

International tourism convention explores leveraging vast tourism potential of Belt and Road Initiative and Greater Bay Area development

The Hong Kong International Tourism Convention, jointly organised by the Government, the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong, was successfully held today (December 12), providing a premier platform for over 1 000 participants from around the world to exchange views on leveraging the vast tourism potential of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development.

Themed "Leveraging Belt and Road Initiative & Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development", the Convention was attended by government officials, representatives of tourism authorities and trade members from the nine Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, the Macao Special Administrative Region and a number of other Mainland provinces, as well as 34 countries, including the Belt and Road countries.

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, delivered an opening address at the Convention, followed by addresses from Member of the Leadership of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Mr Yu Qun; the Vice Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Xu Ruisheng; the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government, Mr Alexis Tam; and the Executive Director of the World Tourism Organization, Mr Zhu Shanzhong.

Noting that developing people-to-people bonds is one of the five connectivities pertaining to the Belt and Road Initiative, and tourism exchange is a powerful means of promoting such bonds, Mrs Lam said multilateral co-operation is central to the Belt and Road Initiative and to tourism development, and multi-destination visits can be effective in developing regional tourism.

"The Belt and Road Initiative is also about capacity building and sharing benefits. Hong Kong is an international hub for professional services, from financial and legal, to architectural, communications, transportation management and many more. We also run one of the largest hospitality and tourism schools in Asia. We have the expertise, the experience and the institutions to provide services to other economies along the Belt and Road on tourism infrastructure developments, as well as train professionals for the tourism industry," she said.

Mrs Lam also pointed out that new infrastructure projects enhancing connectivity such as the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the upcoming land control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai can open up new opportunities barely reachable before and provide a solid foundation for Hong Kong to serve as an international gateway of the Greater Bay Area.

After the opening session, two plenary sessions and a keynote luncheon were held. Speaking at the keynote luncheon, the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said Hong Kong is committed to strengthening co-operation with different economies to promote tourism development, be it regionally or internationally.

"The Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area development, which are about collaboration and sharing benefits, have presented us with new potential. And Hong Kong as the world's most visited city, freest economy, top financial centre, safest city, and one which has one of the world's best educational facilities and the world's top hotel brands, is your ready partner to leverage on the opportunities offered by the two initiatives," he said.

At the plenary session on the implications of the Belt and Road Initiative on the development of international tourism, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, shared his observations on the tourism trend and Hong Kong's experience in coping with the challenges.

Other speakers at the two plenary sessions included the Director General of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, Mr Wang Yiyang; the Director of the Macao Government Tourism Office, Ms Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes; the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Mr Anthony Lau; the Founder of Lvmama and Chairman of Joyu Group, Mr Hong Qinghua; the Chairman of the Board of the Ocean Park Corporation, Mr Leo Kung; the Chairman of Cathay Pacific Airways Limited, Mr John Slosar; the President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific of the Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, Mr Michael Colglazier; the Chief Executive Officer of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, Mr Duncan Pescod; and the Associate Dean and Chair Professor of Tourism, Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Professor Song Haiyan.

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