

Report by the Convenor of the Focus Group on Professional Services, Information & Technology and Tourism after the Economic Summit

Following is the report (translation) by the Convenor of the Focus Group on Professional Services, Information & Technology and Tourism, Mr Leung Chun-ying, at the press conference on Economic Summit on "China's 11th Five-Year Plan and the Development of Hong Kong" today (September 11):

Good afternoon friends from the media. There is something special about this focus group. Actually, we straddle the areas of the other three focus groups. To be an international financial, trading and shipping centre, Hong Kong must ensure that we have complementary development in the professional services, information technology and tourism sectors. We must enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness in these three areas.

China's 11th Five-Year Plan mentioned that there should be autonomous innovation and that we should upgrade our overall high-tech capacity and the technology level of the industry. The plan stresses that while speeding up the pace of economic globalisation, the country should develop relevant business and professional services. It also specifically support Hong Kong to further develop tourism and information services.

The group discussed the challenges and opportunities posed by the plan and also the responses we are going to make.

In terms of professional services, under CEPA a number of professional services have now got the opportunity to develop further on the Mainland. Members of the group agree that we should continue to enhance communication with the Mainland, which should really help service providers to gain access to the Mainland market and study how we should promote cooperation between professionals of the two places. CEPA has offered a platform and the service sector should very actively develop their services to cope with the Mainland market. They should take time to operate there and to gain a better understanding of the Mainland situation so that they can play a complementary role with their Mainland counterparts. And we should continue to maintain our international exposure so that we can strengthen our role as the service sector capital of China.

Some members of the group have requested the Government to follow up on the issue of additional requirements imposed on professionals if they want to practice on the Mainland. They have to get the relevant qualifications and they also have to satisfy additional requirements.

In terms of innovation and technology, we agree that we should strengthen or improve the Guangdong-Hong Kong Technology Cooperation Funding Scheme and also explore the feasibility of extending the scheme to the Pan-PRD region and to establish the Joint Hong Guangdong-Hong Kong Technology Innovation Platform and to consider the establishment of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation Circle.

In terms of information services, we agreed that Hong Kong enterprises should be allowed to take part in more Mainland information projects, so that we could serve as an exhibition and trade platform to showcase Hong Kong's services and products to the world. The local sector should also raise its own strength, build its own brand image, and develop services to cope with the Mainland market. And there should be enhanced cooperation in the Pan-PRD region, so that we can broaden our communications market. There are also proposals that we should continue to develop our high-tech innovation industries, to increase linkage in broadband between Hong Kong and the Mainland, to attract talent and nurture its own talent to develop research and innovation as it is the key to wealth creation, and to give full play to its advantages so that Hong Kong can expand its communication business into the Mainland.

As for tourism, we agree that our cooperation and competition with the Mainland should be enhanced. For instance, we should promote thematic multi-destination itineraries so that we can highlight Hong Kong's position as a cosmopolitan city and also its role as a transit stop for overseas visitors to the Mainland. We should enhance human capital exchange with the Mainland, so that Hong Kong's very rich experience in tourism can help to improve the quality of Mainland services and we should also complement the China National Tourism Association's (CNTA) promotion of honest and quality travel. We should implement CEPA measures, allowing Hong Kong travel agencies to set up in Guangdong and operate group tours to Hong Kong and Macau for Guangdong residents. There are also proposals that 1) the Mainland could absorb Hong Kong tourism experts to improve its travel services; 2) we should bring our mode of operation into the Mainland so that we can improve the quality of tours on the Mainland and solve the problem of 'no charge' tours; 3) we can organise more international conferences and trade shows and festive activities so that we can promote Hong Kong to Mainlanders; 4) we should also develop more tourism products and night entertainment programmes.

The Professional Services, Information & Technology and Tourism Focus Group will continue to discuss the above-mentioned measures in the coming three months with a view to offering a submission to the Chief Executive by the end of this year. We have decided to set up three working groups on professional services, information and technology and tourism respectively and we will also consult the respective industries.

Miss Elsie Leung, Mr Jack So and Mr Jackie Wong have kindly agreed to be the convenors of the three working groups. We will of course welcome members of the community to give us their input.

Thank you.