

## New milestone for cruise tourism in Hong Kong

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The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, today (March 29) highlighted the infrastructural strength of Hong Kong in developing cruise tourism and the city's competitive edge as the regional cruise hub in Asia at the Three Queens in Town Celebration Party reception.

Speaking at the reception in celebration of the concurrent arrival of all of the current fleet of the Cunard Line, namely Queen Mary 2, Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth, to Hong Kong in two days, Mr So thanked the cruise line for its confidence in the Hong Kong market and said that the occasion demonstrated fully Hong Kong's appeal as a destination for cruise passengers, as well as a turnaround port for cruise lines. The three cruise ships of the luxury brand will bring around 17,000 visitors to Hong Kong.

With the Government's commitment and investment in developing cruise tourism in Hong Kong, the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal can now accommodate two mega-size cruise ships simultaneously and provide a smooth and hassle-free experience for cruise passengers. Commissioned in 2013, the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal will receive 90 ship calls from 17 brands this year. The Government and the Hong Kong Tourism Board will continue to leverage on this infrastructural strength to promote cruise tourism development in Hong Kong.

Earlier today, Mr So also attended the inaugural berthing of the new Runway Park Pier near the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal. The pier, which was a jetty serving the former airport fire station, is now renovated for public use with the joint efforts of the Energizing Kowloon East Office of the Development Bureau, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Transport Department, the Highways Department, the Marine Department and the Tourism Commission. The pier will facilitate water-based activities, enable marine transportation to the cruise terminal area and allow for a wider variety of shore excursion programmes for cruise passengers.

"We are offering complimentary Victoria Harbour tours on Dukling to cruise passengers today. And we understand that shore excursion operators will be running seafood tours and programmes to outlying islands soon to allow cruise passengers to enjoy the tranquillity and a more exotic experience of Hong Kong," Mr So said.

The Government is also committed to developing "fly-cruise" programmes in Hong Kong. "We will allocate additional resources to the Hong Kong Tourism Board to

partner with international cruise lines. Together we will launch marketing and promotional schemes to promote fly-cruise programmes," Mr So added.

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