

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)2447/02-03  
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by the Administration and  
cleared with the Chairman)

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**Panel on Economic Services**

**Minutes of special meeting held on  
Thursday, 12 June 2003, at 8:30 am  
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon HUI Cheung-ching, JP  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP  
Hon SIN Chung-kai  
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong  
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP  
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
- Non- Panel Members :** Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP  
**attending** Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP  
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP  
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP  
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP  
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP  
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP  
Hon CHOY So-yuk  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP  
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP

- Public officers attending** : Economic Development and Labour Bureau
- Mr Stephen IP  
Secretary for Economic Development and Labour
- Mr Wilson FUNG  
Deputy Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Economic Development)
- Ms Eva CHENG  
Commissioner for Tourism
- Attendance by invitation** : Hong Kong Tourism Board
- Ms Clara CHONG  
Executive Director, Hong Kong Tourism Board
- Airport Authority
- Dr David PANG  
Chief Executive Officer, Airport Authority
- Mr Howard ENG  
Airport Management Director, Airport Authority
- Clerk in attendance** : Mr Andy LAU  
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2
- Staff in attendance** : Ms Debbie YAU  
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)1
- Miss Winnie CHENG  
Legislative Assistant 5

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**I Briefing by the Secretary for Economic Development and Labour on various measures to revive the economy and promote tourism**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1874/02-03(01) -- Information paper provided by the Administration)

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (SEDL) briefed members on the Administration's

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various measures to revive the economy and promote tourism. He said that following the lift of travel advisories on Hong Kong as an affected area of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the United States of America (USA), the Administration had made concerted efforts to rebuild confidence in Hong Kong as the premier city tourist destination in Asia and to relaunch Hong Kong's economy. SEDL outlined the measures to be taken and activities to be held, which included:

- (a) organizing familiarization visits and programmes for trade and media to rebuild their confidence and interest in Hong Kong;
- (b) launching media-related promotions and activities in support of the main marketing efforts, including worldwide roadshows in 28 cities;
- (c) conducting a 3-phase tracking study to track travellers' perception of Hong Kong. This information would also be used to refine and enhance the overall strategy during the promotional period;
- (d) organizing mega events and themed activities, such as Strato-Fantasia laser and musical show and Colossal Lantern to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of Hong Kong as Asia's top city tourist destination;
- (e) organizing an international tourism forum in Hong Kong in mid July, in conjunction with the World Tourism Organization and the Boao Forum;
- (f) contributing \$1.5 million to "We Love Hong Kong" campaign organized by the trade to stimulate local consumption and foster community involvement and confidence building;
- (g) devising new tourism products such as the Harbour Lighting Plan. Under this Plan, special lighting treatments would be applied to a number of prominent private and government buildings along both sides of the Victoria Harbour to enhance the attraction of the night view of the harbour to visitors including local people;
- (h) implementing beautification and enhancement programme for existing tourist attractions;
- (i) developing eco-tourism in Hong Kong; and
- (j) enhancing people's awareness of safe and healthy travel. The Department of Health would show Hong Kong tour guides how to conduct temperature checks on tourists and other ways to ensure tourists' health.

2. The Executive Director, Hong Kong Tourism Board (ED/HKTB) remarked that HKTB had structured its comeback campaign into three key phases - Response, Reassurance and Recovery. To help overcome some of the misconception about SARS and to show Hong Kong being an open, responsible and concerned destination, HKTB would make available fair, updated and objective information about the situation in Hong Kong to its worldwide offices and trade partners, and through them to the overseas media and potential

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customers under the Response Phase. In the recovery phase, there would be worldwide advertising targeted at key source markets and timed to coincide with in-market events in the key markets of the Americas, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, North Asia, South and Southeast Asia, Taiwan and the Mainland. The aim of the Reassurance phase was to show the world that the SARS outbreak was under control and that life was returning to normal in Hong Kong. HKTB would use press releases, media interviews and feature articles to spread such news and work closely with the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council in relevant markets to deliver a strong and consistent message. In addition, an extensive programme of trade and media familiarization visits would be held under this phase. HKTB was planning its programme for the first phase of the recovery programme under the banner "Hong Kong Welcomes You!".

3. The Commissioner for Tourism (C for Tourism) supplemented that officials and tourism industry representatives from Hong Kong, Guanzhou and Macau had agreed to enhance communication among travel organizations to prevent the spread of infectious illness. At their meeting in Guangzhou, the representatives from the three places had reviewed the measures taken by the industry during the outbreak of SARS and agreed to launch a series of activities to boost tourism in the three jurisdictions, including inviting overseas counterparts to pay business visits. A large-scale exhibition would be organized in Guangzhou in July 2003 to promote travel tours to Hong Kong and Macau.

4. The Chief Executive Officer, Airport Authority (CEO/AA) pointed out that the outbreak of SARS had severely affected the aviation industry, resulting in a plunge in the passenger throughput at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA). The Airport Authority (AA) had offered two relief and incentive packages respectively in April and May 2003 to help the aviation industry to tide over the difficulties they faced and facilitate recovery of air traffic. On 25 April 2003, the AA announced the first relief package to alleviate the short-term financial difficulties faced by airlines, retailers, caterers as well as the airport franchisees, which included (a) a special credit of up to 75% on long-term parking charge; (b) rental reductions for shops and catering outlets at the Passenger Terminal; and (c) deferred payments of airport charges and rentals for airline lounge/office, shops and airport franchisees. The package involved a total amount of HK\$363 million. Following the lifting of the travel advisory by the WHO on 23 May 2003, AA promptly offered a second package of measures on 25 May 2003 to facilitate a speedy recovery of air traffic at the HKIA. The package, amounting to some \$100 million, comprised a total of eight initiatives including temporary discounts of up to 50% in aircraft landing charges, attractive shopping discounts at airport's retail outlets, lucky draws and the launching of a global advertising campaign to promote the HKIA as a safe, secure and healthy airport. AA would continue to work closely with its business partners to stimulate recovery of air traffic and re-vitalise the aviation industry of Hong Kong.

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### Tourism promotions with Southeast Asian destinations

5. Noting that the tourism sectors in many Asian cities were also hard hit by the outbreak of SARS, the Chairman enquired whether the Administration had made a concerted effort with other Asian tourism authorities to boost tourism in the Asia Pacific region as a whole.

6. SEDL remarked that soon after the lifting of travel warnings by WHO and CDC, Hong Kong had targeted at long haul markets and launched joint promotions with other Asian tourism authorities. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) had been working closely with tourist offices in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea and China etc to launch joint promotions such as "See You in Pacific Asia" in USA and Germany, "Asia Now" in Canada, "Together in Asia" in the United Kingdom or "Asia in your City" in France. Over 85% of visitors from these long haul markets would visit Hong Kong on a multi-destination itinerary. Moreover, joint promotions between Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macau, as well as with other Mainland cities had already been conducted or were planned to attract visitors from North America and Europe. Besides, to sustain the international outreach effort to convey the message that the SARS outbreak had been contained, the "Hello from Hong Kong" postcard campaign was launched. All members of the community were urged to help spread the news that Hong Kong was safe to visit by sending special "Hello from Hong Kong" postcards and e-cards to their family, friends and business contacts around the world. SEDL also highlighted that the Boao forum would be attended by more than 1 000 people from 50 countries, including tourism ministers from other Asian countries. The two-day international conference would focus on the role governments and industry could play on revitalizing Asian tourism. The meeting would also explore ways to increase inter-governmental co-operation and improve linkage between government and the business sector to boost the travel and tourism industry.

7. As Hong Kong was a small place with limited tourist attractions, Mr HUI Cheung-ching opined that Hong Kong could capitalize on partnering with the Mainland along its fast emerging global tourism appeal. He suggested that the Administration could consider to plan for multi-destination itineraries with cities at the Pearl River Delta (PRD).

8. Concurring with Mr HUI, SEDL pointed out that HKTb had been offering tailored-made multi-destination itineraries for long haul markets of North America and Europe. Apart from developing theme itineraries with PRD where complementary attractions such as wild life zoo or gambling centre existed, Hong Kong also partnered with Beijing and Shanghai to provide many multi-destination itineraries. ED/HKTb added that there had been joint marketing campaign with China National Tourism Office at different cities in the Mainland, including the PRD. Promotions were made through the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau Tourism Marketing Organization to develop theme itineraries with major operators in selected markets. It was also agreed among the three

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HKTB authorities to market across the websites of each tourist office to cross-sell the other 2 destinations. Publicity means including web marketing, email blasts to subscribers of online magazines, print ads in popular publications and roadshows were adopted. At the request of the Chairman, HKTB undertook to provide further information on HKTB's co-operation projects with other regional destinations.

*(Post-meeting note: The said information provided by HKTB was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2289/02-03(01))*

Measures to promote tourism

9. Mr Howard YOUNG requested to put on record his commendation on the various measures undertaken by AA and the Government to revitalize the tourism and travel industry. He enquired whether the theme of safe air travel could be enlisted in the agenda of the Boao Forum to remove the fears over the deadly epidemic on board aircraft. He also urged the Administration to increase its financial support to sustain the momentum of the "We love Hong Kong" campaign which was mainly sponsored by the trade.

10. SEDL believed that safe air travel would be one of the key subjects of the Boao Forum. He said that it was essential to convey the message to air travellers that the risk of transmission on airplanes was very low and that no suspected cases of SARS had occurred on board aircraft since effective screening measures were introduced. To re-establish the confidence of travellers, the HKIA would provide a safe, secure, healthy and hygienic environment with the necessary health screening measures in place. On further financial support to "We love Hong Kong" campaign, SEDL said that the Government had committed \$1 billion to undertake a comprehensive campaign to revive Hong Kong's economy and restore its reputation. The Administration had been working closely with the trade and the community on more effective use of the resources to rejuvenate the tourism industry.

11. Mr SIN Chung-Kai enquired about the way the private sector could help organize world-class tourism events. C for Tourism advised that the Administration had established a dedicated Events Sponsorship Fund to bring world-class events to Hong Kong. This was intended to provide sponsorship for private sector organized events that had a high international profile such as soccer/basketball matches and award ceremonies which were capable of attracting tourists to Hong Kong. The Administration would also provide the necessary assistance in licence and venue application as well as local publicity. In reply to the Chairman, C for Tourism said that as far as she understood, some event organizers were inviting renowned international sport teams to come to perform in Hong Kong.

12. Mr CHAN Kam-lam was concerned about how the 3-phase tracking studies could help sustain the growth of tourism. ED/HKTB advised that to

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ensure that the marketing campaign was as effective as possible, the HKTB would monitor the effects of its campaigns throughout the period and conduct a three-phase study to assess the perception of Hong Kong. The study, encompassing the consumer markets in 15 countries, would also study potential tourists' consumption habits to facilitate the formulation of publicity strategy. The first phase aimed to ascertain whether consumers in these markets were aware about the lift of travel warnings on Hong Kong by WHO, CDC and the US State Department and to boost their confidence on Hong Kong. The second phase would be held soon after the large-scale promotional campaigns held in these countries with a view to understanding the consumers' perception of Hong Kong. The last phase would be held at a longer time after the campaign to tap those elements of Hong Kong which still remained attractive to the consumers. This study would ensure that the marketing campaigns were effective and that they could be adjusted as the campaign period proceeded. In reply to Mr CHAN, ED/HKTB confirmed that the scope of the study included Guangdong, Beijing and Shanghai, and some other potential consumer markets.

## Tourism software

13. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah was in support of the Administration's initiative to promote tourism which, in turn, could boost local employment. To achieve the desired results, there was a need to launch a territory-wide publicity and public education campaign on hospitality culture, and improve Hong Kong's tourist friendliness, including the quality of services in the industry. Hong Kong should put together a fabulous welcome to tourists and strengthen current measures to counteract mal-practice of "black shops". To differentiate visitors from local residents, Mr LEUNG proposed to design a badge for tourists.

14. Acknowledging the valuable contribution of tourism to Hong Kong's economy, SEDL pointed out that HKTB had all along been paying strenuous effort in making tourist feel like home during their visits in Hong Kong. SEDL said that it was more important to foster a hospitality culture in the community so that both local residents and tourists would be well treated in all respects. Striving to upgrade the quality of services offered to visitors, HKTB had launched the Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme in late 1999. The QTS Scheme was widely promoted by the HKTB through various channels and visitors were encouraged to enjoy the assurance of high quality services at QTS-accredited outlets. Besides, various measures had been put in place to safeguard tourists' interest. Under a "100 per cent refund policy" introduced by the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong since February 2002, travellers whose shopping activities were arranged by their travel agents were entitled to a full refund within 14 days if they were not satisfied with their purchases. HKTB published a leaflet called "Be A Smart Shopper" in simplified Chinese, offering Mainland visitors useful tips for reliable shopping and dining. The leaflet also advised them how to register complaints in case of any unsatisfactory experiences. At the Chairman's request, HKTB would provide members information on quality services promotional materials.

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*(Post-meeting note: The said information provided by HKTB was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2289/02-03(01))*

15. Ms LI Fung-ying echoed Mr LEUNG Fu-wah's view and considered that the Administration did not put adequate resources in developing tourism software. She also expressed concern about the lack of co-ordination among various departments in taking forward the initiative to promote tourism. For example, there was insufficient parking spaces near Wong Tai Sin Temple to cope with the demand from tourists, the Government refused to build a new road to Yuen Yuen Institute and the Western Monastery to improve their accessibility, tourism products of the same nature, (such as Avenue of Stars and Hong Kong Film Archive) were scattered at different districts in the territory, promotion of eco-tourism without corresponding improvement to supporting infrastructure in the areas, etc.

16. Ms CHAN Yuen-han stressed that as one of the economic pillars in Hong Kong, the tourism industry indeed could absorb a major part of the labour force which was of low education and low skills. She shared with Ms LI on the long-standing problem of inadequate supporting facilities at popular tourist attractions. She advised that the Administration should set specific targets for tourism development on a short-term and medium to long-term basis. Ms CHAN was of the view that eco-tourism and green tourism should be promoted to meet increasing demand from visitors and local people after the SARS outbreak. Cultural and heritage tourism was another area that was becoming increasingly popular. She urged the Administration to take forward more development plans in these aspect to increase the attractions of Hong Kong.

17. SEDL agreed with the importance in upgrading the standard of tourism-related facilities and services at existing tourism attractions and future developments. While there was always room for improvement, the Tourism Commission had been sprucing up existing tourism attractions such as improving the system of information signage and lighting etc on a territory-wide basis. On parking and drop-off facilities, SEDL stressed that due to existing constraints, many popular tourist attractions were inaccessible by vehicles. In fact, this was also the case for many well-established and popular attractions around the world. Nevertheless, the Administration would continue to upgrade the supporting facilities and improve the standards of performance. To ensure full inter-departmental coordination on tourism projects, a Tourism Task Force on which all key bureaux and departments were represented had been formed to provide a strategic overview on all tourism issues, including tourism-related supporting facilities.

18. On eco-tourism and green tourism, SEDL assured members that the Government attached great importance to these areas of work. Apart from investing in unique new attractions such as the Hong Kong Wetland Park, the Administration would continue to seek new opportunities for development and



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Admin promotion. The "Consultancy Study on Development of Tourism in the North New Territories" was a case in point. The relevant departments would work hand in hand to explore and identify new opportunities for development. On promotion and publicity of eco-tourism and green tourism, the Administration was requested to make available a collection of publications on Hong Kong's popular country/nature trails at the HKIA.

**II Any other business**

19. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:05 am.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
11 September 2003