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Panel on Home Affairs

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 14 May 2010

Strengthening the arts and cultural software of Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Administration's policy and initiatives on strengthening the arts and cultural software of Hong Kong, and summarises past discussions held by Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members on the subject.

Background

2. Established in April 2000, the Culture and Heritage Commission ("CHC") advises the Government on policies and funding priorities on culture and the arts. CHC submitted the "Culture and Heritage Commission Policy Recommendation Report" to the Administration in April 2003, putting forward over 100 policy recommendations. The Government adopted the Report as the blueprint of Hong Kong's cultural policy. This comprises four major elements including: (a) respecting freedom of creation and expression; (b) providing opportunities for participation; (c) encouraging diversified and balanced development; and (d) giving various kinds of support to build up an environment conducive to the development of culture and the arts.

3. To take forward CHC's recommendations on performing arts, the Committee on Performing Arts ("CPA") was established in November 2004. CPA issued the CPA Recommendation Report (I) in June 2006 proposing changes in the areas of funding mechanism, venue provision and cultural programme presentation by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"). The Administration accepted in principle all the recommendations put forward by CPA which mainly included -

- (a) putting the four major performing arts groups ("MPAGs") funded by LCSD and the six 3-year grantees funded by Hong Kong Arts Development Council ("HKADC") under one roof (i.e. the Home

Affairs Bureau ("HAB")) and setting up a new grant scheme by HKADC to provide funding and venue support for budding artists/arts groups;

- (b) establishing a new funding body (i.e. the Funding Committee for the Performing Arts) to advise the Government on funding concerning MPAGs;
- (c) developing a single assessment mechanism for MPAGs with a set of clear and measurable assessment criteria focusing on artistic and community impact, quantifiable outputs and deliverables as well as governance and management; and
- (d) putting forward all 13 performing art venues under LCSD for the Venue Partnership Scheme to enhance partnership between LCSD and performing arts groups.

4. According to the Secretary for Home Affairs' policy briefing on the Chief Executive's 2007 Policy Address at the Panel meeting in October 2007, HAB would implement the following measures starting from 2008-2009 to take forward CPA's recommendations -

- (a) increasing funding support for MPAGs during the transitional period before a new funding and assessment mechanism is put in place;
- (b) increasing funding for HKADC to enhance support for the development of small and medium arts groups ("SMAGs"), promoting cultural co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland artists and art groups, and conducting baseline studies to support the development of various arts forms;
- (c) augmenting LCSD's work in audience-building and arts education and encouraging the production of partnership programmes by SMAGs at LCSD venues; and
- (d) conducting a comprehensive survey on the demand and supply of manpower in the arts and cultural sector, with a view to devising appropriate training and educational measures.

5. As advised by the Secretary for Home Affairs during his briefing to the Panel on the Chief Executive's 2009 Policy Address in October 2009, the Government is determined to promote culture and the arts in a holistic, concerted and sustainable manner in order to realise the vision for the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and to complement the development of the cultural and creative industries. The Government would, in collaboration with its partners, continue to strengthen the local cultural software through the three pronged approach of arts programme development, audience building, and arts education and manpower training.

Past discussions

6. In December 2007, the Administration briefed the Panel on its initiatives to implement CPA's recommendations in strengthening cultural software and humanware. The Panel subsequently held three meetings in the 2007-2008 session to further discuss the subject with the Administration and receive views from deputations. During the 2008-2009 session, the Panel met with deputations on 8 May 2009 to exchange views regarding the governance of and support to MPAGs. It also revisited issues relating to the development of arts and cultural software on 12 June 2009. The subject was last discussed at the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project on 16 April 2010, in which the Administration updated members on its initiatives in the development of cultural software to complement the WKCD project. Major concerns and views expressed by members and deputations together with the Administration's responses are summarised in the ensuing paragraphs.

Funding mechanism for performing arts groups

7. Members generally considered that the Administration should -
- (a) review the existing mode of subsidy for the MPAGs to avoid stifling the development of non-subsided arts groups and provide more funding for HKADC to underpin support for SMAGs and budding artists;
 - (b) ensure a reasonable and fair distribution of funding resources among arts groups and examine the effectiveness of the current funding policy in achieving policy goals, such as encouraging diversified and balanced development of the arts and culture;
 - (c) explore means to minimise staffing and administrative expenses in the operation of arts programmes so that the savings generated could be channelled towards arts development; and
 - (d) increase its overall allocation of funding for culture and the arts, given the imminent need to achieve the vision and objectives of the WKCD project.

Some members considered that MPAGs should be encouraged to seek sponsorship to enhance its income other than government subvention, and called for more Government effort in encouraging private donation and sponsorship for the arts.

8. As for the deputations, some considered that the outdated funding policy should be reviewed as it had failed to take into account the emergence of new art forms which had proven to be popular in the market and created unfair competition within the arts and culture sector. Others opined that the cumbersome administrative procedures for application of subsidies under the present subvention mechanism

should be streamlined to alleviate the heavy administrative workload of MPAGs. Some suggested that tax concession should be offered to corporations which sponsored non-profit making performing arts groups. In general, deputations urged the Administration to increase the allocation of resources for the performing arts groups as a whole.

9. The Administration explained that it was committed to promoting the sustainable development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong. In the 2009-2010 financial year, more than \$2.7 billion (excluding capital works expenditure) was spent on culture and the arts which was around 1% of the total expenditure of the Government. In 2010-2011, the Government would inject \$3 billion into the Arts and Sport Development Fund as seed money and use the annual investment returns to subsidise the long-term development of sports, culture and the arts. It would also reserve a provision of \$486 million in recurrent expenditure over the next five years for measures such as art programme development, audience building and enhancement of arts education and manpower training.

10. To promote the healthy development of performing arts groups, the Administration had commissioned a consultancy study to develop a new set of assessment criteria and funding mechanism for MPAGs in early 2010. The study would also examine the establishment of "flagship" companies, an entry and exit mechanism to the league of "majors", an articulation ladder for the second and lower tier arts groups to become majors, as well as complementary measures to support the non-subsided performing arts sector.

Distribution of resources

11. Some members expressed concern that 80% of the Government's annual recurrent expenditure on culture and the arts was monopolized by LCSD, whereas HKADC, which was tasked to provide funding support for SMAGs and had a high level of community involvement, only received less than 3% of the Government resources. These members considered that this was not conducive to encouraging diversified and balanced development of culture and the arts.

12. The Administration explained that the reason for LCSD taking up a large share was that most of the major cultural facilities including performing arts venues, museums and public libraries were directly managed by LCSD, for which the associated staffing, programming and management expenses were the major cost items. To enhance its role in supporting young and budding artists and developing SMAGs, the Administration undertook to increase funding support for HKADC.

Arts programme development and audience building

13. Some members considered that the Administration should target at the public at large in arts promotion. These members urged the Administration to focus its resources on the promotion of popular arts with a view to bringing the arts closer to the general public. To encourage community involvement in the arts, they called upon the Government to strengthen venue and funding provision for the arts and

cultural societies at district level, and promote street performances at district level for participation by local and international artists.

14. A member held the view that the Administration in general lacked the cultural vision in enhancing the quality and standard of arts performances in Hong Kong, which was essential for building up a solid audience base for the arts and cultural facilities in WKCD. Another member suggested that the Administration should study the profile of the targeted arts audience in the formulation of marketing strategy in arts promotion. To enrich Hong Kong's cultural contents and enhance the community's cultural literacy, some members urged the Administration to take concrete measures to promote architecture as a form of art, such as establishing a museum of architecture highlighting the historical aspects of Hong Kong architecture, and to promote the development of literary arts.

15. According to the Administration, it had been actively bringing culture and the arts to the people. For example, the Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme under the LCSD supported local performing arts practitioners in conducting outreach/promotional arts activities at various venues, and the Public Art Scheme invited artists to create or install permanent artworks at public places. Through the Community Arts Activities Enhancement Scheme, the HKADC encouraged the arts and cultural societies in all districts across the territory to organise and promote arts activities in the local community. In the five years starting from 2010-2011, more than \$80 million in additional resources would be allocated to step up the promotion of public art and organise more popular arts and cultural activities.

16. On the development of arts programmes, the Administration advised that LCSD, HKADC and local arts groups organised many cultural events throughout the year, including the Hong Kong Arts Festival, the thematic arts festival in autumn and various cultural and entertainment programmes organised by LCSD in collaboration with district organisations. The Administration would sustain the provision of additional resources to nine MPAGs¹, and support SMAGs and individual artists in developing quality programmes, promoting outreach activities and advancing cultural exchanges. It would also provide additional resources to the Hong Kong Arts Festival for programme enrichment and further brand-building. As for the promotion of architectural arts and literary arts, the Administration would consider featuring architecture as an exhibition theme in activities organised by public museums, and convey the suggestion on the establishment of a literary museum in WKCD to the WKCD Authority.

Arts education

17. Members suggested a series of measures to complement the new senior secondary ("NSS") curriculum implemented in the 2009-2010 school year. These included introducing the artist-in-residence scheme to all schools, arranging internship

¹ The nine MPAGs included the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong Dance Company, Hong Kong Ballet, City Contemporary Dance Company, Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Chung Ying Theatre and the Zuni Icosahedron.

schemes to prepare students for future career in the creative/cultural industries, and establishing a mechanism to enable students taking arts subjects under the new curriculum to pursue tertiary studies in arts administration and related subjects. A member urged the Administration to put in place arrangements to facilitate students attending classes on arts subjects, and to follow through students' learning process under the new curriculum.

18. The Administration advised that to tie in with the NSS curriculum, the Education Bureau, LCSD and various arts groups had joined hands to launch "A Journey on Learning the Arts for Senior Secondary Student Scheme" to support students' participation in arts activities and performances for free outside the classroom setting. The LCSD would produce teaching kits and worksheets for special exhibitions, and further enhance the educational programmes in museums and film archive to include learning sessions and workshops to engage students in the appreciation and critique of artworks. Artists would also be arranged to share their creative experience with students. For the promotion of arts education outside the formal curriculum, "the School Culture Day Scheme" was introduced for students to visit LCSD's performing arts venues, museums and public libraries during school days. In the five years starting from 2010-2011, additional resources of \$21 million would be allocated to enhance the promotion of the arts in schools to develop young people's interest in the arts and culture and their appreciation abilities in these areas.

Manpower development and training

19. Some members and deputations expressed concern about the sufficiency of manpower training and provision such as museum professionals and cultural services managers to complement the WKCD project. The Administration was urged to enhance professional training in the arts, arts administration and arts criticism. Some deputations were concerned about the talent drain in the arts and culture sector given that low monetary rewards had deterred entrants to the sector.

20. According to the Administration, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts had been training arts professionals in different disciplines, producing over 900 full-time equivalent graduates every year. The University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions and the Vocational Training Council also offered other educational or vocational training programmes.

21. For the nurturing of budding artists and small and medium-sized arts groups of different nature and development stage, the Administration would cater for their needs through different schemes/funds. LCSD would provide them with support and performance opportunities through various channels, including year-round cultural presentations, the Venue Partnership Scheme, free entertainment programmes, audience building schemes at schools and the community, as well as marketing activities at performance venues.

22. To provide training and internship opportunities for people who aspired to a career in the arts and culture, HKADC ran a Local Internships Programme to sponsor participants to take up work attachments at local arts groups. The Administration

had also commissioned the HKADC to run the new pilot Cultural Internship Scheme from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 to sponsor local art practitioners to undertake short-term internship and training programmes in arts administration in the Mainland or overseas, and would allocate additional funding of \$32 million in the five years starting from 2010-2011 to launch training programmes for arts administrators.

Cultural policy development

23. Some members considered that the Administration should review its effort in cultural development in a more critical and self-reflective manner to meet the challenges arising from the WKCD project. These members considered that the Administration should formulate a long-term policy and a clear vision for cultural development in Hong Kong. Other members suggested that the Administration should consider establishing a Cultural Affairs Bureau/Council or an integrated unit to coordinate policies and implement active measures to promote the arts and develop creative industries.

24. The Administration explained that HAB was the policy bureau responsible for cultural policy. The Bureau was underpinned by LCSD as its executive department and HKADC which advised the Bureau in works related to arts and culture. The Administration's policy objective was to create an environment conducive to free artistic expression and creation, as well as wider participation in cultural activities through the provision of various arts and cultural programmes, concessionary scheme and free performances. The Administration further advised that a steering group co-organised by HAB and the Commercial and Economic Development Bureau was set up in September 2009 to co-ordinate cross-bureaux and inter-departmental efforts in the further development of cultural software.

Development of inclusive arts for persons with disabilities

25. Some members considered that the Administration should take proactive measures to develop inclusive arts as an art form and not as a welfare initiative. Some deputations requested the Administration to provide more funding support for the hiring of teachers/assistants for persons with disabilities and to uphold their right to barrier-free participation in arts and cultural activities.

26. The Administration advised that HKADC would continue its policy to support quality inclusive arts projects through the provision of grants under the three-year subvention scheme and other schemes under the auspice of HKADC. This apart, the Labour and Welfare Bureau had provided funding support for disabled artists through the Jockey Club Arts for the Disabled Scheme, and LCSD had assisted these artists in arts programmes such as the "Theatre of the Silence" to help them develop a life-long interest in the arts and culture. Moreover, all LCSD venues built after 1997 were in compliance with the requirements of the Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 1997 issued by the Buildings Department. The subvention for inclusive arts would also be considered in the consultancy study on performing arts groups.

Latest development

27. The Administration will brief the Panel on its latest initiatives in strengthening the arts and cultural software of Hong Kong, including the progress of the consultancy study on performing arts groups, at its meeting on 14 May 2010.

Relevant papers

28. A list of relevant papers with their hyperlinks at the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
11 May 2010

Panel on Home Affairs

Relevant documents on strengthening the arts and cultural software of Hong Kong

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper/Minutes	LC Paper No.
Panel on Home Affairs	3.7.2006	Committee on Performing Arts Recommendation Report (I)	Issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2476/05-06 on 20 June 2006 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0703cb2-report-e.pdf
		Administration's paper on Committee on Performing Arts Recommendation Report (I)	CB(2)2492/05-06(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0703cb2-2492-1e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)3127/05-06 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha060703.pdf
	14.12.2007	Administration's paper on Strengthening the software and humanware for culture and the arts	CB(2)245/07-08(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/papers/ha1109cb2-245-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)1051/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha071214.pdf
	15.2.2008	Administration's response to the views of deputations/ individuals at the meeting	CB(2)1805/07-08(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0509cb2-1805-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2617/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha080215.pdf

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper/Minutes	LC Paper No.
Panel on Home Affairs	9.5.2008	Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2742/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha080509.pdf
	30.6.2008	Administration's paper on "Funding support for the local performing arts groups, manpower training in culture and the arts and promotion of the participation of persons with disabilities in artistic creation"	CB(2)2416/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0630cb2-2416-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2828/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha080630.pdf
	6.2.2009	Administration's response to the views of members of the Panel and deputations	CB(2)860/08-09(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0206cb2-860-1-e.pdf
	8.5.2009	Administration's paper on Governance of major performing arts groups	CB(2)1464/08-09(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0508cb2-1464-1-e.pdf
		Background brief on Governance of major performing arts groups	CB(2)1464/08-09(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0508cb2-1464-2-e.pdf
	12.6.2009	Administration's paper on Strengthening the Arts and Cultural Software of Hong Kong	CB(2)1790/08-09(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0612cb2-1790-1-e.pdf

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper/Minutes	LC Paper No.
Panel on Home Affairs	12.6.2009	Background brief on Strengthening the Arts and Cultural Software of Hong Kong	CB(2)1790/08-09(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0612cb2-1790-2-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2346/08-09 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha20090612.pdf
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	16.4.2010	Administration's paper on Development of cultural software to complement the West Kowloon Cultural District project	CB(2)1283/09-10(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/wkcd/papers/wkcd0416cb2-1283-3-e.pdf

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