

CEDB statement on report related to Individual Visit Scheme

In response to media enquiries on a report by Apple Daily regarding the relaxation of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) today (September 18), the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) issued a statement as follows:

The headline and content of the article do not reflect the actual situation. In particular, the report mentioned that, "after the CEDB assessed the overall capacity of Hong Kong to receive tourists, the Bureau proposed to extend the IVS to Qingdao, Taiyuan and Xian by phases (English translation)." It must be stressed that the CEDB does not have any plan at this stage to propose extending the IVS.

The Government is very concerned about the impact of the increasing number of tourists on the livelihood of Hong Kong residents. We are at the final stage of assessing the overall capacity of Hong Kong in receiving tourists. Any plans to increase the number of overseas visitors to Hong Kong must be premised on making sure Hong Kong has sufficient capability to receive them, and to minimise the impact on Hong Kong residents brought by these visitors. Therefore, the Government put a halt to the scheme of issuing multi-entry visas to non-permanent residents in Shenzhen last year.

Given the fact that the IVS is being implemented in 49 cities and that there were 23.1 million IVS visitors from these 49 cities last year (2012), the headline of the above mentioned report, "Fear of influx of 19 million more tourists to Hong Kong by opening up three more cities (English translation)", has no factual basis.

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