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5 February 2009

Clerk to the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8, Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Betty Fong)

Dear Ms Fong,

List of Outstanding Issues

**-Funding support for the arts groups
and manpower training for culture and the arts**

At the LegCo Home Affairs Panel meeting on 30 June 2008, the Administration was requested to provide information on the unmet funding demands handled by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) and details of the research study that would be undertaken by the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) to develop a new set of assessment criteria for the major performing arts groups, such as the timetable for conducting the study and specific issues to be studied, as well as any plan to promote the development of inclusive arts. The additional information is set out below –

(A) Unmet funding demands handled by HKADC

The HKADC operates standing funding schemes to support the small and medium sized arts groups and the emerging artists. The standing funding schemes are the 'Project Grant Scheme',

the 'Devolved Grant Scheme' and the 'One-Year Grant Scheme'.

In 2007-08, HKADC introduced an emerging artist grant scheme under the 'Project Grant Scheme' targeting support for the budding artists.

In 2007-08, HKADC also introduced a 'Multi-project Grant Scheme' to provide a more stable source of project funding support to those well established small and medium-sized performing arts groups that are interested in submitting plans for more than one project.

In 2007-08, HKADC received 651 applications under the five grant schemes (project grant, emerging artist grant, one-year grant, multi-project grant and devolved grant) seeking a total amount of HK\$127.4 million. HKADC supported 42% of the applications at HK\$39.6 million. If HKADC were to fully support all the applications having attained a passing score, HK\$91.3 million would be required. In 2008-09, HKADC received 552 applications under four grant schemes as of January 2009 (application for the devolved grant scheme has yet to close) seeking an amount of HK\$107.8 million. The successful rate was 51% with a grant amount at HK\$42 million. If HKADC were to fully support all the applications having attained a passing score, \$82.8 million would be required.

(B) Funding Study to be undertaken by HAB

In February 2008, HAB had issued request for proposals from interested consultants to bid for a research study on a new funding mechanism for major performing arts groups and related matters. The objective of the study is to follow up on the recommendation in the Recommendation Report (I) of the Committee on Performing Arts (CPA) issued in 2006 to develop a new funding mechanism and a new set of common assessment criteria to determine funding for the then 10 major performing arts groups receiving regular subvention from the Government. The new funding model is expected to bring

about a more level playing field for the major performing arts groups as they compete for government funding.

The consultant will help the Government in –

- (a) identifying what constitutes a sustainable development model for the major performing arts groups in Hong Kong that will further promote arts development in Hong Kong with the change to the existing arts landscape to be brought about by the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District;
- (b) developing the parameters for assessment of the groups, recommending the funding formulae to be adopted, including discussion of optimal rates of subvention if applicable and optimal sizes of Government support, as well as identifying the best funding agency to administer the assessment mechanism and to distribute the funding; and
- (c) articulating the relationship between funding for the major performing art groups and that for the rest of the sector, including funding for the non-major, non-profit making performing arts sector and the need for any complementary policy to ensure the vibrancy of the non-subsidized performing arts groups.

In setting out options and recommendations for (b) above, the research recommendation will include instituting a progression ladder for the non-major performing arts groups to rise to the league of majors and instituting an 'entry and exit' mechanism with the league of majors and also an upward and downward adjustment mechanism for funding support to them. The assessment criteria to be developed in the process should include the following indicators recommended in the CPA Recommendation Report (I), namely, the artistic and community impact of the groups, quantifiable outputs and deliverables (such as the number, scope, and scale of activities, the number and types of participants/audience benefiting from

the activities, box office receipt, sponsorship and donations received etc) as well as governance and management.

The research study will also deliberate on the need to formally establish flagship performing arts groups for Hong Kong and to discuss the rights and responsibilities as well as the funding implications of flagship groups.

After protracted negotiations with prospective consultants, HAB will be finalizing the arrangements for the consultant appointment. Once this is completed, the appointed consultant will embark on the study, fully engaging the performing arts sector and the other stakeholders. It is our plan to have the new framework developed in time for the financial year 2010-11.

(C) Plan to Promote the Development of Inclusive Arts

With the objective to encourage persons with disabilities (PWDs) to participate in cultural and arts activities, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), apart from offering half-price concessionary tickets to PWDs and their minders for performing arts programmes they present and also for fee-charging exhibitions and activities of museums that they put up, LCSD also conducts the following promotional activities of inclusive arts –

- (a) presentation or support for performing arts programmes involving disabled artists such as the works of “Theatre of the Silence” and “Asian People’s Theatre Festival Society”. During the financial years of 2003-04 to 2007-08, a total of 120 such cultural performances were supported attracting more than 124 700 audience. The most recent performing arts project was the collaboration with the “Arts with the Disabled Association of HK” in the 2008 International Arts Carnival in August 2008 featuring a physical theatre performance by young artists including some hearing-impaired artists from Hong Kong and the USA to advocate the spirit of social inclusion;

- (b) organizing suitable activities for participation by students of special schools under the “School Culture Day Scheme” and the “School Arts Animateur Scheme”;
- (c) collaborating with arts groups of PWDs such as the “Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong” or rehabilitation/voluntary agencies like “Art in Hospital”, “The Spastics Association of Hong Kong” and “Hong Kong Joint Council of Parents of the Mentally Handicapped” to organize performances, workshops or exhibitions with the aim to give PWDs further opportunities to develop their artistic potential; and
- (d) presentation of the “Care and Concern Concerts” by the Music Office during its annual visits to various institutions for the disabled or rehabilitation agencies.

In future, LCSD will continue to be proactive in improving its venue facilities to better meet the needs of the PWDs and to support the development of inclusive arts through-

- (a) co-organizing performances, training courses, seminars or exhibitions with disabled artists/arts groups so as to provide them with opportunities to develop their artistic potential;
- (b) inviting students (including those with disabilities studying in special schools) to participate in the cultural activities held at the LCSD performing venues, museums and libraries during school hours under the “School Culture Day Scheme” and bringing local artists to schools including special schools to provide training activities for the students under the “School Arts Animateur Scheme”;
- (c) presentation of the “Care and Concern Concerts” by the Music Office during its annual visits to institutions for the disabled or rehabilitation agencies;

- (d) organizing cultural activities for the general public including PWDs with the aim to promote their interest in culture and the arts;
- (e) offering half-price concessionary tickets to PWDs and their minders for performing arts programmes and fee-charging exhibitions and activities of museums; and
- (f) providing guide maps, leaflets or audio guide service for museums exhibitions, and special guided tours of specific exhibitions at major museums for the public, including PWDs. An exhibition “Hong Kong Art: Open Dialogue – Charming Experience” to be held at the Hong Kong Museum of Art from 20 February to 19 April 2009 will provide a unique museum-going experience to audiences including PWDs through tactile and direct participatory experiences with contemporary works of art.

Insofar as the HKADC is concerned, it has always considered applications from able and disabled groups under all its funding schemes. In 2008-09, the Arts with the Disabled Association successfully applied for \$420,000 under the HKADC ‘Multi-project Grant Scheme’, \$175,000 to support its “Arts for Everyone-Audience Development Pilot Project” and another \$120,000 for its “VSA Arts Institute 2009 - The Arts as a Tool to Unlock Student Success & Create Inclusive Communities” project. In future, the HKADC will continue its current policy to support quality inclusive arts projects.

Yours sincerely,



(Venus Yiu)

for Secretary for Home Affairs