

Speech by Commissioner for Tourism at opening ceremony of 27th International Travel Expo and 8th MICE Travel Expo (English only)

Following is the speech by the Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Philip Yung, at the Opening Ceremony of the 27th International Travel Expo (ITE) and 8th MICE Travel Expo today (June 13):

Vice Chairman Wang (Zifa), K S (Tong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great pleasure to be with you here at the opening ceremony of the ITE and MICE Travel Expo 2013. I would like to extend my very warm welcome to all delegates, particularly those who have come a long way to Hong Kong and who have been supporting this Expo year after year.

Decades ago, travel was a luxury to many people. As our society gets more affluent, and thanks to the great strides made in transportation and communication technology, international travel has become much more efficient and affordable, and travel information about different destinations in the world, including those more exotic ones, is now at our fingertips through the Internet and mobile apps. Travel has become an indispensable part of many people's life. This is also why we have representatives from about 50 countries and regions assembling here this morning.

All these changes mean that we need to step up our effort to appeal to our potential visitors and keep upgrading ourselves in order to attract more of them to come.

Hong Kong has long been a popular tourist destination. Our tourism industry has seen strong growth in the past few years. However, we are mindful that our next-door friends are investing heavily in their tourism infrastructure. So we must not be complacent. We are constantly developing new attractions and improving existing ones. Our new Kai Tak Cruise Terminal just commenced operation last evening to receive its first large cruise liner, Mariner of the Seas. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) is working hard to promote cruise tourism with a view to getting more cruise ships to either make port calls to Hong Kong or take us as their home port. So please do visit the HKTB's booth just at the entrance to this Expo later this morning to find out more about our new cruise terminal, and we look forward to forging a fruitful partnership with you on this front.

At the same time, we are working closely with our two flagship theme parks on their expansion plans. For the Ocean Park, it has embarked on building a new all-weather water

park, and is actively pursuing its hotel development project. As for the Hong Kong Disneyland, a brand new, state-of-the-art night-time parade will welcome guests next year. It is also going to roll out a new Marvel-themed attraction in 2016 and is planning to build a new hotel on its existing site.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are just some examples of Hong Kong's tourism initiatives, and there are more to come to the delight of our visitors. Likewise, ITE is bringing in new elements each year to attract more participants. I must congratulate K S on bringing back this Expo again this year.

I wish this year's ITE and MICE Travel Expo a resounding success and all of you a pleasant stay in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.

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