

LCQ17: Treatment accorded to Hong Kong people by Mainland tourist destinations

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Following is a question by the Hon Paul Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (April 11):

Question:

Since the time of my previous office as a Member of this Council returned by the tourism functional constituency, the Government of the Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the tourism authorities of various Mainland provinces and municipalities have been encouraging the residents of the Mainland and Hong Kong to enhance mutual understanding through tourism activities and exchanges. The Chief Executive of the last term also encouraged Hong Kong people (especially young people) to understand the development of our Country from different perspectives, and indicated that the SAR Government was willing to facilitate the exchanges and communications between members of various sectors of Hong Kong and the Mainland. Nonetheless, the Hainan Wenchang Space Launch Centre (WSLC) in Hainan Province of the Mainland has all along been open to Mainland residents only. Hong Kong permanent residents are classified as "foreigners" and as such are not permitted to visit WSLC. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has gained an understanding from the Mainland authorities of the circumstances leading to WSLC's refusing visits by Hong Kong people;

(2) whether it has gained an understanding from the Mainland authorities of the other Mainland tourist destinations which are open only to Mainland residents and not to Hong Kong people; and

(3) as the current national policy is to enable Hong Kong to integrate into the overall development of our Country, but the aforesaid admission policy of WSLC is contrary to such national policy in some Hong Kong residents' opinion, whether the Government has assessed if the differential treatment accorded to Mainland residents and Hong Kong people by WSLC and other Mainland tourist destinations is not conducive to developing a sense of national identity among Hong Kong people and upholding "one country, two systems"; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the

affirmative, of the Government's measures to deal with the situation?

Reply:

President,

Upon consulting the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Paul Tse is as follows:

(1) We understand that the Hainan Wenchang Space Launch Centre is unable to receive large numbers of visitors at the moment as its hospitality facilities and conditions are being developed and enhanced. Therefore, the centre is currently not open to Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and international visitors.

(2) and (3) We understand that all scenic areas and attractions in the Mainland are open to Hong Kong people, and that Hong Kong people enjoy basically the same treatment as Mainland residents in aspects including discounts on tickets and admission requirements. For instance, insofar as youth is concerned, as stated in the Announcement on Taking Forward Policies on Concessionary Tickets for Youth issued by the National Development and Reform Commission in February 2012, Hong Kong youth holding valid identification documents, including Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (Home Visit Re-entry Permits) or student cards, can purchase tickets at the same price as Mainland students at various scenic areas and attractions in the country. Furthermore, Hong Kong elderly reaching a certain age can enjoy certain discounts on tickets at various scenic areas and attractions upon presenting valid Home Visit Re-entry Permits, subject to the policies of the provinces and cities concerned.

In his speech delivered on July 1, 2017 at the Inaugural Ceremony of the Fifth-Term Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), President Xi Jinping stated that the relevant Central Government departments would actively consider adopting concrete measures to facilitate Hong Kong people studying, working and living in the Mainland. In this regard, the HKSAR Government has been undertaking active follow-ups, including reflecting Hong Kong people's views to the relevant Mainland authorities, thereby enabling Hong Kong people to capitalise on the opportunities brought about by the country's development. Since August 2017, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council has announced two

batches of policy measures introduced by the relevant central authorities to facilitate Hong Kong people pursuing development in the Mainland. The measures announced cover areas of education, employment, setting up of businesses, daily life matters, etc., demonstrating in full the important direction of supporting the integration of Hong Kong into the overall development of the country as laid down in the report to the 19th CPC National Congress. On the tourism front, the former China National Tourism Administration (which merged with the Ministry of Culture to form the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in March 2018) asked enterprises in the tourism accommodation trade to strictly comply with national laws and regulations and relevant policy requirements, and not to impose obstacles on Hong Kong people checking in tourism accommodation on any unreasonable grounds. This helps ensure that better and more convenient accommodation services are available to Hong Kong people visiting the Mainland. Furthermore, the China Railway Corporation has installed automatic ticket vending and issuing machines to read and verify Home Visit Re-entry Permits at the train stations of various provinces and cities where there is relatively large demand for ticketing services from Hong Kong people. These ticketing machines can reduce the amount of time otherwise spent on the queuing for and processing of tickets at counters.

Since the introduction of these two batches of facilitation measures, the offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland have been disseminating pertinent information through various channels including websites, WeChat public accounts, e-mails, gatherings of Hong Kong people, etc. Meanwhile, the offices in the Mainland have been in close contact with the relevant Mainland authorities for the smooth implementation of the measures at local level.

The HKSAR Government will continue to actively reflect Hong Kong people's views to the relevant Mainland authorities, with a view to striving for more facilitation measures that will help Hong Kong people travel and/or pursue development in the Mainland to capitalise on the opportunities brought about by the country's development, as well as to fostering Hong Kong people's sense of national identity.

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