

Commissioner for Tourism attends UNWTO meeting (with photos)

The Commissioner for Tourism, Miss Margaret Fong, attended the 18th Session of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly in Astana, Kazakhstan yesterday and today (October 5 and 6). Tourism authorities and stakeholders from all over the world came together to discuss how the tourism industry could contribute to global recovery from the economic downturn and to the emergence of a more sustainable economy.

Meeting every two years, the General Assembly is the principal gathering of the UNWTO, the leading international tourism organisation which serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues.

On the sidelines of the General Assembly, Miss Fong took the opportunity to hold a bilateral meeting with the new Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Dr Taleb Rifai, to exchange views on global tourism issues. Dr Rifai highly commended Hong Kong's participation in world tourism affairs and remarkable achievements in tourism in recent years. To familiarise the new UNWTO leader with Hong Kong, Miss Fong invited Dr Rifai to visit the city.

To foster tourism collaboration with Hong Kong's regional partners, Miss Fong also met the government representatives of India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Vietnam in bilateral settings to update them on Hong Kong's latest tourism developments and discuss co-operation on the development of "multi-destination" travel itineraries, MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions and Exhibitions) and cruise tourism.

After her stay in Kazakhstan, Miss Fong will fly to Dubai on her way back to Hong Kong to meet local tourism authorities and visit the tourism facilities of this fast-emerging destination.

Before arriving in Kazakhstan, Miss Fong visited Mumbai, India, where she attended a travel trade luncheon and officiated at a travel fair organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board. Addressing Indian and Hong Kong trade partners, Miss Fong emphasised the immense opportunities to strengthen bilateral tourism ties.

Miss Fong will return to Hong Kong on Thursday (October 8).

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