

## KTCT tourism infrastructure ready to receive first cruise liner

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"The Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (KTCT), a major tourism infrastructure project in Hong Kong, is substantially completed and the terminal operator as well as relevant departments are working hard to prepare for the berthing of Mariner of the Seas on June 12," the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, said today (June 5).

Conducting a site visit with the media at the KTCT today, Mr So pointed out that the \$8.2 billion infrastructure project is key to developing Hong Kong into a regional cruise hub in Asia and enhancing our position in tourism.

"The KTCT is an important tourism infrastructure project, and is the first completed project within the Kai Tak Development. Together with the two existing berths at Ocean Terminal, the completion of the KTCT will greatly enhance the berthing capacity for cruise ships in Hong Kong, thereby enhancing our competitiveness and attractiveness," Mr So said.

The first berth of the KTCT has been completed and the second one will be due for completion in 2014. Both berths can accommodate the largest cruise ships (up to 220 000 gross tonnes) in the world.

The terminal building of the KTCT provides world-class port facilities. For example, it will offer ample area for passenger check-in/waiting and baggage handling so that cruise guests can check in and collect their baggage efficiently and comfortably. Five boarding bridges, manufactured in Spain, can be flexibly used along the two berths.

The highly efficient customs, immigration and quarantine facilities will be able to clear 3 000 passengers per hour. The terminal building will also provide ample pick-up and drop-off areas and coach parking spaces.

The terminal building also provides flexibility for conversion of the waiting halls into other uses during the non-peak season, such as for exhibitions and meetings.

Another feature introduced by Mr So today is the landscaped deck of about 23 000 square metres, one of the largest public roof gardens in Hong Kong. To be named Kai Tak Cruise Terminal Park, it is ideally located beside the centre of Victoria Harbour for cruise passengers and local residents to enjoy a spectacular panoramic view of the harbour.

The ancillary commercial area of the KTCT will be managed by the terminal operator, Worldwide Cruise Terminals Consortium, which is working on the leasing arrangements. It is expected that the first batch of tenants will commence business in the fourth quarter of this year.

Mr So noted that depending on the works and the planting progress on the landscaped deck, the terminal building and the landscaped deck would be open to the public in the third quarter of 2013, and the exact date will be announced later.

With the new terminal, the estimated economic benefits brought about by the cruise industry may range from \$1.5 billion to \$2.6 billion per annum, and the additional jobs generated may be around 5 300 to 8 900 by 2023.

To support the commissioning of the terminal, the Government has provided additional resources for the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) to step up the promotion of cruise tourism in Hong Kong. The HKTB organised the first Seatrade Hong Kong Cruise Forum in January 2013, which was attended by over 200 delegates from 14 countries and regions around the world to understand the huge potential of the cruise market in Hong Kong and the region.

Mr So said he was glad to learn that the HKTB and the Taiwan tourism authorities had announced today their plan to strengthen co-operation in promoting cruise tourism in the two places. They have reached an agreement with a cruise company to arrange for Mariner of the Seas to homeport at Hong Kong for two cruise journeys between Hong Kong and Taiwan in the end of October and early November this year.

"As in the case of other infrastructure projects, it will take some time for the business of the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal to mature.

"The terminal will encounter some limitations in the first few years of operation. But it remains our hope that the cruise business and the leasing of the ancillary commercial area will develop in a steady manner," Mr So added.

Ends/Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Issued at HKT 18:25