

MESSAGES FROM CHAIRMAN & ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chairman's Message

When I was appointed Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board in April, I was honoured and thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute to our thriving tourism industry and to further its amazing achievements. Visitor arrivals reached a record high of 65 million in 2018, an 11% year-on-year growth, and overnight visitors increased by 5%.

As I write this opening message a few months on, however, tourism in Hong Kong has taken a heavy blow from the continuing social unrest. Visitor arrivals have reversed their trend of double-digit growth in the first half of 2019 and fell back 40% in August, the biggest one-month drop since the SARS outbreak of 2003.

People ask me whether tourists will come back. Can Hong Kong restore its status as a leading destination for visitors? My answer is a very definite and resounding yes.

Hong Kong has strong fundamentals as a world-class destination, offering visitors a diversity of unique experiences that sets it apart from other cities. Our 2018 survey tells us visitors are very satisfied with their stays and 92% said they would come again and recommend Hong Kong to friends and relatives.

It is a destination overflowing with enticing attractions, from the exciting calendar of events including traditional festivals, exceptional

culinary events, international art exhibitions, and major sporting events, to the allure of colourful neighbourhoods steeped in a rich culture and a spirit of the living past.

On top of this, Hong Kong has seen its infrastructure connections significantly boosted by the arrival of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. A wealth of tourism resources in the Greater Bay Area is now within easy reach of visitors to Hong Kong from around the world, and our tourism industry is entering an exciting new era of opportunity.

Tourism is always vulnerable to external circumstances but history teaches us a more important lesson. Time and again Hong Kong has faced many major challenges, and time and again we have overcome them and shown our great resilience and can-do spirit. Together we bounced back from SARS, together we bounced back from the global financial crisis, and together we will bounce back from the current difficulties, and emerge stronger and more united than ever.

Tourism is a pillar of Hong Kong's economy and it needs the support of everyone in the city. Let us seize this opportunity to build on the strong foundations we have and maintain Hong Kong's status as one of the world's leading travel destinations.



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