

LCQ10: Development of cruise tourism

Following is a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, to a question by the Hon Jeffrey Lam at the Legislative Council today (December 8):

Question:

Hong Kong is developing cruise tourism. At present, apart from berthing at Ocean Terminal when arriving in Hong Kong, cruise vessels may apply for berthing at alternative locations such as China Merchants Wharf in Kennedy Town or the container terminals in Kwai Chung, or berthing mid-stream. With the new cruise terminal in the Kai Tak Development Area to commence operation in 2013, the number of cruise vessels arriving in Hong Kong is expected to rise. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the respective numbers of cruise vessels primarily on sightseeing itineraries which arrived in Hong Kong in 2009 and in 2010 (from January to the present), with a breakdown by the vessels' displacement tonnage, as well as the number of times these cruise vessels had used alternative berthing arrangements;

(b) of the anticipated number of cruise vessels primarily on sightseeing itineraries to arrive in Hong Kong in 2011, with a breakdown by the vessels' displacement tonnage, and among these, the anticipated number of cruise vessels that will use alternative berthing arrangements;

(c) whether the Government will cancel the existing alternative berthing arrangements for cruise vessels upon the commissioning of the new cruise terminal in the Kai Tak Development Area; if so, of the reasons for that; whether the Government will consider maintaining these alternative berthing arrangements and adding suitable ancillary facilities (e.g. beautified environment and passenger connection and safety facilities, etc.) so as to increase the overall number of berths for cruise vessels in Hong Kong and to meet the needs of different cruise vessels; and

(d) how the Government will make use of the advantages of the new cruise terminal to further promote the development of cruise tourism in Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the four-part question is set out below.

(a) There were 94 calls on Hong Kong by cruise vessels primarily on sightseeing itineraries in 2009, of which 21 required alternative berthing arrangements. There were 104 such calls from January to October in 2010, of which 24 required alternative berthing arrangements. A breakdown of the above figures by the vessels' displacement tonnage (DT) is set out in Annex I.

(b) The anticipated number of calls by cruise vessels primarily on sightseeing itineraries to arrive in Hong Kong in 2011 is 85, of which 19 would require alternative berthing arrangements. A breakdown by the vessels' displacement tonnage is set out in Annex II.

(c) The new terminal building and the first berth are expected to commence operation in mid-2013. The relevant works of the second berth are expected to be completed in 2015. Both berths can accommodate cruise vessels of largest displacement tonnage in the world. Depending on the displacement tonnage of cruise vessels arriving in Hong Kong, the two berths can be deployed flexibly to accommodate up to three vessels of different displacement tonnages. This will significantly alleviate the existing shortage of berths in Hong Kong. Whether we still need to make alternative berthing arrangements will be subject to prevailing circumstances.

(d) Leveraging on the completion of the new cruise terminal, we will continue to co-operate closely with the major cruise companies and Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) to attract deployment of more cruise vessels to Hong Kong. We will also work with HKTB and the cruise industry through the Advisory Committee on Cruise Industry to formulate strategies in encouraging cruise companies to develop more cruise tourism products.

HKTB has been collaborating with the tourism industry and cruise companies on promotion in the Mainland and overseas markets to attract tourists to Hong Kong to take cruise trips. This year, HKTB has conducted promotion jointly with relevant cruise companies and tourism industry in a number of mainland provinces and cities such as Guangdong, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing and Beijing, etc. HKTB will also participate in the Cruise Shipping Convention in Miami in March next year to

promote Hong Kong's position as the regional cruise hub and introduce the latest development of our new cruise terminal. We will also collaborate with HKTB to explore opportunities to foster closer co-operation with other ports in the Asia-Pacific region with a view to developing the potential of cruise tourism in the region.

Ends/Wednesday, December 8, 2010

Issued at HKT 13:35