, due to residents' continuous concern over Hong Kong's carrying capacity and the problem of parallel trading, the HKSAR Government proposed to the Central Government to replace the "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements with the "one trip per week" Individual Visit Endorsements, and implemented the relevant policy on April 13, 2015.

Subsequent to the publication of the above Report, various large-scale cross-boundary infrastructure, including the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai boundary control point, were completed. Hong Kong's cross-boundary transportation capacity has been strengthened, offering

more choices for Mainland visitors' trips to Hong Kong and therefore facilitating Mainland visitors to visit Hong Kong. Since the transportation between the Mainland and Hong Kong becomes more convenient, the coverage of the "one-hour living circle" has been expanding continuously. It is anticipated that more Mainland visitors will visit Hong Kong in the form of same-day visit and their travel habits will be different from traditional visitors and will be more similar to local residents' activities and habits. For example, they may not stay in Hong Kong in the hope of covering more attractions or activities; instead, they would rather visit again. On the other hand, based on the findings of the HKTb, the average length of stay of Mainland overnight visitors has extended from 3.1 nights before the pandemic to 3.4 nights in the third quarter last year, which reflects that attractions and activities in Hong Kong are attractive enough for traditional visitors to extend their stay in Hong Kong. In fact, the HKTb's exit survey with visitors has proved this again.

On the receiving capacity of hotels, there were more than 100 000 rooms offered by hotels and guesthouses in total in late November 2023, representing a 31 per cent increase as compared with 2013. Regarding tourist attractions, the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort continued to implement its multi-year expansion and development plans including the opening of the world's first and largest "World of Frozen" in November 2023, the openings of the Ocean Park's all-weather indoor cum outdoor Water World and the Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong in recent years, the upgrading and re-opening of the Peak Tram in August 2022, and the launching of the Ngong Ping 360's "Crystal+" cabin in December 2022 which offers 360-degree panoramic view. Moreover, various cultural spots including Hong Kong Palace Museum, M+ museum and Hong Kong Museum of Art have been built or renovated, which helped to attract visitors. In addition, the Travel Industry Authority (TIA), the regulatory body of the travel industry, has come into operation in September 2022 which promotes the integrity, competence and professionalism of the travel agents, tourist guides and tour escorts through its licensing and regulation mechanism. The TIA also continues to monitor the operation and management of tour groups, with a view to minimising the impact of their activities on residents livelihood. On the whole, Hong Kong's visitor carrying capacity has improved over the past 10 years.

As the policy bureau responsible for formulating and coordinating the implementation of policies, strategies and plans to promote the development of the tourism industry, the CSTB will continue to actively lead and coordinate with other government bureaux and departments to implement policies and measures that contribute to the vibrant growth of the tourism industry, including developing more in-depth signature tourism products, providing continuous support for various international events, conferences, exhibitions, and incentive travel to be held in Hong Kong, developing cruise tourism products, promoting smart tourism, optimising and enhancing tourist facilities, and implementing comprehensive industry regulations, with a view to attracting more high value-added overnight visitors. On tourism promotion, the HKTb will continue to launch activities to promote Hong Kong's in-depth and diversified travel experiences to visitors through various channels, with a view to attracting visitors to Hong Kong. The CSTB is working on the

updating of the "Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0" to promote the concept of "tourism+" and "+tourism", in a bid to optimise collaboration in various fields to enhance the quality of tourism activities and promote the development of other sectors through tourism at the same time, so as to strengthen the integration of culture, sports and tourism, further enhancing Hong Kong's attractiveness. The CSTB is preparing to establish the high-level Tourism Strategy Committee to further promote the long-term and sustainable development of the tourism industry and enhance collaboration among different stakeholders in the sector.

Regarding the recent suggestions of reinstating the measure of "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements for Shenzhen residents and extending the relevant policies to other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the Government has been maintaining close communication with relevant Mainland authorities on the implementation of the relevant arrangements and the way forward, and has nothing to supplement at this stage.

For the upcoming 2024 Chinese New Year Golden Week, the Chief Secretary for Administration will chair the Co-ordination Meeting on Cross-boundary Transport Arrangements for Large-scale Events to enhance co-ordination among relevant departments and the trade, and prepare in advance to ensure smooth cross-boundary transport arrangements for visitors. CSTB will continue to closely monitor the situation and the number of Mainland visitor arrivals, and maintain close communication with relevant Mainland authorities, as well as liaising with the travel trade to better prepare to receive visitors.

Lastly, the CSTB will continue to work with Mainland tourism-related units on initiatives including joint promotion and exchange of visitors, with a view to actively building a GBA tourism brand that caters to regional and international markets, jointly promoting "multi-destination" tourism to source markets and "shaping tourism with cultural activities and promoting culture through tourism", and unleashing Hong Kong's role as an international tourism hub and a core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism.