

LCQ1: Making good use of shoreline tourism resources

Following is a question by the Hon Benson Luk and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (June 4):

Question:

In May last year, the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council proposed that Hong Kong should establish the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", and in November of the same year, he advised that Hong Kong's shoreline tourism resources should be put to good use. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether, according to the Government's estimation, the "Round-the-Island Trail" developed on Hong Kong Island can be completed in 2031 as scheduled; how the Government will study with the MTR Corporation Limited the enhancement of the design of the ventilation building of the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel project, so as to minimise the impact on the waterfront promenade on Hong Kong Island and the Central Harbourfront Event Space, as well as the relevant design proposal and construction schedule;

(2) given that a number of sections of the waterfront promenade in Kowloon are not connected (including the Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area, the Green Island Cement Pier, the Fishtail Rock in Hoi Sham Park and the waterfront gas facility off Grand Waterfront, etc), whether the authorities have plans to connect the entire shoreline of Kowloon in different modes; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it has formulated mega event programmes for the proposed waterfront promenades and those under construction, and of the measures in place to facilitate the industry to set up long-term catering premises at such promenades?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong possesses abundant coastal resources, and Victoria Harbour and the harbourfront are world-famous. In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, the reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Regarding the construction of a 60-kilometre-long "Round-the-Island Trail" on the Hong Kong Island, 85 per cent has been connected thus far. It is estimated that 90 per cent would be connected by end-2027. The remaining 10 per cent, with a length of about six km and mainly including sections such as Shau Kei Wan to Heng Fa Chuen and Brick Hill to Mills & Chung Path, involves works that require relatively more technical considerations and are

more complicated (such as slope improvement), which we will strive to substantially complete by end-2031.

The Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel project refers to a proposal to construct a tunnel of around 500 metres long beneath Lung Wo Road to the east of the Hong Kong Station in Central for trains to turn back so as to enhance the train carrying capacities and operation efficiency of the existing railway lines. Facilities under the project will mostly be constructed underground, while the ventilation cum emergency access building will be constructed aboveground, with a site area of about 1 200 square metres. The Government and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) are proactively optimising the project, including the overall design of the concerned facilities, with a view to minimising the footprint and height of the ventilation cum emergency access building, and also minimising the works area needed during construction. The target is to ensure that the permanent and temporary facilities of the concerned project would not need to, as far as practicable, occupy the existing Central Harbourfront Event Space (CHES), site area of which is some 36 000 sqm, or to minimise the overlapping area between the concerned project and the CHES. The Government and the MTRCL will report the latest progress and the construction timetable of the project to the stakeholders in the second half of the year.

(2) For the Victoria Harbourfront in Kowloon from Cheung Sha Wan to Lei Yue Mun, the developable waterfront has a length of about 21 km, which excludes the about 6km-long waterfront areas currently occupied by existing facilities. After years of efforts by the Government and various sectors, about 65 per cent of the harbourfront has been connected at present, including sections in Tai Kok Tsui, the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), Tsim Sha Tsui, Cha Kwo Ling, etc. By end-2028, with the addition of sections along the harbourfront in Kai Tak as well as at the former freight yard pier site in Hung Hom, nearly 80 per cent will be connected. The remaining 20 per cent of the waterfront, such as Yau Tong Bay Comprehensive Development Area and some other harbourfront sections in Kai Tak, will be developed along with private development projects at the respective locations.

We will maintain our efforts regarding the aforementioned 6-km waterfront areas in the south of the Kowloon peninsula currently occupied by existing facilities. Subject to technical feasibility, we will improve harbourfront connectivity through other means. For example, we are constructing a pedestrian walkway along the inland boundary of the New Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area to link up the WKCD and the Tai Kok Tsui harbourfront. Upon completion next year, the pedestrian walkway will be opened to the public. As for the harbourfront connectivity of other locations, we will commence the Study on East Kowloon Harbourfront Trail in the near future, riding on the opportunities brought about by the newly amended Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531), and exploring to further connect harbourfront sections in Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan that are not yet accessible, including those locations mentioned in the question raised by the Member. Besides, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) has initiated the To Kwa Wan Harbourfront Study, which is a holistic planning covering the

hinterland of To Kwa Wan, waterfront spaces and the adjacent water body, in order to explore improving the connectivity between the hinterland and the harbourfront, in addition to utilising harbourfront resources. We will co-ordinate and join forces with the URA on these fronts.

(3) Many venues within the Victoria Harbourfront are suitable for hosting mega events and activities of various types. For instance, the CHES has been a venue frequently used for hosting a considerable number of signature events over the years; the WKCD has more than 20 indoor and outdoor venues, attracting different types of large-scale events; the Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade and the Avenue of Stars are also venues where leisure and entertainment activities are frequently held, such as music, film and arts and cultural events. The 15th National Games will be held in November this year, of which a number of competition events will take place in Hong Kong. Amongst them, the Triathlon event will be staged at the Central harbourfront and Victoria Harbour, which would allow spectators to watch the event while experiencing the natural beauty and vibrancy of Victoria Harbour.

Regarding food and beverages facilities at the harbourfront, we set up smart specialty vending facilities with distinctive exterior designs for photo-taking at the harbourfront in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong and Cha Kwo Ling last year, offering light snacks, drinks and gadgets. We are partnering with WestK Enterprise Limited in recent months to invite interested operators, through expression of interest, to set up refreshment stalls at four harbourfront locations with relatively more frequent flow of visitors in Central, Wan Chai, North Point and Tsim Sha Tsui within this year. Furthermore, we will revitalise the former freight yard pier site in Hung Hom into a special event space and open it for public use in the first quarter of next year. In the longer term, we have already released the preliminary land use proposal on the long-term development of the former pier site in Hung Hom and the sites around Hung Hom Station earlier; and we are also carrying out a study on the use of the topside development of the Exhibition Centre Station in Wan Chai North. Both projects will involve introducing food and beverages, retail and entertainment facilities of sizeable scale at the harbourfront, and continue to make good use of harbourfront resources to create new highlights for Hong Kong.

Thank you, President.