

Speech by Commissioner for Tourism at 2013 Hong Kong Tourism Overview
(English only)

Following is the speech by the Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Philip Yung, at the 2013 Hong Kong Tourism Overview today (March 1):

Chairman (Mr James Tien), Anthony (Lau), friends from the travel trade, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It's my honour to address so many friends and partners from our travel trade today. A happy Year of the Snake to you all.

The biggest issue that faces our tourism sector this year is how to maintain Hong Kong's appeal as a premier destination in this region and how to ensure that our visitors have an enjoyable stay while they are here. In a moment, you will hear from Anthony and his colleagues their marketing and promotion strategy this year. On the part of the Tourism Commission, I would like to update you on the progress of some of the Government's initiatives in maintaining the momentum of our tourism development.

2012 is indeed a year of great achievements for our two major theme parks. Credit goes to everyone in their teams and the travel trade for supporting them. Yet even more exciting developments are in the pipeline. For the Ocean Park, to further enhance its capacity and to bring back a collective memory for so many of us, it will embark on converting its Tai Shue Wan area into an all-weather water park with integrated facilities which will open all year round. As announced in the Budget two days ago, the Government will provide a loan to the Ocean Park to take forward this project. Our plan is to seek funding approval from the Legislative Council for the project in the second quarter of this year. Meanwhile, the re-tender of the Ocean Hotel went under way in early January. We will continue to work hand in hand with the Ocean Park to ensure the smooth implementation of its hotel development.

For the Hong Kong Disneyland, with the addition of the popular, world-exclusive Grizzly Gulch last July and the opening of Mystic Point in a few months' time, we will have finished a fine chapter of the park's expansion. With this success, we will continue to build out the existing site by adding new attractions and hotels. The Hong Kong Disneyland is going to launch a brand new, state-of-the-art night-time parade next year, and well, to our great delight, a new attraction based on Marvel characters in 2016. In addition, a new hotel is being planned to meet the demand for hotel rooms at the Hong

Kong Disneyland. Surely these projects will help increase patronage of the park and strengthen its position as one of our key tourism assets.

As you are aware, the new Kai Tak Cruise Terminal is expected to come into operation in June this year. We are working closely, very closely indeed, with the appointed terminal operator, Worldwide Cruise Terminals Consortium, with a view to providing high-quality services to arriving cruise ships and visitors. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has stepped up the promotion of cruise tourism and cementing co-operation with our partners. Just in January, the first ever cruise forum in Hong Kong was staged. It attracted over 200 delegates from 14 countries and regions, including key figures in the industry as well as the national tourism organisations and port authorities from our neighbours. It is encouraging to see that the forum has successfully raised the cruise lines' awareness of the vast opportunities that Hong Kong and the region as a whole can offer, and has laid solid ground for further collaboration among different players.

So ladies and gentlemen, we are cautiously optimistic about the outlook of our tourism industry in the foreseeable future. Actually our plate is quite full. Let's all keep up our hard work.

On a sentimental note, the Hong Kong Tourism Board will soon undergo a change in chairmanship. Mr Tien has just spoken on this. He will retire from the Board after six full years of outstanding service as the Board Chairman. On this special occasion, I would like to express once again the Government's warm appreciation of and sincere gratitude to Mr Tien for his invaluable contribution to the Board and of course to Hong Kong's tourism development. During his able chairmanship, the Board has garnered the full support of the tourism sector in promoting Hong Kong to the world. A number of hugely popular mega events have come on stream in the past few years, including the New Year Countdown and the Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival. Both of them have grown into signature events that receive very positive feedback from local and foreign media and from visitors alike. Even amidst the uncertain global economy and competition from neighbouring cities, Mr Tien has brought Hong Kong's tourism to new heights and reinforced our position as a top-tier destination with his clear vision, sharp commercial sense and competence, as well as the devotion of much personal time and effort. I myself am extremely grateful to Mr Tien for his strong support to my work. It has been my pleasure to work with him. So ladies and gentlemen, let's give Mr Tien a big round of applause!

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you are very eager to learn more about the work of the HKTB in the coming year. I wish you all a very fruitful day at this Tourism Overview. Thank you very much.

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