LCQ5: Attracting visitors to Hong Kong

â€‹Following is a question by the Hon Adrian Ho and a reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

To promote the recovery and development of Hong Kong's tourism industry, the Government has launched the "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign, and the Hong Kong Tourism Board has also rolled out a series of promotional activities to attract visitors to Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the aforesaid global promotional campaign includes giving away free of charge to visitors by various means within six months about 500 000 air tickets purchased in advance by the Airport Authority Hong Kong from several local airlines, and distributing "Hong Kong Goodies" visitor consumption vouchers to one million visitors to Hong Kong, so as to attract them to visit and spend money in Hong Kong, whether the Government has set targets for the substantive benefits and effects of such activities as the basis for implementing such activities;

(2) whether, prior to conducting activities to publicise and promote Hong Kong around the world, the authorities have established the publicity targets, including the countries and regions as well as the age groups of visitors, in order to formulate corresponding publicity strategies; and

(3) whether the authorities will organise a series of activities highlighting the various unique cultures and characteristics of Hong Kong, with a view to establishing Hong Kong's tourism brand and selling points as well as telling the stories of Hong Kong well; if so, of the details of the various activities?

Reply:

President,

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Adrian Ho, having consulted the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, Transport and Logistics Bureau and Information Services Department, the consolidated reply is as follows:

(1) According to the information provided by the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) purchased in advance around 500 000 air tickets from three locally-based carriers in 2020 to support Hong Kong's aviation industry, which had been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To complement the Government's "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign launched in February this year, AAHK launched the "World of Winners" Tickets Giveaway Campaign in March to give away these air tickets through the three locally-based carriers, the travel trade and public organisations, with

a view to increasing the airport passenger throughput, speeding up airlines' recovery as well as boosting the business of upstream and downstream supporting services. Visitors to Hong Kong winning the free tickets are also entitled to special offers on hotel accommodation, shopping and entertainment, etc. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has been rendering full support on promotion. The whole campaign will last for six months. A total of about 200 000 air tickets have been given away. AAHK expects that the campaign will bring more than 1.5 million visitors to Hong Kong in total.

Riding on the launch of the "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign, HKTB also launched a series of promotional activities to welcome visitors, including distributing "Hong Kong Goodies" visitor consumption vouchers which consisted offers at dining and retail outlets, attractions or transport to one million visitors through HKTB's Discover Hong Kong e-platform. As of mid-May, the vouchers have been distributed to more than 760 000 visitors.

(2) HKTB has been promoting the tourism appeal of Hong Kong leveraging Hong Kong's uniqueness, such as the Victoria Harbour, city life, natural scenery, traditional culture, food and beverage of the East and the West, as well as various cultural, arts and sports mega events, which meet various needs of different target visitors. Attracting high value-added visitors is our major promotional target. In addition to organising and supporting mega events in Hong Kong, HKTB will also step up efforts to attract Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) events of various scales and types to be held in Hong Kong.

With the launch of the "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign, HKTB and government departments have rolled out series of activities to send out welcoming messages to the world, promote Hong Kong, and attract visitors around the world to visit Hong Kong. HKTB expects that short-haul markets such as the Mainland and Southeast Asian markets and regional travel will resume faster than long-haul markets. As such, HKTB first targets short-haul markets in promotion, including inviting travel trade, the media and KOLs on social media platforms in the Mainland to visit Hong Kong in depth, bringing CCTV famous news anchors to Hong Kong to introduce the city, and inviting popular Mainland reality TV variety shows to introduce Hong Kong's authentic gourmet culture, classic drama and new attractions. Besides, HKTB has organised a number of mega trade familiarisation trips for travel trade in Southeast Asia to promote new tourism products of Hong Kong. HKTB will also invite stars and directors from Korea, Thailand and the Philippines to film in Hong Kong and promote the city.

This year, HKTB plans to invite over 1 000 travel trade, media, film stars, KOLs and Hong Kong Super Fans to visit Hong Kong to generate positive word-of-mouth and good comments. At the same time, HKTB plans to lead the travel trade to participate in more than 20 major tourism exhibitions and MICE-related events in the Mainland and overseas throughout the year.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong overseas Economic and Trade Offices strive to maintain close communication and interaction with the international

community, to promote and explain the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's (HKSARG) major policies, promote Hong Kong's cultural and creative industries and foster cultural exchanges, conduct, sponsor and participate in various arts and cultural activities, and leverage activities during the visits of Government senior officials, to promote Hong Kong's status as Asia's emerging arts and cultural hub, and our uniqueness as a quality tourist destination and Asia's world city. Besides, the HKSARG Mainland Offices (Mainland Offices) take the opportunity of senior Government officials' visits to the Mainland to arrange them to attend promotional activities, give speeches and join media interviews in order to enhance promotion. Mainland Offices will continue to play the bridging role, and make good use of the online and offline platforms to promote Hong Kong's advantages and opportunities in the Mainland.

The Information Services Department (ISD) aims to promote Hong Kong's advantages, potentials, and opportunities to overseas countries and the Mainland, showcasing Hong Kong's vibrancy and attractiveness as Asia's world city. ISD has also stepped up its promotional and publicity efforts in major target markets, in particular the Middle East and ASEAN countries, to tie in with the Government's policies for attracting enterprises and investment. Target audiences of these promotional efforts include business and political leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, professionals and young talents, etc.

(3) Cultural, sports and tourism mega events will provide visitors with rich and diverse experiences, and attract visitors to visit Hong Kong. In 2023-24, mega events organised or under planning in Hong Kong include the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, Harbour Chill Carnival, Hong Kong Cyclothon, Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, Hong Kong WinterFest, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong Sevens, Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival 2023, Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations, and Hong Kong Chinese New Year Celebrations next year.

HKTB will also extend and expand the "Hong Kong Neighbourhoods" promotions, injecting new elements into "Old Town Central", "Sham Shui Po" and "West Kowloon", to attract visitors with authentic local culture. In addition, HKTB will continue to implement the Pilot Scheme for Characteristic Local Tourism Events and provide funding support for staging events showcasing local characteristics. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is actively organising the "Hong Kong Week" to be staged in Bangkok, Thailand from October to November this year to feature the unique East-meet-West arts and cultural ambience of Hong Kong.

Pursuing in-depth and personalised travel experiences is on a rising trend. With a variety of cultural, sports and mega events, Hong Kong will continue to attract visitors from all over the world. We believe that the number of visitors will continue to increase within this year, which will benefit Hong Kong's tourism, retail, catering, business, exhibitions and other sectors.