

**For information
on 21 April 2006**

**Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and
Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District**

Hong Kong's Cultural Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to brief Members on Hong Kong's cultural policy.

The Three-tiers Definition of Culture

2. "Culture" is a word that is frequently used but difficult to define. The three tiers of meanings of "culture" are: everyday life culture, high culture and spiritual culture.

Everyday Life Culture

The day-to-day life style of the general public, such as clothing, food, rituals, customs, festivals, leisure and recreation, also known as the public culture or popular culture.

High Culture

Artistic creation and presentation including music, literature, theatre, visual arts. It takes education and cultivation of artistic flair to appreciate the culture

which reflects the guiding values and artistic flavour of the society.

Spiritual Culture

The values, perceptions, beliefs and way of thinking of people, including, i.e. ethics, morality, philosophy, religion and cultural tradition, reflecting the cultural identity, respect and pride of a nation and its people.

The Government can and should exercise influence through its policy primarily on high culture (i.e. culture and the arts).

Hong Kong's Cultural Policy

3. Hong Kong's cultural policy refers to the policy on culture and the arts. Our policy objective is to create an environment which is conducive to the freedom of artistic expression and creation, and the wider participation in cultural activities. The policy comprises the following four major elements:

- respect freedom of creation and expression
- provide opportunities for participation
- encourage diversified and balanced development
- provide a supportive environment and conditions (venues, funding, education and administration)

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This policy is in line with the core values of Hong Kong as a free, diversified and open society.

4. Our cultural policy is descriptive (rather than prescriptive). As a facilitator, the Government will neither impose an official definition on culture and the arts, nor influence the specific operation of artistic creation or contents of creativity. Instead, we are committed to upholding the freedom of cultural and artistic creation and expression, as well as providing an environment that keenly supports the development of culture and the arts. Therefore, we should provide support both to certain forms of high culture with traditional values as well as to those avant garde artistic expressions.

Hong Kong's Cultural Position

5. While the great majority of the population in Hong Kong is Chinese, the 150 years of British administration has shaped Hong Kong as an international city, which embraces both the essence of the Chinese culture and the diversities of other cultures. The long tradition of Chinese culture has offered a great treasure house for the sustained development of the city's local culture, as well as its pluralistic and international character, which contributes to Hong Kong's unique cultural position, "diversity with identity". Hong Kong people's cultural identity should start from

acknowledging its local character as well as the deeply-rooted Chinese cultural traditions. It should also possess a global vision which is open and pluralistic. As a Special Administrative Region of China established under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” and the Basic Law, Hong Kong should position itself as a metropolis in China which is most capable of bridging China and the world. It is on this premise that Hong Kong will be able to open up new opportunities on the cultural front and to achieve the aim of becoming an international cultural metropolis.

Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC)

Policy Recommendation Report

6. Our existing cultural policy is generally in line with the six principles and strategies put forward by the CHC in its Policy Recommendation Report issued in April 2003. The six principles are “people-oriented”, “pluralism”, “freedom of expression and protection of intellectual property”, “holistic approach”, “partnership” and “community-driven”. The elaborations of these six principles by the CHC are at Annex.

7. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) set up the Committee on Performing Arts, the Committee on Museums and the Committee on Libraries in November 2004 to follow up on and implement the policy recommendations on arts education, cultural facilities, resource deployment and institutional framework put forward by the CHC. All three

committees are making progress on respective fronts.

Government Support to Culture and the Arts

8. The Government allocates a total of \$2.4 billion (about 1% of the Government's total expenditure) on culture and the arts each year. This percentage share is broadly comparable to that in some Western countries¹. The resources are mainly deployed for the provision of venues, funding support to arts groups, arts education and promotion, as well as relevant administrative costs. The HAB provides support primarily through the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) and Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA).

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

9. LCSD's vision and mission are to provide quality cultural services which are commensurate with Hong Kong's development as a world-class city and events capital. The LCSD formulates specific vision and mission statements in respect of performance venues, museums and libraries for the effective and quality management of public cultural services. Its cultural strategies follow a dual approach: to enhance the cultural literacy of the public in the appreciation of culture and the arts, and to promote culture and the arts

¹ For example, the French Government provides enormous funding for culture and the arts, yet, the resources allocated is about 1% of the Government's total budget.

in the community. LCSD also actively encourages community involvement and forges strategic partnership in the delivery of cultural services.

10. In a typical year, some 3 800 indoor and outdoor performances are presented by LCSD, while around 4 000 performances are presented by hirers at major facilities in LCSD venues. More than 2 500 programmes are provided in other non-LCSD major performance venues. All in all, these programmes reach millions of audience. A wide range of performing arts programmes supported by LCSD are offered to our citizens and visitors, like the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival and thematic festival in Autumn.

11. Each year LCSD also provides recurrent funding for several major arts groups to present a series of cultural performances including music, theatre and dance. The Department also presents and sponsors over 3 000 performances/ activities featuring small and medium local performing arts groups and individual artists, serving one million audience. Moreover, LCSD presents regularly world renowned arts groups and artists in order to bring performances of a high artistic standard to citizens, tourists as well as local artists.

12. To promote knowledge and appreciation of the performing arts, LCSD puts much efforts in partnering with

local arts groups/artists to organize audience building/arts education activities in schools and in the community. The creativity and enthusiasm of these local arts groups/artists contribute much to the success of these activities. Examples include:

- **Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme:** To increase the accessibility of the performing arts to the community, the Scheme invites local performing artists to be Community Cultural Ambassadors to interact with the community via intensive outreach programmes. Such programmes aim to cultivate a wider audience base for the performing arts and develop participants' creativity.
- **District Cantonese Opera Parade:** The Parade promotes Cantonese opera and provides performance opportunities for amateur artists to develop their skills. Selected groups are invited to perform at regional/district venues. A performance fee and publicity support are being provided.
- **School Arts Animateur Scheme:** To promote appreciation of performing arts among students as a means to stimulate creativity, the LCSD works with professional performing arts groups experienced in arts education under the School Arts Animateur Scheme.

- School Culture Day: Under the School Culture Day scheme, LCSD organizes schools to take part in arts education activities performed at LCSD venues which mainly features local artists and arts groups. Many of these programmes are designed especially for students.

13. In respect of museum services, according to the Code of Ethics of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), public museums have the mission to preserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage of mankind to facilitate research, education, and appreciation, as well as to enhance the quality of our life. The public museums in Hong Kong aim to provide quality museum services to enrich the cultural life of the people in Hong Kong, to preserve cultural heritage and to play a vital role in education. The mission of museums reflects a long-term responsibility for our future generations, covering the following six areas:

- to provide quality museum services for the enrichment of cultural life in Hong Kong, and to enhance the public's interest in and awareness of the visual arts, science and technology, Hong Kong history and traditional Chinese culture;
- to promote professionalism and excellence in museum services by strategic acquisition of artistic, historical

and scientific artefacts to execute the core museum functions of preservation, research, interpretation and education;

- to support and promote contemporary Hong Kong art, and encourage pluralistic artistic creation;
- to preserve cultural heritage to enhance citizens' knowledge of our cultural tradition;
- to promote synergy with the Education and Manpower Bureau, schools, scholars, collectors, artists, cultural and community organizations in enhancing the development of museums in the territory; and
- to collect and preserve Hong Kong films and relevant materials and to provide facilities to film industries for research and educational purposes in order to enhance our citizens' appreciation of film art.

14. There are more than 20 museums in Hong Kong. 13 of them and one film archive are managed by the LCSD. The total number of visitors to LCSD's museums is close to 5 million a year.

15. There are 74 public libraries run by LCSD, with over 11 million books and 3.3 million registered users. The provision of public library services in Hong Kong aims to provide public

library services to meet the community's need for information and research, to support life-long learning, continuous education and profitable use of leisure time and to promote local literary arts.

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

16. HKADC is a statutory body, established in 1995, to promote the development of the arts in Hong Kong. Home Affairs Bureau provides an annual recurrent subvention of around \$100 million to HKADC.

17. The HKADC is dedicated to establishing a sound working relationship with strategic partners, pursuing its goal of developing Hong Kong to be an international cultural metropolis. Its strategies of facilitating holistic arts development are:

- Exploit the social functions of the arts to increase public awareness of the role of the arts in encouraging creativity and pluralism, and enhancing civic quality and integrated intelligence;
- Expand the market for the arts and build audience participation;
- Promote life-long arts education for all; and
- Enhance the artistic level and social status of artists.

18. As the statutory body promoting the arts in Hong Kong, the HKADC is dedicated to creating a thriving environment for artistic pursuits. It supports the diversified development of local artists and arts groups through its Three-Year Grant, One-Year Grant, Devolved Grant and Project Grant schemes. It is also committed to forging strategic partnerships with many different sectors in the community to promote arts development in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

19. Established in 1984 as a statutory body, the HKAPA is the only tertiary institution in the territory which provides professional education, training and research facilities in the performing arts, theatre technical arts, and film and television. Its educational policy reflects the cultural diversity of Hong Kong with emphasis on both Chinese and Western traditions.

20. HKAPA has the following Schools/discipline: School of Dance, School of Drama, School of Film and Television, School of Music, School of Technical Arts and Chinese Traditional Theatre. Academic programmes are offered by each of the five Schools from post-secondary Diploma level up to Bachelor Honours Degree level. It receives an annual recurrent subvention of around \$150 million from the Government. Every year HKAPA enrolls about 750 students

for its full time programmes and around 770 students for the junior programmes. Besides, the Academy's self-funding extra-mural studies unit, EXCEL (Extension and Continuing Education for Life), founded in 2001, offers part-time personal enrichment courses and in-service professional training on performing arts, technical arts and film and television to the general public, corporate clients, government departments and disabled persons of all ages. EXCEL provides about 330 programmes for 6 900 students each year.

Cultural Exchange

21. In recent years, HAB implements a series of measures to establish a wider cultural network in the Greater Pearl River Delta, with the Ministry of Culture and with other countries.

Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Cooperation

22. Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao cultural authorities held the First Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Summit in November 2002 and signed the Agreement on Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Cooperation in August 2003. Under the Agreement, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao would take turn to host the Summit. Seven Summits have since then been held. During the 7th Summit, about 150 representatives of the cultural and arts sector from

Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao were invited to the Summit. Six working groups have been formed to strengthen collaborations and exchanges in the following areas:

- Development and exchange of performing arts talents and programme presentations;
- Exchange of cultural information;
- Development of museum network and archaeological excavation, conservation and promotion of heritage;
- Digital library network;
- Promotion of Cantonese Opera; and
- Study on the development of cultural and creative industries.

23. There are good progress on various fronts in cultural cooperation in the region, such as staff training, ticketing system, programme introduction and exchanges, research projects, marketing work, internet connections etc.

Mainland / Hong Kong Agreement on Closer Cultural Partnership Arrangement

24. In November 2005, HKSAR Government signed an Agreement on Closer Cultural Partnership Arrangement with the Ministry of Culture of the Central People's Government to further promote cultural exchange and cooperation with the Mainland and jointly promote the development and

dissemination of Chinese culture. We will hold meetings and have regular discussions with the Ministry of Culture in order to formulate implementation plans for cultural exchange and cooperation. We are now discussing with the Ministry on the arts and cultural programmes for celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong SAR.

Cultural Network with Other Countries

25. We have been making efforts to enhance cooperation with other countries in the field of culture and the arts through the signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation (MOU). MOU could provide a formal, Government to Government framework to further strengthen the cultural links and exchanges between the HKSAR and the countries concerned. Following the signing of an MOU, the Government would consider the arrangement of further culture co-operation initiatives with the country concerned. So far, the HKSAR Government has signed MOUs with nine countries. We are planning to sign MOUs with a few more countries in the coming year.

Asia Cultural Cooperation Forum

26. HAB has been organizing the annual Asia Cultural Cooperation Forum (ACCF) since 2003 with the objective of fostering cultural cooperation with the major economies

within the region. The 3rd ACCF held in November 2005 was attended by delegates of the cultural ministries from 8 countries in Asia and cultural officials of Ministry of Culture and most Mainland provinces and municipalities. During its two-and-a-half-days' open forum, we invited cultural officials, professionals, stakeholders and members of the public to discuss together issues on publishing, films, intellectual property, etc. We will hold the 4th ACCF in November 2006, and invite stakeholders to jointly organize the open forum sessions.

West Kowloon Cultural District

27. The Government's objective of developing the WKCD is to develop a world-class arts and cultural district comprising local, traditional as well as international elements, to enrich arts and cultural life for the people in Hong Kong and neighbouring areas, to create job opportunities and benefit the tourism industry, and to make Hong Kong an international cultural metropolis. This is effectively a major initiative to implement our existing policy on the culture and arts. This is also in line with the CHC's views on Hong Kong's cultural position and vision, i.e. a metropolis in China which is most capable of bridging China and the world. In fact, the CHC has given its clear support to the WKCD development, and considered this project an unprecedented opportunity to develop the culture and arts in Hong Kong. For the time being, our first and foremost task would be to, on the

original planning basis for the facilities, re-examine and reconfirm if appropriate the need for the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities in the WKCD.

Heritage Conservation

28. Heritage conservation is an integral part of our cultural policy, aiming to help citizens understand their historical origin and cultural identity. The Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) was enacted in 1976. Under the Ordinance, the Antiquities Advisory Board, a statutory body, was set up to advise the Antiquities Authority (i.e. the Secretary for Home Affairs) on matters relating to the conservation of antiquities and monuments.

29. We are now reviewing our policy and measures with a view to improving our efforts in heritage conservation. We intend to devise measures that can enrich our culture and enhance the community's awareness of Hong Kong's unique history and their sense of belonging.

30. Taking into account the views collected from the first stage of public consultation held in 2004, we are now in the process of formulating the strategy and improvement measures.

Hong Kong's Cultural Vision

31. We have provided in this Paper an account of Hong Kong's cultural policy and the major implementation measures. We have a clear cultural vision for Hong Kong, which is to raise our cultural literacy and to develop Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis. After all, culture is life and pursuing arts is a lifestyle. If Hong Kong becomes a city where life is celebrated through cultural pursuit, a city where its people are enchanted by the arts, enlightened by different cultures and enriched by social diversity, we will certainly have a vibrant cultural scene.

Home Affairs Bureau
April 2006

Culture and Heritage Commission

The six principles put forward by the Culture and Heritage Commission to promote the long term overall cultural development in Hong Kong are:

- **People-oriented**
The development of culture cannot be separated from the needs of the people and the community at large. The society of Hong Kong inclines towards short-term interests and utilitarianism at the expense of spiritual pursuit. We need a social environment that pays due respect to culture and the arts.
- **Pluralism**
Hong Kong is an international city in southern China with the overwhelming majority of the population being Chinese. We must assimilate the best of Chinese and other cultures, and build a cultural environment that is grounded in Chinese culture but pluralistic and open to the world.
- **Freedom of Expression and Protection of Intellectual Property**
These are essential conditions for the lively development of culture. Both the government and the community must maintain and advance the achievement of Hong Kong in these areas.
- **Holistic Approach**
The development of culture is closely related to many policy areas such as education, urban planning, tourism, creative industries, and trade and economic development. The government should take cultural development as an important consideration in formulating policies and enacting legislation in those areas.
- **Partnership**
The government must allocate adequate resources on culture, encourage community participation and establish partnership among the government, the business community and the cultural sector.
- **Community-driven**
In the long run, non-government organisations should take the lead in cultural development, and the government should gradually reduce its direct involvement and management in cultural facilities and activities.