

Speech by SCED at opening ceremony of 31st International Travel Expo and 12th MICE Travel Expo (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, at the opening ceremony of the 31st International Travel Expo and the 12th MICE (meetings, incentive travels, conventions and exhibitions) Travel Expo today (June 15):

K S (Managing Director of TKS Exhibition Services Limited, Mr K S Tong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to join you this morning at the 2017 International Travel Expo and MICE Travel Expo. A very warm welcome to you all, especially those who have travelled a long distance to be here with us today.

This is a special time for our city. On July 1, in just a couple of weeks' time, we shall be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China. How time flies!

It is also worth looking back on how the travel industry has changed over the past 20 years, not only here in Hong Kong but also internationally. Twenty years ago, most of our visitors would have gone to a local travel agent to find the best packages and pick up their tickets. They would have flown into Kai Tak airport and taken holiday snaps on an old film camera.

Since then, our tourism sector has been undergoing changes brought about by the evolution of Internet and digital media. In particular, new communication and media technologies are rapidly transforming the way we source, pay for and share our travel experiences. Against this backdrop, this Expo presents a very useful platform for all of us to breed and share ideas, identify emerging trends and create more business opportunities.

To keep pace with the fast-changing needs of visitors and challenges faced by the tourism industry, the Government has to act swiftly and adjust its strategies for tourism development from time to time as well. Each year, we undertake a structured planning process to map out our strategies, initiatives and resources allocation for the coming year's tourism development, taking into account various factors such as the

global economic conditions and market trends, visitors' travelling patterns and preferences as well as Hong Kong's tourism offerings.

This year, our emphasis is to develop more new tourism products to differentiate Hong Kong from other destinations. To signify the importance we attach to the tourism industry, we will invest an additional amount of over \$240 million in this year's Budget to support the development of the tourism industry. A majority of the resources will be deployed for taking forward various new initiatives and promotion work focusing on our targeted visitor segments to showcase Hong Kong's unique tourism appeal. These include redesigning our Symphony of Lights light show to make Hong Kong's famous night vista even more charming; promoting product diversification such as developing new products in green, culture and heritage tourism; collaborating with the trade to roll out a series of promotion plan targeting cruise and MICE visitors as well as transit passengers; and supporting renowned international mega events and home-grown events showcasing local characteristics. We believe that the new measures will further enhance the tourism appeal of Hong Kong and reinforce our position as a premier tourist destination.

On hardware, we are striving to enhance the quality of tourism infrastructure on various fronts. In the coming years, a number of exciting tourism-related developments, such as the West Kowloon Cultural District, the expansion and development of Hong Kong Disneyland Resort and Ocean Park, a new SKYCITY next to Hong Kong International Airport and Kai Tak Sports Park and others will be completed. Several mega transportation infrastructures, including the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, will also come on stream in the next few years. We are confident that the completion of these infrastructure and facilities will further enhance our attractiveness and competitiveness in attracting more visitors from around the world to visit Hong Kong for business and pleasure.

I encourage our visitors to get into the spirit of Hong Kong's 20th anniversary celebrations during your stay with us by exploring the city and enjoying the wonderful hospitality and wide range of attractions that we have to offer.

I hope you have an enjoyable and fruitful stay in Hong Kong, and wish the event great success. Thank you.

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