

# Chairman's Message



## LEVERAGING TOURISM SOFT POWER TO SHOWCASE HONG KONG'S APPEAL

**Dr Pang Yiu-kai, GBS, JP**  
Chairman,  
Hong Kong Tourism Board

Tourism is about much more than the fun and enjoyment that a destination has to offer: It is nowadays a vital element of the cultural promotion and soft power of a community. This reality was demonstrated in the past year when Hong Kong's tourism industry welcomed new visitors, helped rebuild the economy, and grasped new opportunities, embracing new challenges. At the same time, Hong Kong's unique strengths, advantages and immense appeal were showcased to the world through tourism. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has an increasingly important role to play when it comes to boosting local consumption, spurring economic dynamism, raising Hong Kong's profile, and advancing our contribution in national development strategies.

### Three directions to successful tourism development

The Hong Kong Tourism Board has three key objectives that guide its strategies: Consolidating Hong Kong's status as an international city, strengthening Hong Kong's role as a tourism hub, and pursuing high quality growth to expand the contribution of tourism to Hong Kong.

#### 1. Consolidating Hong Kong's status as an international city

Hong Kong has the unparalleled advantages of enjoying the strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the entire world under the "One Country, Two Systems" policy of governance and economic development. This makes it the only world-class city that combines the strengths of the Mainland with our historic links and easy access to the rest of the world. In addition, Hong Kong's East-meets-West culture and diverse and seasoned professional services provide a solid foundation for Hong Kong to promote itself as the "Events Capital of Asia" and the "World's Meeting Place".



The HKTB will continue to work hand in hand with government departments and event organisers to ensure events held in Hong Kong receive the best possible cross-departmental support to maximise the benefits of the mega events economy.

As well as staging and supporting major events across the city, HKTB has established a Mega Event Development and Advancement Division this year in line with the HKSAR Government's strategy of promoting the mega events economy. This dedicated team serves as a "first point of contact" for event organisers, as well as scouting potential events to be staged in the city and supporting their promotion.



#### 2. Strengthening Hong Kong's Role as a Tourism Hub

Hong Kong is not only a leading destination but also a regional tourism hub, which has the capacity to attract visitors to stay in our city on their way to and from the Mainland and neighbouring Asian countries and regions. Hong Kong is able to capitalise on its unique advantage of "One Country, Two Systems", which gives Hong Kong the opportunity to consolidate its status as an international financial, aviation and trading centre, while deepening cooperation with cities within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). By doing this, Hong Kong can play a pivotal role in the nation's development and interactions with the world.

Because of its geography, Hong Kong is ideally placed to serve as a "super-connector" between cities in the Mainland and overseas locations. Hong Kong can be reached by plane within five hours from countries and territories where half

of the world's population live. Meanwhile, the extensive increase of high-speed rail services in both frequency and destinations, as well as the addition of overnight sleeper train services, have brought Hong Kong and cities across the Mainland closer than ever and enhanced the convenience and speed of intercity travel.

HKTB fully appreciates the great potential these advantages offer. We are drawing on our global network and expertise and working in partnership with other GBA cities to reach out to the world to showcase the GBA's tourism appeal to visitor source markets, and attract visitors to come for multi-destination journeys.







For Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism HKTG adopts the strategic positioning of “Meet Hong Kong, Meet the GBA” and “Meet Hong Kong, Meet the World” to maximise Hong Kong’s unique position as a gateway connecting with the businesses of the Mainland and those from the rest of the world, and creating new business opportunities. This allows Hong Kong to fully utilise its role as a “super-connector”, as well as a “super value-adder”.

3. Pursuing high quality tourism development

HKTG consistently promotes high-quality tourism development. It organises a wide range of events which enrich tourist experience, stimulate spending from tourism, and encourage visitors to extend their stays in town. We have also collaborated with trade partners to launch a new promotion on hospitality to raise standards and satisfaction levels for both visitors and local consumers.

Beyond this, HKTG is committed to exploring potential new tourism source markets, such as the very promising GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries in the Middle East, ASEAN, South Asian countries and the Belt and Road nations. These initiatives will attract a more diverse range of visitors and drive both the quality and quantity of tourism growth.

For these efforts to succeed, our trade partners in the tourism industry must work hand in hand with us to launch new and attractive tourism products in a timely and strategic manner, responding to evolving visitor preferences and travel patterns to further increase the contribution of tourism to society and to the economy. HKTG look forward to continuing our longstanding partnership with all of our tourism industry stakeholders to further strengthen Hong Kong’s competitiveness and sustainable development.



Planting the Seeds for Tourism and Economic Growth

I firmly believe that, given our unique advantages of having the Motherland’s strong support while being a gateway to the world, the tourism sector will play an increasingly important role in promoting the global image of Hong Kong as well as of the whole country, and play in driving economic growth. I hope that the trade continues to be proactive and flexible in responding to changing visitor habits and consumption patterns by identifying, and innovating positively to these evolutions in the industry, and contributing to the prosperity and growth of Hong Kong and of our Motherland.





# Executive Director's Statement



**HELLO  
TAKES YOU  
TO MORE**

**Dane Cheng**  
Executive Director,  
Hong Kong Tourism Board

Hong Kong tourism's new chapter has launched at full speed over the past year. On one hand, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) focused on the large-scale "Hello Hong Kong" promotion campaign to connect with global visitors, successfully showcasing Hong Kong's return to normalcy. On the other hand, we intensified our promotional efforts to present Hong Kong's diverse facets and warm hospitality, enriching visitors' itineraries and experiences. By staging and supporting major events and activities in the city, HKTB encouraged both visitors and the local public to participate, exchanging hellos and jointly exploring this extraordinary world-class tourism destination.

As the global "Hello Hong Kong" campaign launched in early 2023, HKTB seized the opportunity and meticulously planned a series of exciting promotions to widely broadcast the message welcoming visitors. In response to changes in visitors' preferences, with an increased desire for in-depth immersive experiences in arts and culture, natural scenery, or wellness, HKTB continuously deepened its "Hello Hong Kong" promotional efforts, which has received positive feedback.

## Short videos connect globally, gifts welcome visitors

Exciting, crispy videos are the best tools to greet visitors. Therefore, HKTB collaborated with industry leaders, celebrities and online influencers to produce over 300 promotional videos. These were broadcast on more than 3,000 global media platforms, reaching 200 million viewers worldwide, connecting with visitors and showcasing Hong Kong's diverse appeal.

At the same time, HKTB distributed a total of 2 million "Hong Kong Goodies" visitor consumption vouchers to inbound visitors, collection of which has become a popular must-do activity for tourists.

## "Seeing is Believing" to generate word-of-mouth, celebrities to boost promotional effects



Simultaneously, HKTB continued to employ the strategy of "Seeing is Believing" to present the most authentic side of Hong Kong. Over the past year, HKTB invited more than 2,000 industry members, media representatives, and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) to Hong Kong to personally experience the vibrancy and dynamism of this international metropolis, generating positive word-of-mouth. These experiences were then leveraged to design tourism products and utilise their extensive networks to promote Hong Kong.

HKTB fully capitalised on the celebrity effect to maximise the publicity impact. We invited Hollywood star Henry Golding, Korean artist Jung Hae-in, Malaysian actress Michen Lin, and

Japanese actor Satoh Takeru to Hong Kong to explore the city from their unique perspectives and shared Hong Kong's local culture with their fans, further expanding Hong Kong's global exposure.

HKTB also actively reached out the world by participating in more than 20 major tourism exhibitions worldwide over the past year. It led the industry in in-depth exchanges with tourism stakeholders from around the world, creating business opportunities together. In October 2023, HKTB collaborated with the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province and the Macao Government Tourism Office to promote a new Greater Bay Area (GBA) tourism brand in Bangkok, Thailand, showcasing the endless charm of cities within GBA.





## Utilising diverse themes to introduce in-depth experiences

HKTb also focused on promoting Hong Kong's unique characteristics to attract visitors to embark on their journeys. Many tourists enjoy visiting filming locations in Hong Kong. In light of this, HKTb presented the micro-film series Hong Kong in the Lens by Asian Directors and fully supported the filming of Under Parallel Skies in Hong Kong, showcasing Hong Kong's unique scenery on the big screen. This "soft-sell" approach uses the magic of the movie culture to attract visitors to follow the footsteps of stars featured in these productions and hence personally discover more new and interesting experiences in Hong Kong.

In terms of culture, in addition to the year-round promotional platform "Arts in Hong Kong" and the "Hong Kong Neighbourhoods" campaign, HKTb also took advantage of various Chinese and Western festivals and celebrations. Events such as the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance during the Mid-Autumn Festival and the "Hallo" Hong Kong Halloween promotion were adorned with festive decorations, adding to the joyful citywide ambience of these holidays.

To capitalise on visitors' enthusiasm for in-depth experiences and seeking out travel tips and recommendations online, HKTb has stepped up its promotional efforts on social media. We have accumulated over 11 million loyal followers across major social media platforms, with a reach of over 2.4 billion through these platforms in the past year. HKTb also collaborated with Mainland social media platforms to promote city walk itineraries, featuring themes such as the great outdoors, art and culture, street arts, museums and neon lights, attracting Mainland visitors to embark on in-depth experiential journeys in town.

## Sparkling endless vitality from the city's night vibes

Echoing the Government's launch of "Night Vibes Hong Kong", HKTb actively enhanced the night-time atmosphere through various promotional efforts. We distributed 1 million "Hong Kong Night Treats" visitor dining vouchers and 200,000 for the local public, successfully attracting numerous visitors and locals to collect the offer for further spending. In addition, the HK\$20 night bus tour exclusively launched for visitors also successfully created business opportunities for the tourism-related trade partners.

What impressed me even more was how HKTb revitalised the lively atmosphere of the Temple Street Night Market through "A taste of Temple Street" and "captivating street décors". This new promotion, launched last December, attracted 200,000 visitors in just half a month. It led both locals and visitors deep into Hong Kong's streets and alleys, allowing them to experience the most unique local culture while also bringing more business opportunities to local merchants in the area.



## Waves of mega events and happenings

The city's diverse mega events and activities are beneficial to enriching visitors' experiences. Throughout the year, HKTb successfully staged seven flagship events, including the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, Harbour Chill Carnival, Hong Kong Cyclothon, Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, Hong Kong WinterFest, Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations and International Chinese New Year Night Parade. These events created countless unforgettable moments of joy for both locals and global visitors, reinforcing Hong Kong's position as the "Events Capital of Asia". On top of that, the strong recovery of Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism and the excellent performance of cruise tourism further highlighted Hong Kong's important roles as the "World's Meeting Place" and "Asia's Cruise Hub".

HKTb will continue to fully support world-class events in the city and the promotion of these events, while serving as the "first point of contact" for event organisers, which aligns with the Government's efforts to promote the mega events economy.

## Seamless partnership with the trade

The successful implementation of the aforementioned initiatives was only made possible thanks to the full support of the tourism and related industries. I vividly recall the launch ceremony of the "Professional Quality Tourism Services Pledge" held by HKTb in July 2023. It brought together nearly 100 industry representatives and frontline practitioners from eight tourism-related sectors, including tourism, aviation, transportation, hotels, food and beverage, retail, attractions, and MICE services.

This event was a significant testament to the industry's united efforts.



Entering 2024, HKTb launched the "Let's Go the Extra Mile" hospitality promotion, collaborating with the industry to ensure every visitor to Hong Kong receives a warm welcome and feels at home.

## Maximising tourism's contribution to the economy

In addition to our industry friends, I would like to express my gratitude to the HKSAR Government, our partners, sponsors, and members of the public for their trust and strong support of HKTb's work.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all our Board Members for their generous guidance, and to thank our colleagues at the Hong Kong Head Office, Worldwide Offices, and Regional Representatives for their dedicated efforts and unwavering commitment in their respective roles, working together as one to advance Hong Kong's tourism industry.

Looking ahead, HKTb will spare no effort in converting visitors' intention to visit Hong Kong into actual trips and help plan their Hong Kong journeys. At the same time, we will consolidate Hong Kong's position as a world-class tourism destination, enabling the tourism industry to make broader and more profound contributions to the society and the economy. Working hand in hand with different sectors, we will continue to tell Hong Kong's compelling story to the world and highlight our city's distinctive charm.