



## **Merlin Entertainments announces LEGOLAND Resort in Western China**

***LEGOLAND Sichuan planned to open by 2023***

***Merlin enters partnership agreement with Global Zhongjun to develop and operate a full-scale LEGOLAND Park and Hotels***

**27 September 2019:** Merlin Entertainments (“Merlin”), a global leader in location based entertainment with brands including LEGOLAND, Madame Tussauds, SEA LIFE and the Dungeons, today announces that it has entered into a partnership agreement with Global Zhongjun Cultural Tourism Development Co., Ltd (“Global Zhongjun”) to build and operate a LEGOLAND Resort in Sichuan Province in Western China. The resort is scheduled to open by 2023.

Under the terms of the agreement, Global Zhongjun will fund the construction of LEGOLAND Sichuan, as well as the required infrastructure and adjacent commercial developments, while Merlin will partner in the resort development and operate it under a management contract arrangement.

LEGOLAND Sichuan will be located within the Tianfu New Area in the city of Meishan, approximately 60km south of Chengdu city centre. With good transport links by road and a future metro station planned for the area, LEGOLAND Sichuan will be within a two-hour catchment of 30 million residents. Chengdu and the surrounding region is also a popular tourist destination within Western China attracting millions of international and domestic visitors each year.

The resort will open with two fully-themed LEGOLAND Hotels, with an estimated capacity of 500 rooms. It will also have scope to incorporate further attractions in the future.

**Nick Varney, CEO of Merlin Entertainments, said:**

*“There’s no doubt that China represents a great opportunity for strong global brands. Having been active in China for over a decade, Merlin has gained critical insights into Chinese consumers and built a broad portfolio of Midway attractions within key cities.*

*“Leveraging this position, we’re delighted to be able to announce the development of a LEGOLAND Park in Sichuan Province together with a strong partner in Global Zhongjun. It is an exciting prospect and a significant milestone in the expansion of the LEGOLAND estate in China.”*

**John Jakobsen, Chief New Openings Officer of Merlin Entertainments, added:**

*“Sichuan Province has a strong tradition of welcoming people from all over, which aligns closely to our values as a business. Within it, Chengdu, Meishan and the Tianfu New Area is developing at a rapid pace driven by investment, enterprise and, increasingly, its popularity as a tourist destination.*

*“Our partner is a leading developer of tourism in the region with a great track record in delivering scale projects, and we look forward to working with them and the local community to bring the LEGOLAND Resort experience to guests in Western China.”*

Global Zhongjun is a joint venture between development companies Zhongjun Beijing and The Chengdu Global Century – Exhibition & Travel Group (“ETG”). The majority shareholder ETG focuses on investing in and operating exhibition centres, tourism resorts, branded hotels, urban commercial complexes, and health care facilities throughout China. It is one of Western China’s largest tourism companies and boasts the New Century Global Centre in Chengdu – the largest building in the world.

**ETG commented:**

*“LEGOLAND Sichuan Resort will be a significant tourist development in Tianfu New Area and the largest LEGOLAND in the world, subject to planning approvals. With its unique design, we aspire for it to be the role model for future new LEGOLAND parks.”*

The LEGO Group has distributed products in China for more than 25 years. The company opened a regional hub office in Shanghai in 2014 and a manufacturing facility in Jiaxing in 2016. During the past year it has expanded its presence in the country and expects to have more than 140 stores in 35 cities by the end of 2019.

Merlin operates 13 Midway attractions in China including LEGOLAND Discovery Centres, Madame Tussauds, SEA LIFE Centres, Dungeons, Peppa Pig World of Play and Little BIG City.

Subject to future announcements, LEGOLAND Sichuan will be Merlin’s eleventh LEGOLAND Park following the announcement of LEGOLAND New York (scheduled to open 2020) and LEGOLAND Korea (scheduled to open 2022). Discussions continue regarding opening further LEGOLAND Resorts in China.

**Ends**

**For enquiries contact:**

**Investors**

Simon Whittington

+44 (0)1202 493 011

**Media**

Brunswick

Fiona Micallef-Eynaud / Imran Jina

+44 (0)20 7404 5959

Images are available at <https://www.merlinentertainments.biz/newsroom/media-library>

### **About Merlin Entertainments**

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location based, family entertainment. As Europe's Number 1 and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin now operates over 130 attractions, 20 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 25 countries and across 4 continents. The company aims to deliver memorable experiences to more than 65 million visitors worldwide, through its iconic global and local brands, and the commitment and passion of its c.28,000 employees (peak season).

Visit [www.merlinentertainments.biz](http://www.merlinentertainments.biz) for more information.

### **About LEGOLAND Parks**

Merlin currently operates eight LEGOLAND parks in seven countries, including the most recent new openings in Dubai (2016) and Japan (2017), and plans to open LEGOLAND New York in 2020 and LEGOLAND Korea in 2022. The LEGOLAND Park Operating Group constitutes 38% of Merlin revenues and welcomes over 15 million guests (2018). The roll out of new LEGOLAND Parks is one of the key growth drivers of Merlin Entertainments.

Merlin also operates LEGOLAND Discovery Centres, a smaller, indoor LEGOLAND experience which brings to life 'learning through play'.

### **Merlin attractions in China**

Madame Tussauds – Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Wuhan, Chongqing

LEGOLAND Discovery Centre – Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang

SEA LIFE – Shanghai, Shenyang

Dungeons – Shanghai

Peppa Pig World of Play – Shanghai

Little BIG City - Beijing