

Credit card lending survey results for fourth quarter 2022

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority published today (February 15) the credit card lending survey results for the fourth quarter of 2022.

Total card receivables increased by 12.1 per cent in the fourth quarter to HK\$145.0 billion at end-December 2022, mainly driven by festive spending and salaries tax payment.

The combined delinquent and rescheduled ratio edged down to 0.28 per cent at end-December 2022 from 0.29 per cent at the previous quarter-end. The quarterly charge-off ratio decreased to 0.38 per cent from 0.42 per cent in the previous quarter.

Tentative issuance schedule for Exchange Fund Bills and Notes

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) issued today (February 15) a tentative issuance schedule for Exchange Fund Bills and Notes (EFBNs) for the coming quarter of April to June 2023. The schedule contains information on the tentative tender dates, issue sizes and issue dates of individual issues, representing rollover of maturing issues and taking into account planned adjustments to the maturity spectrum of the EFBN portfolio.

The quarterly schedule is issued in the second month of each quarter (i.e. February, May, August and November), covering the EFBN tenders in the following quarter.

It should be noted that the tender dates, issue sizes and issue dates projected in the advance issuance schedule are tentative. The details of new issues of Exchange Fund Bills are to be confirmed and announced at least four business days prior to the respective tender dates. The details of new issues of Exchange Fund Notes are to be confirmed and announced seven business days prior to their respective tender dates. The HKMA may make changes in the light of prevailing market conditions.

LCQ6: Betting duty

Following is a question by the Hon Adrian Ho and a reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (February 15):

Question:

Over the past few years, the economy of Hong Kong has been hard hit by the epidemic, and the expenses involved in anti-epidemic and relief measures have amounted to over \$600 billion. Some analyses have pointed out that, excluding the amounts of the Housing Reserve and Future Fund ploughed back and the proceeds from the issuance of bonds, the Government has recorded fiscal deficits for three consecutive years, and the fiscal deficit of the current financial year is estimated to be over \$100 billion. According to Article 107 of the Basic Law, Hong Kong shall follow the principle of keeping the expenditure within the limits of revenues in drawing up its budget, and strive to achieve a fiscal balance and avoid deficits. There are views that the Government should increase stable and recurrent revenue, and betting duty is one of such revenue. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government raised the betting duty and authorised betting on football matches in 2003, and amended the Betting Duty Ordinance in 2006 to convert the betting duty on horse race bets from turnover-based to a tax on net stake receipts, of the respective betting turnovers of and revenues from betting duty on football betting, betting on horse races, cash-sweeps and lotteries (i.e. Mark Six) in each of the years from 2003 to 2009;

(2) whether the authorities will conduct a study on raising the betting duty, with a view to increasing the stable revenue of the Government from betting duty; and

(3) whether it will, by drawing reference from the experience of neighbouring regions in issuing additional betting licences, conduct a study on suitably increasing the number of licences for conducting betting on football matches under section 6I of the Betting Duty Ordinance, with a view to increasing revenue from betting duty; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has all along been adhering to the principles of exercising fiscal prudence, keeping expenditure within the limits of revenue and committing resources as and when justified and needed in public finance

Betting on football matches	16,063	26,731	31,272	30,190	34,442	35,108	38,908
Betting on horse races	65,025	62,661	59,032	63,860	66,791	67,653	71,647
Lotteries	5,860	6,599	6,293	6,589	6,382	6,429	6,375
Total	86,948	95,991	96,597	100,639	107,615	109,190	116,930

Remarks: The figures above are based on the financial years of HKJC (from July to June of the following year)

As for betting duty, the revenue from betting duty increased from \$11.6 billion in 2003-04 to \$12.8 billion in 2009-10. The revenue from duty on betting on football matches, betting on horse races and lotteries between 2003-04 and 2009-10 is summarised in Table 2.

	Table 2: Government revenue from betting duty						
	(\$million)						
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Betting on football matches	1,024	1,928	2,355	2,797	2,947	2,946	2,978
Betting on horse races	9,259	8,467	7,950	7,703	8,415	8,089	8,292
Lotteries	1,353	1,662	1,633	1,547	1,686	1,585	1,497
Total	11,636	12,057	11,938	12,047	13,048	12,620	12,767

(2) To ensure fiscal sustainability, the Government would look into different measures, including tax rate adjustment, to increase revenue without affecting people's livelihood and maintaining the policy of low tax rate as far as possible. We will take into account the fiscal position of the Government, the economic environment of Hong Kong, and the impact on people from different walks of life in the community and give prudent consideration to the proposal of adjusting betting duty.

(3) The gambling policies in different jurisdictions around the world are not the same and the betting duty regimes also vary. Therefore, the licensing regime of betting activities (including the number of betting licences issued) in other jurisdictions may not be directly applicable to Hong Kong. As for Hong Kong, the Government's policy has all along been not to encourage gambling.

As per established practice, the licence for football betting is only issued by the Government under the Ordinance to one organisation, namely HKJC, to prevent competition amongst operators which could stimulate demand for gambling. Having considered that the prevailing practice is consistent with the Government's gambling policy of not encouraging gambling and has all along been effective, we have no plan at the moment to increase the number of licence for football betting.

Thank you, President.

LCQ22: Work on promoting Hong Kong to Mainland

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (February 15):

Question:

There are views that with the resumption of normal travel of persons between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the Hong Kong SAR Government should focus on engaging itself with the Mainland and telling Hong Kong's stories well to its Mainland counterparts while further enhancing the branding and image of Hong Kong, so as to facilitate the flows of people, goods and capital between Hong Kong and the Mainland to bring them back to the pre-epidemic levels as soon as possible. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the overall plan of the Hong Kong SAR Government this year to actively engage itself with the Mainland and tell Hong Kong's stories well to its Mainland counterparts, and how the Task Force on Promoting and Branding Hong Kong led by the Financial Secretary will play its role in this regard;

(2) whether the officials of the Hong Kong SAR Government have plans to visit various Mainland provinces and municipalities to give talks and presentations; if so, whether they have formulated detailed promotional plans and activities, so as to restore and strengthen the co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland cities in economic, humanities and other fields; and

(3) as it has been reported that the number of Mainland visitor arrivals to Hong Kong after the orderly resumption of normal travel of persons between Hong Kong and the Mainland in January this year fell short of expectation and was far from returning to the pre-epidemic level, whether the Hong Kong SAR Government has plans to step up publicity efforts targeting Mainland

visitors?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong enjoys strong support of the Motherland while being closely connected to the world. Meanwhile, as Hong Kong is entering a new phase of advancing from stability to prosperity, and the epidemic has slowed down with everything returning to normal, Hong Kong is reconnecting to the world as well as resuming normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland fully. Under this circumstance, telling the good story of Hong Kong to the world with a view to reviving Hong Kong economy and the livelihood of people has become one of the top priorities of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (SAR Government).

Regarding Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng's question, after consultation with the Financial Secretary's Office; the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau; the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau; the Transport and Logistics Bureau; and the Information Services Department, this Bureau's comprehensive reply is as follows:

(1) With the resumption of convenient cross-boundary movement, the SAR Government is going all out to promote the new potentials and opportunities of Hong Kong at full steam, and has planned a series of promotional activities, one after another, with a view to enhancing promotion of Hong Kong in the Mainland. The Task Force on Promoting and Branding Hong Kong (the Task Force), led by the Financial Secretary, has commenced the relevant work. With the focus on telling good stories of Hong Kong for the new situation, new potentials and new opportunities in Hong Kong under its new development stage, and through direct communication and public relations promotion, the Task Force will facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of Hong Kong's advantages and opportunities by people in the Mainland and overseas regions. With members comprising prominent individuals in diverse sectors, representatives of Hong Kong Inc. partner organisations and Government officials, the Task Force will provide valuable advice on the Government's overall promotional strategy and a series of promotional plans and activities in the Mainland and overseas regions. We believe that with concerted efforts, our promotional work in the Mainland and overseas regions will be more targeted, more in line with the actual objectives and more impactful in terms of further enhancing the branding and image of Hong Kong.

The SAR Government has also launched a large-scale publicity campaign "Hello Hong Kong". Through a series of publicity and promotional activities, the campaign will showcase Hong Kong's new attractions, new developments and new opportunities to the world. To welcome tourists from the Mainland and overseas to come and experience the hospitality of Hong Kong in person, the SAR Government will distribute 500 000 free air tickets through the campaign. In addition, a number of major new attractions have opened locally over the past few years, such as the Hong Kong Palace Museum and the M+ museum at the West Kowloon Cultural District, and the newly renovated Hong Kong Museum of

Art, providing visitors with newer experiences. There are also a series of consumption vouchers, including transport, food and beverages, tourist spots and shopping, redeemable under HK Goodies and various special offers provided by merchants available to welcome visitors and enrich their itinerary in Hong Kong. A variety of large-scale events that will take place in the coming two to three months include Hong Kong Sevens, Trailwalker, Art Basel Hong Kong, Museum Summit, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival, Hong Kong International Jewellery Show, WOW Summit Hong Kong and Vis East Moot, etc. Also, large-scale MICE tourism related international conferences and exhibitions are also returning one after another, in order to bring in more high-spending tourists to Hong Kong.

(2) Since the implementation of the gradual resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland on January 8 this year, the Chief Executive and the principal officials of the SAR Government have actively planned to visit various provinces and municipalities in the Mainland for high-level visits and exchanges, hosting and attending bilateral and multilateral co-operation meetings with provinces and municipalities in the Mainland, and participating in meetings and activities organised by the SAR Government Mainland Offices (Mainland Offices) and the relevant Mainland organisations in areas of business and trade, culture, art, tourism, sports, etc., so as to strengthen the co-operation with the provinces and municipalities in the Mainland comprehensively. The Mainland Offices will also take advantage of the opportunity when senior SAR Government officials visit the Mainland to arrange for officials to attend promotional activities, give speeches and accept media interviews in order to enhance the effectiveness of publicity and tell good stories of Hong Kong in the Mainland. In addition, the Mainland Offices and relevant organisations will also promote Hong Kong's advantages through diversified activities, encourage and support representatives of different professions and sectors to visit the Mainland, and deepen exchanges with various places.

The Mainland Offices will continue to play the bridging role, to organise visits to Mainland authorities and bodies, to attend speaking occasions, to conduct media interviews and briefings, as well as to participate in business and trade meetings. They will also make good use of the online and offline platforms, including digital and multimedia platforms, and mass media platforms such as television, radio, newspapers, etc. These platforms will also be used for disseminating information, short videos, interview programmes, etc., for promoting Hong Kong's advantages and opportunities in the Mainland.

At the same time, to complement the policy initiatives of "competing for enterprises" and "competing for talents", the SAR Government has expanded the functions of the Mainland Offices. The five Mainland Offices had each set up a "Dedicated Team for Attracting Businesses and Talents" in December 2022 to support the relevant work of the Office for the Attracting Strategic Enterprises led by the Financial Secretary, and the Talents Service Unit under the Labour and Welfare Bureau, including reaching out to target enterprises and talents in the Mainland proactively, liaising with the world's top 100 universities, discussing with target enterprises, and

providing appropriate information and assistance, etc., with a view to attracting investments and talents from the Mainland to come to Hong Kong to pursue development.

In addition, this year, Invest Hong Kong will continue to work closely with the relevant ministries and commissions of the Central Government, commerce bureaux of Mainland provinces and municipalities, Mainland commercial and industrial organisations in organising a variety of investment promotion events of different scale, so as to assist Mainland enterprises to understand the distinctive advantages of Hong Kong enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems", and encourage more potential Mainland enterprises to set up in Hong Kong, or to make use of Hong Kong as a platform to go global and open up overseas markets.

Besides, bureaux and departments of the SAR Government are also reactivating various co-operation projects with the Mainland, including youth exchange, internship, activities promoting start-ups, etc., so as to further strengthen the co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland in different areas.

(3) As for the plans to step up publicity targeting Mainland visitors, the SAR Government has already devised an overall plan to welcome Mainland visitors proactively, as demonstrated by the Task Force and the large-scale promotional campaign "Hello Hong Kong" mentioned in Part (1) above. With the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland starting from February 6, Hong Kong is increasing its capacity in receiving tourists gradually. The Mainland will also resume the arrangement for tourist groups visiting Hong Kong in a gradual and orderly manner. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau of the SAR Government has already taken immediate action to get in touch with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to discuss the relevant issues.

[Providing a housing lifeboat](#)

To address the short-term public housing shortage, the Chief Executive announced in the 2022 Policy Address that about 30 000 light public housing units will be completed in five years. Secretary for Housing Winnie Ho brought a group of subdivided unit tenants to a mock-up of a light public housing unit for a preview of their future homes.

News.gov.hk spoke to Ms Ho to learn more about how the new units will provide an imperative lifeboat to those with urgent housing needs, especially families living in subdivided units in poor conditions.

The story is available at www.news.gov.hk/eng/feature today (January 29)

in text and video format.