

2012 Hong Kong and Mainland Tourism Working Meeting held in Beijing

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, and the Chairman of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), Mr Shao Qiwei, co-chaired the 2012 Hong Kong and Mainland Tourism Working Meeting in Beijing today (September 21). They discussed the direction of future tourism co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong and exchanged views on issues of mutual concern.

At the meeting, both sides reviewed recent tourism performance as well as mutual exchange and co-operation between the two places. They also decided the detailed arrangements for implementation of tourism liberalisation measures under Supplement IX to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA).

Regarding the Central Government's announcement in late June that Mainland tour groups taking cruises from Hong Kong to Taiwan could visit Japan or Korea on the same cruise journey before returning to the Mainland, active and constructive discussion was held on implementation details, including the development of cruise itineraries and the arrangements for travel documents and tour groups. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSARG) will make announcements on the related arrangements to the local tourism industry once all the details have been finalised.

Regarding joint manpower training between the Mainland and Hong Kong as raised by Vice-Premier Li Keqiang during his visit to Hong Kong last year, both sides reached consensus on the launch of a work exchange programme between tourism organisations of the two places, with the first training course for Mainland tourism practitioners to be held in Hong Kong in late 2012.

Two officials of the CNTA will be placed with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) respectively for a six-week work exchange programme. The first training course jointly organised by the Mainland and Hong Kong for Mainland tourism practitioners will be held in November this year. To tie in with the future tourism developments of the two places, the course will cover basic knowledge of the cruise business and skills in cruise selling.

In addition, both sides discussed joint overseas promotion of multi-destination itineraries comprising the Mainland and Hong Kong, and promotion of honest and quality tourism. They also exchanged views on enhancing the quality of tourism services.

Mr So briefed the CNTA on the latest situation in Hong Kong after the Ministry of Public Security introduced new measures on the relaxation of travel endorsement applications in six cities including Shenzhen. He also mentioned the follow-up work regarding the announcement by the Chief Executive, Mr C Y Leung, on setting up a liaison mechanism on the Individual Visit Scheme with the relevant Mainland authorities in respect of the implementation of the measures. Both sides expressed their concerns on the issue and agreed to maintain close communication.

Mr Shao expressed his support for tourism co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Hong Kong enterprises operating travel agencies in the Mainland, the development of Hong Kong-based cruise tourism, and joint efforts in improving the quality of tourism services. He also agreed that the two places would continue to maintain close co-operation and communication.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the CNTA, the Tourism Commission of HKSARG, the HKTB and the TIC.

Mr So and the Hong Kong delegation will return to Hong Kong tonight.

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