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HKTB Steps Up Various Promotions to Drive Tourism Recovery

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) held its annual Tourism Update event online this morning (18 May), discussing tourism trends and sharing details of the HKTB's latest strategic plans with around 2,700 trade representatives from Hong Kong, mainland and overseas travel agencies, attractions, hotels, airlines, retailers, restaurants, meeting and exhibition operators, cruise lines, and other travel sectors. HKTB Executive Director Mr Dane Cheng told the representatives the HKTB was preparing to step up promotions and would launch a new round of the *Hong Kong Neighbourhoods* campaign. In addition, the HKTB also hopes to relaunch mega events in physical formats to prepare for tourism recovery.

Mr Cheng said: "As well as driving local tourism through the *Holiday at Home* platform, the HKTB has maintained Hong Kong's international profile with a succession of promotional campaigns throughout the pandemic.

"The global economy has started to rebound with Asia predicted to recover sooner and the Mainland expected to outperform other markets in economic growth. Combined with the gradual easing of the pandemic situation in Hong Kong, this makes it a good time for Hong Kong to further raise its profile. As cross-border travel gradually resumes, the HKTB will launch the *Open House Hong Kong* platform to conduct large-scale promotions in our source markets."

The HKTB has in recent years launched two promotions, Old Town Central and Sham Shui Po, under its *Hong Kong Neighbourhoods* campaign. Both were warmly welcomed by visitors who appreciated the in-depth experience they offered. To tie in with the opening of M+ visual culture venue in late 2021, the HKTB will focus its next promotion on the West Kowloon Cultural District and its surrounding area in the next quarter by revamping the promotions on the authentic local cultural aspects of the neighbourhood to help boost interest from visitors as travel resumption draws closer.

If the pandemic situation in the city remains under control, the HKTB also hopes to relaunch mega events that Hong Kong people can initially take part in. The first event to return in a physical format will be the Hong Kong Cyclothon, and the HKTB is studying the feasibility of extending

its route to the Hong Kong Section of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to add to the event's appeal. For other mega events to be conducted in an "Online+Offline" format, new elements of interests will be added to maintain Hong Kong's global visibility. The HKTB will also continue to lobby for international large-scale business events and meetings to be hosted in Hong Kong.

However, the pace of global tourism recovery will be determined by the situation surrounding the pandemic and the vaccination rate worldwide. The HKTB therefore appeals to everyone in tourism-related industries to take part in the vaccination programme and help Hong Kong achieve herd immunity as soon as possible.

At today's event, the HKTB invited representatives from leading Mainland and Hong Kong brands to share their insights at two forums titled "Seize the Business Development Opportunities in the Mainland and Greater Bay Area" and "Global Hong Kong Brands Gear Up for the Recovery". Guests at the forums discussed the way forward for tourism and the preparation works. Here are some of the insights they shared:

Industry Forum 1: Seize the Business Development Opportunities in the Mainland and Greater Bay Area

Mr Yanxiang Liu, General Manager of Tickets & Travel BU, Meituan: "In the wake of the epidemic, the travel industry has accelerated its online transformation, and consumer behaviour and demand have changed. Meituan is committed to exploring effective ways to drive the recovery of the tourism industry. We will leverage the strengths of technology and e-commerce to provide a diverse consumer experience and help Hong Kong's tourism industry better grasp market trends, allowing us to work together to build a vision for a better life."

Mr Liwei Yang, Head of Volcengine Culture & Tourism Industry, ByteDance: "The idea that 'content is king' has become the key to success in digital marketing in recent years. Data analysis plays a very important role in the widespread communication of content. ByteDance will continue to maximise its capabilities in big data analysis, cloud computing and artificial intelligence to move forward with our industry partners."

Mr Frank Huang, Vice President, Fliggy: "The convenience brought by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will further increased the demand for travel within the Greater Bay Area. Young consumers has become a key visitor segment. Fliggy will continue to work with the Hong Kong tourism trade to attract visitors from the Greater Bay Area through a variety of promotional platforms and resources and drive tourism development."

Industry Forum 2: Global Hong Kong Brands Gear Up for the Recovery

Dr Jennifer Cronin, President, Wharf Hotels and Chair, Heritage Tourism Brands: "Hong Kong's hotels are renowned for offering the world's best service. Not only has the quality been enhanced during the pandemic, but we have also committed to be ahead of the curve in guest

expectations under the new travel paradigms. I believe the Hong Kong tourism industry is more than ready and geared up for a swift recovery.”

Mr Simon Large, Director Customer, Cathay Pacific Airways: “To meet travellers’ expectation throughout their consumer journey, we believe that digitalization, such as digital travel passes in the aviation industry, will play an important role in facilitating the safe, progressive return of international travel, enabling our customers to travel with reassurance and convenience throughout their journey. Moreover, we also believe that vaccination is the key of tourism recovery.”

Mr Eric Gnock Fah, COO & Co-founder, KLOOK: “We are witnessing a permanent shift in consumer behaviours and digital adoption will only accelerate further. While the pandemic has brought many challenges to the travel industry, it also presents an opportunity to rethink and reinvent to address evolving customer expectations or risk being left behind.”

Mr Syed Asim Hussain, Founder, Black Sheep Restaurants: “I believe in the magic of Black Sheep Restaurants and I believe in our city. Hong Kong is going to come back in a big way, and we will be a part of the city’s comeback story. I always tell my team we are in a marathon, not a sprint. For the last two years, we have focused on survival. Now it is time for us to get back to doing what we love, which is running great restaurants, building dynamic teams and looking after our guests.”

The HKTB announced today that provisional visitor arrivals for April were over 5,700, a 38.3% increase on the same month in 2020. The rise is a result of the low base figure for comparison from last year.

Provisional visitor arrivals in April 2021

Market	April (year-on-year change)	January to April (year-on-year change)
Mainland	4,120 (+39.9%)	15,717 (-99.4%)
Non-mainland*	1,586 (+34.4%)	6,527 (-99.2%)
Short-haul	669 (+16.6%)	2,975 (-99.1%)
Long-haul	573 (+18.4%)	2,242 (-99.3%)
New markets	258 (+239.5%)	1,029 (-97.8%)
Total	5,706 (+38.3%)	22,244 (-99.4%)

Note: Because of rounding up, the total may differ from the sum of the individual figures.

**Includes figures from long-haul, short-haul, and new markets, as well as the Macao SAR.
(Full details of April visitor arrivals will be released on 31 May.)*

- Ends -

Photo caption 1



HKTB Chairman Dr YK Pang (left) and Executive Director Mr Dane Cheng (right) shared their analysis of recent tourism trends and HKTB’s latest strategic planning. Because the pace of Hong Kong’s tourism recovery will be determined by the global pandemic situation and the rate of vaccinations in Hong Kong, they appealed to everyone in tourism-related industries to take part in the vaccination programme.

Photo caption 2



The Hong Kong Tourism Board held an online Tourism Update event this morning. Insights into new tourism opportunities from the Greater Bay Area markets were provided by industry experts including Mr Yanxiang Liu, General Manager of Tickets & Travel BU, Meituan (upper middle), Mr Liwei Yang, Head of Volcengine Culture & Tourism Industry, ByteDance (upper right), Mr Frank Huang, Vice President, Fliggy (bottom right), and Dr Honggen Xiao, Associate Professor of School of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (left).

Photo caption 3



A second industry forum at the event explored how Hong Kong brands with a global presence could prepare for the resumption of international travel. Experts at the forum included Dr Jennifer Cronin, President, Wharf Hotels and Chair, Heritage Tourism Brands (second from the left), Mr Simon Large, Director Customer, Cathay Pacific Airways (middle), Mr Eric Gnock Fah, COO & Co-founder, KLOOK (second from the right), Mr Syed Asim Hussain, Founder, Black Sheep Restaurants (first from the right) and Professor Brian King, Associate Dean and Professor of School of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (first from the left).

Members of the media can download the press release and photos from the links below:

Press release: <https://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/hktb/newsroom/press-releases.html>

Photos: <https://hktb.filecamp.com/s/2q5d4qvM1Ox7KNgl/fo>

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