2011 Macao, China Tourism Performance

The tourism industry took a leap forward in 2011. International tourism hit new records in 2011 despite the challenging conditions characterized by economic uncertainty, major political changes in the Middle East and North Africa and natural disasters.

In keeping with the new tourism theme, “Touching Moments - Experience Macau” a number of tourism promotion channels had been increased and portfolios of source markets expanded using innovative and diverse promotion media. To boost Macao’s tourism sector, the city had been promoted in different and creative ways taking always into consideration the specifications of each country and market. In 2011, with strong support from national strategy, the development of regional cooperation had been supported at all levels, especially in quality of services, industry and in managing multi-destination itineraries.

Tourism offers a wonderful connecting thread between visitor and resident community. Macao has an attractive tourism product, not only in the entertainment area, but there is a certain diversification in the cultural, heritage, leisure and MICE areas. In 2011 MGTO has been exploring new markets, so as to diversify the source markets.

Visitor Arrivals

Visitor arrivals to Macao SAR reached 28 million during 2011, registering an increase of 12.2% year-on-year. We welcomed close to 25 million visitors from the Greater China region, with a growth of 13.5%. There was a positive growth in the international markets which reached three million during 2011 with an increase of 2.2% and representing 10.9% of total visitors. In terms of total visitor expenditure, a record of around US$35 billion was generated, which registered a surge of 30.5%. The per-capita spending of visitors increased by 7.0% year-on-year to US$202 according to Visitor Expenditure Survey 2011.

During the past years, tourism benefited from the popularity of budget air travel and the significant increase in intra-Asia travel. The Mainland, Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan, China continued to be the top three visitor generating markets followed by Republic of Korea and Japan. Visitors from the Mainland exceeded 16 million last year, a surge of 22.2% of which 50.0% came from neighbouring Guangdong province. Meanwhile, Republic of Korea performed
well with an increase of 20.2% to about 400,000 visitors. In addition, emerging markets such as Russia, India and Middle East showed a rise of 41.1%, 0.3% and 24.4% respectively over 2010. MGTO has been working extensively to explore new markets and lure more travellers, and these efforts have shown encouraging results with the number of visitors to Macao increasing consistently over the past few years.

**Hotel and Other Areas**

According to MGTO, at the end of 2011 Macao had 65 hotels and 32 guesthouses, providing around 23 thousand rooms, showing a 10.7% increase of room numbers in hotel establishments compared to 2010. Regarding the hotel sector performance in 2011, the average occupancy rate of the three to five-star hotels scored 84.1% with an average room rate around US$168.5.

In 2011, Macao held 1,045 MICE events, involving 1.3 million participants with a remarkable increase of 58.5% in the number of participants. The average duration of the MICE participants stood at 2.1 days.

**Highlight of Tourism Activities**

The government together with the Macao residents had been maximizing its advantages and capitalizing the opportunities in implementing its plan to make Macao a world centre of tourism and leisure. In order to achieve the long-term objective, policies and measures on tourism were being fine tuned, and a comprehensive plan for development in this area became a priority.

The goal was to work closely with tourism operators to improve the quality of hotels and the food and beverage industry. In addition as part of the promotion plan for the sector's healthy and sustained growth, we continued to review and improve legal measures that regulate hotels, food and beverage establishments, travel agencies and tour guides and reinforced training.

To encourage diversity, different types of tourism products were being enhanced by cooperation with other government departments, associations and related entities. At the same time, a range of large international events and traditional festivals were continuing to be organized, enriching Macao's image as a cultural tourism destination. Further, efforts had been put together in positioning Macao as a world centre of tourism and leisure. To enhance Macao as a world centre of tourism and leisure, and to diversify the
segments of visitors, MGTO will continue to promote the city in different ways.

Local colorful events were held around town in 2011 to enable visitors to discover local culture and heritage. Apart from the MGTO hosted events such as the Macao Grand Prix, World Tourism Day, International Firework Display Contest, MGTO also co-organized or supported many other activities for instance the Macao Shopping Festival, Ice World, America’s Next Top Model, Chinese New Year celebrations, Macao Food Festival and International Kart Grand Prix, among others.

Moving up to the international level, MGTO took part in the Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific in March 2011 and PATA 60th Anniversary and Conference in April 2011 in Beijing. In October, MGTO also participated in the 19th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Korea and Macau SAR was present in the 5th UNWTO/PATA Forum.

Whilst the number of visitors to Macao continues to grow and the expectations of visitors are being stepped up, we continue to work closely with the industry to understand the needs of the visitors.