

**Hong Kong Retail Management Association's
Submission to the Legislative Council
Panel on Economic Services
23 April 2007**

Strengthening the Protection for Mainland Visitors

1. In response to the recent episodes of some unscrupulous retailers who had deceived tourists by selling counterfeit goods -- a practice that is seriously damaging Hong Kong's reputation as a world-class shopping destination, the Hong Kong Retail Management Association (the "Association") urges the Government to strengthening actions to rectify the situation and to remedy the negative impacts on the tourist and retail industries of Hong Kong.
2. The Association applauds the concerted efforts of the Consumer Council, the Police, and the Customs and Excise Department taken so far in launching speedy attacks to these unscrupulous retailers after the report of these incidents. And we would like to see similar sustaining actions to be taken to preserve the reputation of Hong Kong's premier tourist and retail industries.
3. We support the initiatives such as publishing the "blacklisted" operators on the China National Tourism Association website as well as at the major travelers entry points from China, launching raids on counterfeit goods, and strengthening the promotion of consumer rights to the mainland travelers.
4. Amongst all, the Association is of the view that education and publicity on consumer rights and protection measures should be enhanced both in Hong Kong and China. In particular, the message that Hong Kong sells "no fake goods" and the retail practitioners are on par with their international counterparts in terms of commercial practices and honesty

should be widely publicized. At the same time, the Government should strengthen the promotion of "No Fakes Pledge Scheme", the "Quality Tourism Service Scheme", "Hong Kong Q-Mark Product Scheme" and the "100% Refund Guarantee Scheme" to the trade and the tourists.

5. To tackle the problem root and branch in the long run, the Association urges the Government to take the lead to foster more communications between the tourism organizations in Hong Kong and China and encourage joint force to work closely on practical measures to eradicate and prevent unethical practices arising from zero-fare tours in future.
6. On Hong Kong side, the Association advocates that the Government should devise a more effective and well-coordinated regulatory mechanism for the tourism industry. This could be done by reinforcement on control/punitive measures in regard to the commercial malpractices involving in the tourist trade such as inbound travel agents, tour guides, retailers, and the like. The set up of a multi-tier control/punishment system for different levels of malpractices such as warning letter, announcement of "black list", heavy penalty and invalidation of the license could be enforced.
7. The recent undesired incidents have greatly tarnished Hong Kong's overall image as an honest and quality shopping destination, especially to the mainland tourists. The Association urges the Government to coordinate a large-scale nation-wide campaign to rebuild the tourists' confidence in Hong Kong without delay.

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