

LCQ16: Cheung Chau Bun Festival

Following is a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, to a question by the Hon Paul Tse in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

Regarding the Cheung Chau Bun Festival, which has successfully drawn tens of thousands of citizens and visitors from the Mainland and abroad every year, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) as it has been reported that earlier, the lack of policy co-ordination between the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Home Affairs Department has resulted in inflexible law enforcement, affecting the traditional Cheung Chau Bun Festival which has all along been popular among local citizens and overseas visitors for many years, in that one of the bakeries selling lucky buns stamped with peace messages for the festival decided to close its business on the May 10 during the Cheung Chau Bun Festival this year to protest against the inflexible law enforcement practices of FEHD, causing visitors who wished to seek "symbolic blessings" to wait for several hours in order to buy lucky buns and thus spoiling the mood of the tourists, whether the Government will look into ways to improve the problem of insufficient co-ordination among government departments and exercise discretion in law enforcement under special and viable circumstances so as to enable similar large-scale tourism events to come to full fruition;

(b) given that in recent years, the number of citizens and tourists coming to the Cheung Chau Bun Festival has increased each year, coupled with the fact that the parade-in-the-air is usually performed under high temperature, and there were even suspected cases of visitors suffering from heat stroke this year while watching the parade, whether the Government has any plan to improve the transportation, medical and other ancillary facilities on the island, so as to further spice up this spectacular tourism event with local characteristics;

(c) as some members of the public have pointed out that the success of the Cheung Chau Bun Festival demonstrates that as long as events have local characteristics, it is sufficient for them to be developed into "sustainable" iconic tourism events, and that the authorities need not spend huge amounts of public money to launch massive

promotional campaigns to "boost" "spectacular events" which are large in scale but lack cultural characteristics, whether the Government will make reference to the success of the Cheung Chau Bun Festival and thoroughly review the policy under which hundreds of millions of dollars are spent every year on tourism promotion;

(d) given that it has been reported that the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), used the Internet as the main platform to promote this year's Cheung Chau Bun Festival and the overall promotion expenditure was not large, thus achieving cost effectiveness with "maximum effect and minimum cost", whether it knows the amount of promotion expenditure made by HKTB for this year's Cheung Chau Bun Festival; whether HKTB will consider extending such mode of promotion to other events, such as the annual Chinese New Year Night Parade and Summer Concert, etc. so as to effectively utilise the annual funding for promotion which amounts to hundreds of millions; if so, of the details of the plans; if not, the reasons for that;

(e) whether the Tourism Commission and HKTB had tried to join hands with registered travel agencies to promote the Cheung Chau Bun Festival as a spectacular tourism event in the past three years; if they had, of the details of the promotional policies; if not, the reasons for that; and

(f) as in the floats of the parade-in-the-air which is the highlight of the Cheung Chau Bun Festival this year, some children imitated situations such as "the Financial Secretary and the Chief Executive handing out candies", "crabs being hard-pressed under a rock" and "on guard against radiation", and have struck a chord with the public, whether the Tourism Commission and HKTB will use the Cheung Chau Bun Festival's special characteristics of making iconic mockeries of the current affairs as a selling point to step up promotion of the Festival?

Reply:

President,

The Cheung Chau Bun Festival is a cultural celebration of long history and full of local characteristics. The event, which was successfully staged on May 10 this year, attracts many local residents and overseas tourists annually.

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

(a) and (b) The Cheung Chau Bun Festival is organised by Hong Kong Cheung Chau Bun Festival Committee. As a large number of tourists are attracted to Cheung Chau by the event every year, the Islands District Office co-ordinates the effort of relevant government departments to make appropriate arrangements on aspects such as marine traffic control, crowd control, emergency medical services and additional hygiene facilities (such as temporary toilets). The Islands District Office will improve and strengthen its co-ordination work with relevant departments with reference to the experience gained from the festival each year.

The lucky buns incident which occurred during the Cheung Chau Bun Festival this year falls within the enforcement responsibilities of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). The co-ordination work of the Islands District Office does not involve enforcement action of individual departments. FEHD is responsible for ensuring food safety to safeguard public health. Since April 16, 2011, FEHD has received eight complaints (two of which were referred by the Legislative Council Secretariat) against the shops at Pak She Street, Cheung Chau and its vicinity for the manufacturing and handling of lucky buns outside the shops.

Upon receipt of the complaints, FEHD staff carried out follow-up inspections to the licensed food premises in Pak She Street, Cheung Chau and its vicinity, but no irregularities were detected. However, in view of the complaints received, FEHD staff had advised the persons-in-charge to refrain from carrying on food manufacturing and handling outside the licensed area. During the course of inspection, no warning was issued and no enforcement action was taken.

In fact, FEHD received a similar complaint last year and no irregularities were detected during the follow-up investigation. As an enforcement agency, FEHD has to act according to the law to safeguard food safety. If the licensed food premises concerned have any proposals to improve their business operation, they should ensure that the manufacturing and handling of the lucky buns would comply with the relevant food safety and hygiene requirements. FEHD would be pleased to offer advice on such proposals.

(c) The Government has been working with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) to actively develop and promote Hong Kong's cultural tourism so as to achieve a more diverse portfolio of tourism products and to enhance Hong Kong's overall attractiveness as a premier tourist destination.

During the year, HKTB rolls out different mega events and large-scale activities, including local events, traditional festivals and international arts, sports and cultural activities, and bundles them under various promotional campaigns. For example, the four traditional festivals in April and May, namely the birthdays of Tin Hau, Lord Buddha and Tam Kung and the Cheung Chau Bun Festival, are packaged by HKTB under its "Hong Kong Cultural Celebrations" promotion to showcase Hong Kong's cultural characteristics. As regards mega events like the New Year Countdown Celebrations, Chinese New Year Parade, etc, which are organised by HKTB, they are very popular among overseas visitors and serve to build up Hong Kong's image as a city of endless excitement. All these events attract considerable coverage by the international media and help enhance the attractiveness of the city. At the same time, these events provide Hong Kong's travel trade and other related sectors with opportunities to launch tourism products of different themes, creating further business for the trade.

(d) HKTB's latest revised estimated expenditure for the promotion of the "Hong Kong Cultural Celebrations" in 2011 is about \$2.8 million. Major activities include the followings:

- * produced and uploaded a fun viral video on the Cheung Chau Bun Festival onto YouTube, Tudou, Sina Video and other online video sharing sites; promoted this video on online social media platforms, such as Sina Weibo, and encouraged viral sharing by the public;

- * by adopting a focused approach and targeting visitors with an interest in traditional festivals (such as long-haul visitors), HKTB, in collaboration with the local travel trades in the target markets, promoted travel itineraries which covered these festivals;

- * displayed posters, banners and other publicity materials at major ports of entry; arranged a Cheung Chau Bun Festival mascot to greet visitors at the Hong Kong International Airport so as to create a festive atmosphere to the visitors; and

- * produced a dedicated website and activities guide on the "Hong Kong Cultural Celebrations", to introduce details of the festivals and to encourage visitors to take part in the festivals in various districts.

In view of the popularity of the social media, HKTB will strengthen its digital marketing efforts in 2011-12 to publicise Hong Kong through creative means. It also

plans to invite famous twitter users and bloggers to visit Hong Kong and share their experience, and to encourage Internet users to spread and share twitter and blog entries.

Digital marketing and traditional marketing channels serve to complement each other. The major purpose of utilising digital marketing is to ride on the viral effect on the Internet, so as to reach more consumers, especially potential visitors, with a view to maximising the impact of HKTB's promotion.

In devising its promotional strategies and channels for each campaign, HKTB will take into account the scale of the project, as well as the target markets and visitor segments. Taking the annual Hong Kong Summer Spectacular and WinterFest as examples, HKTB will make use of the Internet to complement advertising, public relations activities and consumer promotion, such as road shows. Further to these, HKTB will collaborate with the trade to promote travel itineraries and special offers, in order to achieve maximum exposure and publicity for the campaigns and Hong Kong as a whole.

(e) Each year, HKTB issues circulars to the travel trades, including local travel agencies, to notify them of the programmes of the promotional campaigns, including the four traditional festivals during April and May. HKTB also encourages the travel trade to develop festival-themed tour products and incorporate them into the travel itineraries for visitors to experience the fun-filled festivals. This year, a number of guided tours themed on the Cheung Chau Bun Festival, such as "Bun Festival Tour", "Cheung Chau Island Floating Colours Parade and Lamma Island Fishing Village 1-Day Tour", have been organised by the local travel agencies.

(f) The floating colours parade, which is full of local characteristics, is one of the highlights of HKTB's promotion of the Cheung Chau Bun Festival. This year, with the support of the Hong Kong Cheung Chau Bun Festival Committee, HKTB produced a fun viral video to tell the story behind the parade. HKTB will continue to promote events and activities in Hong Kong that cater for visitors' interests and preferences.

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