30 May 2007

Tourism Commission
2/F, East Wing
Central Government Offices
Lower Albert Road
Central
Hong Kong

By Fax and Post
(2801 4458)

Dear Sir,

Views on the Proposal for a New Cruise Terminal at Kai Tak

The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (the DAB) supports the Government to develop Hong Kong into a leading regional cruise hub through the development of a world-class cruise terminal with state-of-the-art facilities which are user-friendly, and provide efficient and quality services.

With regard to the development of a New Cruise Terminal at the southern end of the former runway at Kai Tak, we wish to convey the following views and suggestions to relevant Government authorities for consideration:-

(i) **Timely provision of direct and proper vehicular access to the New Cruise Terminal from Kwun Tong**

Given the elongated configuration of the former runway, the proposed location of the New Cruise Terminal at the southern end of the former runway is literally a dead-end that requires road infrastructure to connect with the hinterland. As the Government endeavours to have the first berth of the New Cruise Terminal commissioned by 2012, we consider that it is paramount to have timely provision of road infrastructure to support smooth operation of the New Cruise Terminal.
In order to ensure efficient vehicular circulation to and from the New Cruise Terminal and effective diversion of traffic away from the elongated runway during emergency, we strongly urge for the construction of the Kwun Tong Bridge to connect the New Cruise Terminal with the hinterland. Not only that it could serve as an alternative access for the New Cruise Terminal, the Kwun Tong Bridge could also significantly shorten the traveling distance to and from the New Cruise Terminal. It is in line with the Government’s commitment in environmental protection and also helps relieve the traffic loading on Prince Edward Road East.

The distance between the Cruise Terminal site and Kwun Tong waterfront is only about 500m. However, under the current planning by the Government, access road to the site would be provided via the existing Cheung Yip Street at Kowloon Bay. In other words, cruise passengers would have to travel for more than 3km to get through the runway and the North Apron Area to reach the hinterland. It would be both time consuming and cost ineffective.

At the same time, it would be detrimental to the image of Hong Kong as a world-class tourist destination. It is because by the time when the first berth of the New Cruise Terminal comes into operation in 2012, most parts of Kai Tak would still be under construction. It would be ridiculous if cruise passengers have to pass through all these construction sites before reaching the hinterland and returning to the New Cruise Terminal (see Plan 1).

As cruise passengers would only have a short stay in Hong Kong, giving them a positive first impression right at the time when cruise vessels ashore would be very important. Ruining their first impression would mean economic loss, as the appeal of Hong Kong as a leisure destination would be reduced and the reputation of Hong Kong as a world class city with modern infrastructure would be damaged. Hong Kong could not afford such a negative impact to its tourism industry.

(ii) Comprehensive Traffic Networking - “3-use” Kwun Tong Bridge

To achieve a comprehensive networking between the New Cruise Terminal and the different means of existing transportations, we insist that the proposed Kwun Tong Bridge must be a “3-use” bridge which could accommodate vehicles, pedestrians as well as the proposed rail-based environmentally friendly transport system (EFTS). It would realize the optimum use of the Kwun Tong Bridge connection and bring the most benefits to cruise passengers and the local people by providing different options of transport of the most direct access.
(iii) Early implementation of the rail-based EFTS

To strengthen the attractiveness of the tourism node proposed at the southern end of the runway and to adhere to the planning theme of Kai Tak as a new tourism hub, we strongly urge for the early implementation of the rail-based EFTS. As witnessed in other world cities such as Sydney and Singapore, rail-based EFTS could become a popular mode of transport for tourists and form an integral part of the city’s tourism promotion package.

In fact, given its design flexibility and minimum space requirement, rail-based EFTS could easily integrate with buildings and railway stations. As the Government already has plans to establish a rail-based EFTS station at the New Cruise Terminal, relevant authorities could consider integrate the rail-based EFTS station inside the New Cruise Terminal and form a unique feature in the whole development. It could bring a modern and extraordinary experience to cruise passengers.

Furthermore, no matter it is in the form of a monorail or other equivalent systems, the proposed rail-based EFTS must be further extended to Kwan Tong town centre to create the greatest synergy by connecting with Kwan Tong MTR Station at one end and the future Kai Tak Station of the Shatin-to-Central Link at the other end (see Plan 2). A complete loop could thus be formed and therefore bringing the most benefits to cruise passengers.

We believe the success of the New Cruise Terminal hinges on the above supporting infrastructure and therefore sincerely invite relevant Government authorities to take into account our views and suggestions when planning for the New Cruise Terminal.

Yours faithfully,
For and on behalf of DAB

Chan Kam Lam, SBS JP
The Proposed New Cruise Terminal and Its Vicinity
The Proposed Rail-based Environmentally Friendly Transport System (EFTS) and the Two Railway Systems