

LCQ6: Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival

Following is a reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, to a question by the Hon Paul Tse in the Legislative Council today (December 15):

Question:

It has been reported that only 10% of the attendees at the Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival (the Event) organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) in October this year were visitors. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it knows the respective expenses on promoting the Event through advertising in the media in and outside Hong Kong; the reasons why the Event had attracted the participation of visitors equivalent to only 10% of its attendance; how the number and percentage of visitors compare with those of last year;

(b) whether it knows if HKTB, as the organisation to promote tourism activities of Hong Kong, had co-operated with registered travel agents in Hong Kong to promote the Event; if it had, of the specific details of the co-operation and expenditure involved; if not, the reasons for that; and

(c) given that most attendees of the Event are Hong Kong citizens while the number of visitors was small, and that the Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC) in November this year successfully attracted a large number of overseas and local exhibitors and customers, whether the Government has studied if it is more suitable and cost-effective for the Home Affairs Bureau or TDC to organise or co-organise the Event; if it has, of the progress of the study; if not, whether it will conduct such a study as soon as possible?

Reply:

President,

The four-day Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival (the Event) held in end-October this year was first staged by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) in 2009,

building on the success of the three-day inauguration event which attracted over 70,000 attendees and was rated one of the "world's top ten food and wine events of the year" by ForbesTraveler.com. This year, the Event was expanded in scale and attracted more foreign exhibitors. Over 110,000 attendees were drawn to the four-day Event. It kick-started the Hong Kong Wine and Dine Month organised by HKTB, enhancing the brand image of Hong Kong as the wine and dine hub of Asia.

My reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(a) HKTB promoted the Event in 2010 through a number of channels in Hong Kong and overseas. In Hong Kong, besides HKTB's Visitor Centres, publicity materials were also displayed in hotels and retail outlets of local trade partners. Regarding advertising, it mainly utilised media in strategic locations frequented by visitors (e.g. light boxes and billboards at ports of entry, TV screens at large shopping malls and attractions, bus body advertising, video display panels of taxicabs, etc.) to promote and raise awareness of the Event among visitors and encourage their participation during their stay in Hong Kong. The total spending was about \$2.8 million.

Outside Hong Kong, HKTB mainly promoted the Event in selected key visitor markets. An expenditure totalled \$10 million was incurred, including \$5.5 million in advertising and the remaining sum in organising consumer-oriented roadshows, press conferences, as well as inviting over 70 international media organisations from 13 countries and regions to attend and report on the Event.

From experience, any mega event needs to be nurtured by long-term promotion and reputation building before it can effectively raise awareness among visitors and attract their participation. The International Chinese New Year Night Parade, for example, has become a popular event among visitors after 10 years of sustained promotion by HKTB.

The number of visitors participating in the Event was around 11,000 in both years. The ratio of visitors decreased in 2010 because of a bigger base number arising from greater participation by local citizens as a result of enhanced awareness of the Event.

Besides, numerous overseas media had come to Hong Kong to report on the Event. These include media from Mainland China, the USA, Canada, France, South Africa, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, India, Thailand and Taiwan. The coverage of the Event via local TV, radio, newspapers and the Internet not only

helps attract more visitors to participate in the Event next year, but also enhance the image of Hong Kong as a diverse travel destination worldwide.

(b) HKTB co-operated with travel agents in Hong Kong on a continuous basis. Co-operative promotion of the 2010 Event was mainly on publicising the Event through these travel agents' retail outlets at hotels, ports of entry and attractions, as well as selling wine tokens to in-town visitors. HKTB did not bear any cost incurred in the co-operative promotion.

(c) The Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC) and the Wine and Dine Festival by HKTB differ in terms of objectives, nature and target participants.

TDC's Wine and Spirits Fair is an event for traders. It seeks to provide an international platform for companies from wine-producing countries and regions all over the world to showcase their wines to buyers and traders in Hong Kong and other Asian economies for the purpose of business matching. This helps build and fortify Hong Kong's position as a regional wine trading and distribution hub.

HKTB's Wine and Dine Festival, on the other hand, aims to cultivate in Hong Kong a wine appreciation culture and enhance the knowledge related to wine appreciation among local residents, restaurants and tourists. Besides drawing visitors' participation in the Event, in the long run it also helps project Hong Kong's image and brand as a wine and gourmet centre in Asia, thereby attracting more overseas and Mainland consumers to come to Hong Kong for a variety of fine wines and enhancing our city's appeal as a diverse travel destination.

To conclude, TDC focuses on the promotion of the wine trade, while HKTB carries out the function of tourism branding and enriching Hong Kong tourism offerings. The positioning and objectives of these two organisations are distinct from each other, and yet complementary at the same time. Both are contributory to the economic development of Hong Kong.

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