

LCQ6: Agencies responsible for promoting Hong Kong overseas

Following is a written reply by the acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, to a question by the Hon Vincent Fang in the Legislative Council today (November 19):

Question:

The Chief Executive stated in his Policy Address this year that the Government would strengthen the collaboration among agencies responsible for promoting Hong Kong overseas, including the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, Hong Kong Trade Development Council ("TDC"), Invest Hong Kong and Hong Kong Tourism Board, in developing strategies for city branding and publicity. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the types of projects jointly organised by these agencies over the past three years, and the quantified achievements of such projects;

(b) of the details of its plan to strengthen the collaboration among these agencies, and in view of the impact of the financial tsunami on the global economy, whether it will review afresh the overseas promotional activities to be held by these agencies in the coming two years and the expenses involved;

(c) whether it has any plan to accommodate the overseas offices of these agencies at the same location so as to strengthen the collaboration among them, save resources and make it more convenient for local people to enquire about information on Hong Kong; if it has, of the details of such plan; if not, the reasons for that; and

(d) given that TDC will set up its first office in Taipei, whether it has any plan to accommodate the offices of the other agencies mentioned above at the same location when such offices are set up in Taipei in the future?

Reply:

President,

(a) In 2006/07 and 2007/08, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices ("HKETOs"), Hong Kong Trade Development Council ("HKTDC"), Invest Hong Kong ("InvestHK") and Hong Kong Tourism Board ("HKTB") co-organised or supported a total of 279 events in various places around the world (including in Mainland China, Asia, Europe, the

Americas and Australia) to promote Hong Kong and develop economic and trade co-operation between Hong Kong and these places. It is estimated that over 1.96 million people have participated in these events and 122 investment projects have been initiated by InvestHK as a result. (Details of the events are set out at Annex.)

(b) The HKETOs, HKTDC, InvestHK and HKTB review their work plans, including the activities and expenditure of their overseas offices, from time to time. They also collaborate with other Hong Kong agencies as appropriate and necessary to publicise and promote Hong Kong as a platform for international trade and commerce using cost-effective channels. In view of the impact of the financial tsunami on the global economy, these agencies will strengthen their publicity and promotion work.

InvestHK and HKTDC meet on a regular basis to discuss their plans and promotional initiatives and to explore opportunities for co-operation, to achieve synergy and economies of scale and avoiding unnecessary conflict and duplication of efforts. For example, during the past year, InvestHK and HKTDC have reviewed their respective in-house mechanisms to strengthen their work in initiating and recording cross-referrals of companies.

Moreover, to maximise the effectiveness of our overseas network for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) promotion, the Tourism Commission has formed an Alliance Group with the above agencies. The Group meets regularly to promote concerted marketing efforts and actively attract more conferences and exhibitions to Hong Kong.

(c) While the HKETOs, HKTDC, InvestHK and HKTB share the common responsibility of promoting Hong Kong overseas, they focus on different areas. These agencies maintain close contact and work together to produce optimum results and avoid duplication of efforts.

The HKETOs seek to promote Hong Kong's overall image and advantages as a world city and international business hub. InvestHK is responsible for attracting foreign direct investment and enhancing Hong Kong's position as the preferred destination for international investors. The HKTDC mainly engages in trade promotion whereas the HKTB is tasked with promoting the tourism industry.

The locations of the overseas offices of these agencies are chosen in accordance with the local situation, facilities and operational needs. Where appropriate and circumstances allow, arrangements will be

made for the agencies to be accommodated in the same office building to strengthen collaboration and make it more convenient for people who wish to seek information on Hong Kong. For example, in London, New York, Sydney, Singapore and Chengdu, some of these agencies are housed in the same office building.

InvestHK has set up Investment Promotion Units in 10 HKETOs in Brussels, London, New York, San Francisco, Tokyo, Toronto, Sydney, Guangdong, Shanghai and Chengdu for investment promotion.

(d) Taiwan is Hong Kong's fourth largest trading partner. The SAR Government has been actively promoting trade between Hong Kong and Taiwan. The office set up by the HKTDC in Taipei will not only assist Hong Kong's business sector in exploring business opportunities in Taiwan, but also encourage Taiwan businessmen to join our trade fairs and to make use of the fair to open up new markets. This is an important move, demonstrating the SAR Government's commitment to the long-term development between Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The office of HKTDC in Taipei will facilitate business exchanges and development between Hong Kong and Taiwan. The SAR Government will consider all proposals which will enhance the co-operation on Hong Kong-Taiwan economic and trade relations in accordance with our established policy and actual needs.

At present, the HKTB has a Representative Office in Taipei. Whether the offices of the agencies responsible for promoting Hong Kong overseas will be accommodated in the same office building depends on the circumstances. We will actively consider such a proposal.

Ends/Wednesday, November 19, 2008