

Speech by SCST at 37th International Travel Expo and 18th MICE Travel Expo opening ceremony (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, at the 37th International Travel Expo and the 18th MICE Travel Expo opening ceremony today (June 15):

Mr Tong (Founder and Managing Director of TKS Exhibition Services, Mr KS Tong), distinguished guests, Consuls-General, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great honour joining you all again for the opening ceremony of the International Travel Expo (ITE) and MICE Travel Expo twin shows. May I first extend a very warm welcome to you all. Your presence here today clearly underlines that Hong Kong is back – back to the world stage, bringing opportunities with the world.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to KS for successfully bringing the twin shows back to their pre-pandemic grandeur. Today we have over 400 exhibitors from some 50 countries and regions, and the shows are set to attract more than 60 000 visitors. Our key partners in the travel trade are making the best use of this first forum in Hong Kong after the pandemic to reconnect, revive business, and reveal their exciting offerings, with the theme of "Onward to Full Recovery" of the shows.

The recovery of the tourism industry is evident from the upsurge in visitor arrivals since our full resumption of normal travel with the Mainland and the rest of the world. We recorded a visitor arrival of over 2.8 million last month, and since the beginning of the year, we have had over 10 million visitor arrivals.

To keep this momentum going, the Government, together with the Hong Kong Tourism Board and our partners in the tourism sector, will continue to strengthen our promotion under the "Hello Hong Kong" Campaign and to extend our heart-warming welcome to visitors which include distribution of 500 000 free air tickets and a million "Hong Kong Goodies" visitor consumption vouchers.

This year, we are also hosting and supporting a series of large-scale events in Hong Kong, ranging from arts and culture to sports and entertainment such as the first-ever annual Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival, Hong Kong Cyclothon and Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival. In the next weekend (June 24 and 25), we will be receiving the participating teams and audience to the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races after a four-year hiatus. Meanwhile, we are deploying additional resources to attract more MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) events and international cruise lines to come to Hong Kong. New tourism offerings are also coming on

stream. For example, later this year we will be welcoming the world's first Frozen-themed area at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort, the launch of the next phase of the Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival and the next edition of Design District Hong Kong.

We are also looking into opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). In fulfilling Hong Kong's role as an international tourism hub and a core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism, we are working together with our friends in the GBA, many of them are present here today, in establishing a coherent tourism brand for the GBA and promoting multi-destination tourism to different source markets. With the full support of our nation, I am confident that Hong Kong will bring a positive impact on developing the GBA into a world-class bay area for leisure. Looking ahead, we will actively align ourselves with national development strategies and integrate into overall development of our nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, the path towards recovery is surely not without challenges. But do rest assured that the Government will continue to provide the necessary support to the industry to boost the momentum of revival. I am confident that with the concerted efforts of the Government, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, our industry and the community at large, we would rise above the challenges and march into an even brighter future together.

In closing, I wish the ITE and MICE twin shows another year of great success and the best of business. For those who are visiting Hong Kong, I wish you all a fruitful and an enjoyable stay in this world city of Asia. Thank you!