

For the meeting on 6 May 2005

Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development

Arts and cultural policy in Hong Kong

Purpose

In response to Members' request, this paper provides information on the arts and cultural policy in Hong Kong.

Basic Principles

2. As mentioned in Paper No. WKCD 110 and WKCD 130, the Government's policy is to create an environment which is conducive to the freedom of expression and artistic creation and which encourages participation in such activities. The policy is based on several principles, which are as follows:

- we encourage pluralism and diversity
- we respect freedom of expression
- we are a facilitator/catalyst
- we provide various kinds of support, including financial support, as and when appropriate

3. As a facilitator, we aim to support the development of arts and culture in certain aspects. For instance, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provides different kinds of arts and cultural facilities (including libraries, museums and performance venues etc.) for public use. We also promote the development of culture and the arts through financial support (mainly through LCSD and Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ADC)), professional training (through the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (APA)) and publicity. Annual recurrent funding of \$2,304 million has been allocated by the Government in 2004/05 for LCSD's services relating to culture and the arts, while annual recurrent subventions of \$101.9 million and \$158.6 million have been allocated by the Government for the ADC and the APA respectively in 2004/05 in support of their activities.

4. Please refer to Paper No. WKCD 110 for details of the above services.

Culture and Heritage Commission

5. Our blueprint of cultural policy is based on the Culture and Heritage Commission Policy Recommendation Report. In April 2000, the Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) was established by the Chief Executive to advise the Government on the long-term policies as well as resource allocation priorities on culture and the arts. Since its first plenary meeting in May 2000, the CHC has held 23 plenary meetings, some 80 working group meetings, 4 retreats and 4 study visits. Two large-scale public consultations were also conducted in early 2001 and late 2002.

6. After three years of efforts, the CHC submitted its Policy Recommendation Report (the CHC Report) to the Government in April 2003, putting forward more than one hundred recommendations which cover overall policies as well as specific implementation strategies. The CHC Report was submitted to the Legislative Council in 2003, and was uploaded to Home Affairs Bureau's website (<http://www.hab.gov.hk>). To facilitate the operation of the Subcommittee, we have submitted this paper once again (Paper No. WKCD 85).

7. The Report is comprehensive and covers a wide range of issues, looking into the cultural position of Hong Kong, education in culture and the arts, cultural facilities, review on resource deployment and institutional framework, and cultural vision of the future. It also puts forward over 100 recommendations on overall policies and strategies of implementation. The Government has accepted most of the recommendations, and is implementing and following up on them in phases (Please refer to Paper No. WKCD 131 for details).

8. The vision and expectation behind the Report are to enhance the awareness of the community towards culture, and turn Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis. As pointed out by the CHC, Hong Kong became an extraordinary channel of communication between China and the world due to its unique historical background and geographical position. Looking back on the past 150 years, the situation between

China and the international society has kept on changing but the role of Hong Kong as a link between the two remains unchanged. Hong Kong must maintain and develop this role. The CHC also considered that, as a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong should position itself as a metropolis in China which is most capable of bridging China and the world. As regards Hong Kong's cultural position, CHC recommended that Hong Kong people's cultural identity should start from local culture, be grounded in Chinese cultural traditions and possess a global vision.

9. We agree to CHC's views. In early 2004, the Government formally responded to the CHC Report, accepting most of its recommendations (Paper No. WKCD 86). The Government is following up on the recommendations (Paper No. WKCD 131).

10. To implement most of the recommendations in the CHC Report, we have set up three new committees in late 2004 to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on issues relating to performing arts, museums and libraries. These three committees have started operation and commenced thorough discussions on the improvement of venue utilization, resources deployment, strengthening of roles and functions of existing facilities and so on.

The CHC Report and WKCD

11. The CHC supported the Government's decision to develop WKCD. The CHC noted that the Government launched a concept plan competition for the WKCD in 2001, and the CHC's vision of the development of the cultural district was included in the competition document. The CHC was of the view that the five winning entries could fulfill the CHC's vision in principle. In addition, the CHC Report also pointed out that the WKCD presents an unprecedented opportunity for cultural development in Hong Kong. The CHC believed that the overall planning of the cultural district should follow the principles of "people-oriented", "partnership" and "community-driven".

12. Furthermore, the CHC has made suggestions on the themes of the museums in WKCD. Please refer to Paper No. WKCD 132 for details.

13. We totally accepted the views of the CHC. In order to realize our principles and vision, we opine that Hong Kong must be equipped with world-class facilities so as to promote cultural exchanges and enhance Hong Kong's status as a cultural metropolis of Asia. These facilities must be able to cope with the cultural needs of the local community, as well as the demands of the Mainland and overseas.

Home Affairs Bureau

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