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## **PolyU Report Focuses Tourism Forecasts for Mainland China and Taiwan**

PolyU recently released the second issue of the *Hong Kong Tourism Forecasting Report* reviewing forecasts of the demand for Hong Kong tourism from Mainland China and Taiwan. The Report presents the forecasts from the Tourism Demand Forecasting System for Hong Kong. This sophisticated web-based system was jointly developed by PolyU's Public Research Institute and School of Hotel and Tourism Management and was officially launched on 4 March 2008.

According to figures released by the Hong Kong Tourism Board, visitor arrivals in the first five months of 2008 reached 12,037,578, 9.8% more than the same period last year. Hong Kong tourism has been performing well up to now, but with special events such as the oil price hike and direct flights between the Mainland and Taiwan starting in July, it is necessary to review the forecasts of the demand for Hong Kong tourism.

Taking into consideration of rising oil prices throughout the year, direct flights between the Mainland and Taiwan starting in July, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in August and the bankruptcy of the low-cost carrier Oasis Hong Kong Airlines in April, a survey was carried out in order to evaluate the impacts of these special events on Hong Kong tourism. In the survey, two major source markets for Hong Kong tourism – Mainland China and Taiwan are examined.

Led by Professor Haiyan Song, Associate Director of the School, an expert panel of the Forecasting System gave their advice and opinions on the forecasts of future growth for total visitor arrivals in Hong Kong and future growth for Taiwan and Mainland Chinese visitors. It is found that the accuracy of the combined forecasts generated by the experts and the system is higher than that of the statistical forecasts alone. Professor Song believes that “accurate forecasts of demand in the tourism sector of the economy will help Hong Kong formulate and implement appropriate medium-long term tourism strategies which will in turn enhance the tourism industry’s sustainability.”

Subscribers of the Forecasting System can view the full report online by visiting the official website at URL: <http://www.TourismForecasting.net>. For potential subscribers, please contact the School on phone number 2766-6356 to find out more about this web-based system.

PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management is a leading provider of hospitality education in the Asia-Pacific Region. It is ranked No. 4 among the world's top hotel and tourism schools based on research and scholarship, according to a study published in the *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* in 2005. With more than 60 academic staff drawn from 18 countries, the School was awarded the “2003 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Institutional Award” in recognition of its significant contribution to tourism education, and is the only training centre in the Education and Training Network in Asia recognized by the World Tourism Organization.

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