

LCQ9: New strategies to encourage the staging of events or activities in Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Ma Fung-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (November 22):

Question:

The Mega Events Fund (MEF) ceased operation in March this year after eight years' operation. On the other hand, the Government has, in this financial year, adopted the following four new strategies to encourage and support different organisations to stage events or activities in Hong Kong: (1) providing one-stop support for large-scale commercial events with significant tourism merits, (2) cultivating home-grown events to enhance their status, (3) supporting international events with significant branding impact on Hong Kong, and (4) introducing a pilot scheme to support tourism activities showcasing Hong Kong's local characteristics. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows, among the events previously supported by MEF, the number of those which will be/have been held again in this financial year; of the channels through which the organisers of such events can apply/have applied for financial and other support from the Government when holding the events again; the number of the relevant applications received by the Government in the past six months, and set out by name of event the support rendered by the Government (if any); if there are events not receiving any support, of the reasons for that;

(2) of the criteria adopted by the Government for determining whether an event is a "large-scale commercial event with significant tourism merits"; whether it knows if there were events of this category held in Hong Kong in the past six months; if so, of the number of those which were cultural, arts or sports events, and the support provided by the Government for those events and the achievements of those events;

(3) how the Government determines whether an event should be regarded as "an international event with significant branding impact on Hong Kong"; whether the Government provided funding support for events of this category in the past six months; if so, of the details of the events which were funded (including the amount of public funding received) and, among such events, the number of those which were cultural, arts or sports events; if there were cultural, arts or sports events which did

not obtain any funding support, of the reasons for that;

(4) whether it knows the details of the pilot scheme to be launched by the Hong Kong Tourism Board to promote tourism projects with local characteristics, including the implementation timetable and the eligibility criteria for funding support; whether it has assessed how the scheme may help promote the development of cultural, arts or sports events in Hong Kong; and

(5) of the measures that the authorities have put in place to strengthen their collaboration with the local cultural, arts and sports sectors, so as to motivate them to organise more events?

Reply:

President,

To enhance our tourism appeals and enrich our visitors' experience in Hong Kong, the Government adopts a new strategy in 2017-18 to support the staging of events and activities with different scale and nature in Hong Kong to tie in with our policy objective of product diversification and attracting high-yield overnight visitors.

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Ma Fung-kwok is as follows:

(1) In 2016-17, events supported by the Mega Events Fund (MEF) included the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival, the Hong Kong Tennis Open and the Hong Kong Open. In 2017-18, the Government continues to support these events, which are identified by the MEF, to be held in Hong Kong through allocating additional funding to the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB). The Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival and Hong Kong Tennis Open were held again in June and October respectively this year; while this year's Hong Kong Open will be held again in end-November.

Moreover, the Information Services Department co-operates with the organisers of these three events to enhance their publicity as well as to promote Hong Kong with a view to reinforcing Hong Kong's positioning as "Asia's World City". Such promotional efforts include placement of advertisements and lamppost buntings; and promotions of these events on Brand Hong Kong's website and social media.

(2) In assessing the tourism merits of the concerned event/activity, we would consider

whether it is an international mega event with significant branding impact; whether it can attract additional high-spending overnight visitors to Hong Kong; and whether it can draw international media coverage and broadcast which would increase Hong Kong's exposure and raise Hong Kong's international profile, etc. A good example is the "FIA Formula E Hong Kong ePrix". According to the organiser, this mega event, which was first held in Hong Kong in October last year, attracted more than 20 000 spectators, with a quarter of them from overseas. The event also attracted high-spending overnight visitors from famous racing teams and motorsports lovers around the world to come to Hong Kong. The event generated wide local and international media coverage; and burnished Hong Kong's image as an international metropolis through overseas live broadcast of the races.

This mega event will be staged again in Hong Kong in December this year. The Tourism Commission (TC) has been co-ordinating the co-operation efforts among the organiser and the Government bureaux/departments. TC has also encouraged collaboration between the organiser and the tourism trade to develop tourism products. In addition, we have enhanced the overseas marketing of the event through allocating additional resources to HKTB, with a view to attracting more visitors to Hong Kong to participate in this mega event. TC will continue its collaboration with relevant departments in exploring the introduction of more large-scale international events of different types with tourism merits to Hong Kong.

(3) Regarding events with significant branding impact on Hong Kong, they refer to events which can attract high-spending visitors, including overseas sports/arts lovers, etc., to Hong Kong; and have all along been able to attract worldwide broadcast and media coverage. Hosting such events in Hong Kong can raise Hong Kong's international profile. The Government supports the continued staging of events with significant branding impact in Hong Kong, including Art Basel, Hong Kong Sevens, Hong Kong Tennis Open and Hong Kong Open, through allocating funding to HKTB to assist in the promotion of these events. In 2017-18, HKTB's total funding support to events with significant branding impact on Hong Kong is about \$30 million. In addition, HKTB also assists in the promotion of arts and cultural events with international reputation, such as the Hong Kong Book Fair, the Ani-Com and Games Hong Kong, the Clockenflap Music and Arts Festival, etc.

(4) To help staging events of different types in our city, it is necessary to nurture more local cultural, sports and entertainment activities. The Pilot Scheme for Characteristic Local Tourism Events (Pilot Scheme) to be implemented by HKTB

targets at Hong Kong-registered non-profit-making organisations, such as sports organisation, non-governmental organisation and arts organisation, etc. The Pilot Scheme aims to provide funding support to these organisations for marketing targeting overseas visitors for events related to arts, culture, festivals, dining or sports with Hong Kong's local characteristics and unique attributes. HKTB expects that the Pilot Scheme will be open for application in this fiscal year.

(5) The Government has all along been co-operating with local sports sector through different measures to facilitate them to stage more mega events. Among these measures, the "M" Mark System and Support Package was established by the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) in 2004. The number and scale of major sports events in Hong Kong have been increasing over the years. The number of "M" Mark events has increased from four in 2005 to 13 in 2017. Besides, there are various major sports events held in Hong Kong this year, including the Yao Foundation Charity Game (Basketball), the Hong Kong Masters 2017 (Snooker), and the Volvo Ocean Race 2017-18 – Hong Kong Stopover which are programmes in celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Government will continue to enhance the existing funding mechanism with a view to providing better support. Moreover, HAB is taking forward the Kai Tak Sports Park project, which will provide multi-purpose facilities of international standard to facilitate and attract more major events to be staged in Hong Kong.

On the cultural and arts fronts, HAB has all along been providing support to local arts and culture organisations as well as arts groups to hold different exhibitions, performances and other events for local residents and visitors. Every year, audiences from other places come to Hong Kong to attend a variety of arts programmes, such as Hong Kong Arts Festival. HKTB also promotes such programmes to visitors and has set up a dedicated page on its website introducing arts and entertainment programmes, such as the Le French May Arts Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival, Arts in the Park Mardi Gras and Chinese Opera Festival, etc. The Government would continue to provide resources to Hong Kong Arts Festival and other arts groups in future in order to maintain the quality of their programmes so as to attract participation from locals and visitors.

Ends/Wednesday, November 22, 2017

Issued at HKT 15:00