

The Legislative Council Meeting on 25 May 2011

Motion on “Hong Kong as a sustainable regional cultural hub”

Progress Report

Purpose

At the Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting on 25 May 2011, the motion on “Hong Kong as a sustainable regional cultural hub” moved by Hon. LAU Kong-wah and amended by Hon. LEE Wing-tat and Hon. Tanya CHAN was carried. The wording of the motion carried is at Annex.

2. This report briefs Members on the latest development in respect of the issues raised in the motion.

3. Over the past year, the Government has been actively pursuing work on various fronts in meeting the following objectives:

- (i) to provide opportunities for wide participation in culture and the arts;
- (ii) to provide opportunities for those with potential to develop their artistic talents;
- (iii) to create an environment conducive to the diversified and balanced development of culture and the arts;
- (iv) to support the preservation and promotion of our traditional culture while encouraging artistic creation and innovation; and
- (v) to develop Hong Kong into a prominent hub of cultural exchanges.

Enhancing organisational structure and policies

4. The Government has put forth to the LegCo the proposal of setting up a Culture Bureau which will focus on policies relating to the development of culture and the arts, creative industries, and heritage

conservation. Besides, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) is currently conducting a review on the nomination exercise, with a view to facilitating more arts practitioners to participate in the related activities in the future.

Provision of resources and market development

5. The Government provides resources and support through a variety of channels and means to foster the development of culture and the arts.

Major performing arts groups

6. The Government provides recurrent subvention to major performing arts groups (MPAGs)¹ for their work in developing quality programmes, audience building, nurturing artistic and arts administrative talents as well as promoting Hong Kong's arts and culture to the international community through cultural exchange activities. The Government has turned the time-limited additional funding of \$40.5 million provided since 2008-09 into recurrent subvention. Moreover, starting from 2012-13, the funding for MPAGs is increased by \$40 million, of which about \$26 million is used for raising the level of recurrent subvention for individual MPAGs by 10%, another amount of around \$14 million has been set aside for launching a contestable funding pilot scheme for the MPAGs. The total funding earmarked for the nine MPAGs in 2012-13 amounts to \$304 million.

7. The contestable funding pilot scheme was launched in June 2012, aiming to encourage the MPAGs to develop new initiatives that would help to promote their sustainable development financially and artistically, as well as to benefit the long-term development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong. In the first round of the funding exercise, the proposals submitted by the MPAGs should include the following themes:

¹ The nine major performing arts groups include the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Hong Kong Dance Company, the Hong Kong Ballet, City Contemporary Dance Company, the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Chung Ying Theatre Company and Zuni Icosahedron.

- (i) promoting art-form development, including nurturing local arts talents and collaborating with other local artists and arts organisations on creation of new works;
- (ii) enhancing the group's long-term fundraising capacity (which helps to strengthen its financial sustainability); or
- (iii) conducting researches on and analyses of as well as promoting good practices in audience building and collaboration with the local arts community.

8. We expect to complete the vetting of applications and start disbursing grants to successful MPAGs by the fourth quarter of 2012.

Small and medium arts groups

9. Meanwhile, small and medium arts groups and budding artists also play a significant role in ensuring a healthy and vibrant arts scene in Hong Kong. We have injected \$1.5 billion into the Arts and Sports Development Fund (Arts Portion) as seed money. The annual investment returns (around \$60 million every year) generated from the seed money are used to subsidise the long-term development of culture and the arts. Around \$30 million is disbursed under the newly established Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS) annually to subsidise initiatives of a large scale as well as cross-year arts and cultural activities, so as to enhance capacity development of promising arts groups and arts practitioners. The ACDFS offers two types of grants, namely Project Grants, which are direct grants, and Springboard Grants, which are matching grants. The first round of ACDFS approved a total of 18 applications, including nine for Springboard Grants and nine for Project Grants. The total grants allocated reached \$39 million to meet the demand of the arts sector.

10. In addition, we have been supporting the development of small and medium arts groups, nurturing budding artists, and encouraging public appreciation of and participation in arts and cultural activities through the HKADC. In 2011-12 alone, the HKADC subsidised over 330 arts groups or arts practitioners for their creative pursuits (including

39 small and medium arts groups benefiting from the HKADC's One-Year/Two-Year Grant Scheme) with a total funding of about \$25.42 million. The amount of annual funding received by each arts group ranges from \$0.27 million to \$1.1 million.

11. Apart from these, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has been providing support and performing opportunities for small and medium arts groups through various channels such as year-round cultural presentations and district arts and cultural activities, with a view to facilitating their artistic creation and outreach activities. In 2012-13, funding support for this purpose is estimated at around \$102.8 million, providing approximately 4 300 performances and activities. At the same time, the LCSD has launched a Venue Partnership Scheme at its performance venues, which fosters a partnership between venues and arts groups with the objectives of building up the artistic image and character of the venue and its partner, as well as enlarging the audience base.

Manpower training

12. Taking into account the sector's strong demand for arts and cultural talents, we will continue to provide resources for manpower training. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) will migrate from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate degree structure starting from the 2012/13 school year. The number of its full-time equivalent students is expected to increase to 979 by 2016/17 as a result. Accordingly, the Government will provide additional amount of subvention for the HKAPA by \$35.08 million in 2012/13, which will be further increased to \$43.68 million from 2017/18 onwards. In addition, we will earmark \$444.8 million for the HKAPA's on-site campus expansion project, with works scheduled to commence in the second quarter of 2013 for completion in the fourth quarter of 2015. The project will provide more space for teaching and various activities so as to further enhance the environment of the campus. We will continue to work closely with the HKAPA to promote its development and nurture talents in the performing arts.

13. We have also been training talents for the arts and cultural sector through various programmes. In addition to launching the Emerging Artists Scheme in 2007-08, the HKADC has implemented a variety of proactive projects, including the Xiqu Playwright Mentoring and New Play Performance Project, Fresh Wave Short Film Competition, Young Musicians Performance Platform Series and Hong Kong Youth Dance Season, with a view to identifying new blood for different arts disciplines. Moreover, the HKADC continues to organise Internship Schemes to sponsor the engagement of budding artists with potential by arts groups across various disciplines, including music, drama, xiqu, dance and visual arts.

14. The HKADC has launched the Cultural Internship Scheme with the support from the HAB to sponsor promising arts professionals to take up work attachments at local and overseas arts groups. This includes the Clore Leadership Programme, the Sage Gateshead Internship, the Whitechapel Gallery Internship and the Japan Mori Art Museum Internship.

15. The Arts Administrator Trainee Scheme launched by the LCSD in 2010 has so far offered 23 training places, providing training and internship opportunities for people aspired to a career in the performing arts and museum administration. In respect of the performing arts, internship opportunities are provided on venue operation, facilities maintenance, planning of arts programmes, carnivals and festivals, as well as community relations, marketing, and publicity for arts activities. For museum and visual arts, trainees will receive training in managing and organising various activities including venue operation, exhibition curating, management of collections, heritage restoration, and public art. Phase two of the Scheme will begin in 2012 with the addition of ten more training places, splitting equally between performing arts and museum administration. As a result, the numbers of performing arts and museum trainees will be 18 and 15 respectively. Under the scheme, the LCSD provides additional funding for its venue partnering arts groups to engage trainees as well. The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority also seeks to nurture young talents through internship programmes.

Provision of arts space and venue support

16. Since 2012-13, the Government has provided additional resources for the HKADC to identify appropriate locations for leasing of arts space to arts groups and arts practitioners as offices, workshops or rehearsal studios at concessionary rates. The HKADC has set up a working group to follow up on details of the project. Furthermore, the Government encourages the development of cultural facilities in support of artistic endeavours by community organisations. For example, the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC) which has 103 studios operates on a non-profit making mode to provide space for artistic creation with policy support and rental subsidy provided by the HAB.

17. We are also committed to providing other forms of venue support for arts groups. Under the LCSD's Venue Partnership Scheme introduced since April 2009, venue partners are entitled to priority use of venue facilities, free work space, additional publicity support, and subsidy for organising activities and related production, staff and administrative costs. A new round of Venue Partnership Scheme was launched in April 2012. 13 out of the 21 venue partners selected for 12 performance venues managed by the LCSD are consortiums comprising a total of 35 small and medium arts groups. These 13 venue partners receive funding up to a ceiling of \$1 million each year from the LCSD.

18. By applying for the HKADC's Performing Arts Venue Subsidy Scheme, small and medium arts groups can also hire non-LCSD performance venues, including the Hong Kong Arts Centre, On & On Cattle Depot Theatre, Multi-Media Theatre of the HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, Hong Kong Baptist University Academic Community Hall, Youth Square, Chiang Chen Studio Theatre of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the black box theatre of the JCCAC. A total of \$2.56 million was disbursed under the scheme since 2009-10.

Promotion of public arts education

19. To actively promote the arts and culture in the community, we

will continue to step up the promotion of public art and organise more popular arts and cultural activities. For example, we have installed artworks in the public spaces of three government joint-user buildings (JUBs) through the "Art@Government Buildings" project. We are going to extend the project to another six JUBs this year. Moreover, we have taken forward various public and community arts projects, including "ArtAlive@Park" and "Park Déco", to showcase artworks created by budding artists and students and install everyday facilities imbued with artistic qualities at different venues. Apart from lending an artistic touch to public space, these projects also provide local artists with more creative opportunities and exhibition space. Under the Arts in the Neighbourhood Scheme, the LCSD collaborates with institutions like the MTR Corporation and shopping malls to set up arts exhibitions at various venues. The HKADC also encourages the organisation and promotion of community arts activities across the 18 districts through the Community Arts Activities Enhancement Scheme. The LCSD, HKADC, nine major performing arts groups, HKAPA and other related institutions organised over 40 000 arts education and audience building activities in 2010-11.

Active dissemination of cultural information

20. The HKADC is collaborating with the Television Division of the Radio Television Hong Kong on a series of TV programmes on the arts and culture, which will be aired on local free TV channels. These programmes introduce the audience to a wide variety of arts activities and the work of artists and arts groups in order to develop their interest and knowledge in the arts. Teaming up with a local pay TV station, the HKADC presented a special segment in one of the station's cultural programme. The segment interviewed local artists who talked about their creative processes and the characteristics of their works and introduced the activities of subvented arts groups under the HKADC's One-Year/Two-Year Grant Scheme.

21. We will continue to actively cooperate with different parties to take forward initiatives that are instrumental to the development of the arts and culture in Hong Kong, thereby facilitating Hong Kong's development into a vibrant international cultural metropolis.

Home Affairs Bureau
July 2012

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Hong Kong as a sustainable regional cultural hub”
moved by Hon LAU Kong-wah
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 25 May 2011**

Motion as amended by Hon LEE Wing-tat and Hon Tanya CHAN

That, given that the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (‘WKCD’) has designated a conceptual plan as the master plan for developing the West Kowloon Cultural District (‘WKCD’), the authorities will launch the Stage 3 Public Engagement Exercise in summer this year to consult the public on the development plan of the WKCD; whether the WKCD can develop into a first-class arts and cultural facility in the world will largely depend on Hong Kong’s overall cultural development, and whether we can seize the opportunity presented by the WKCD to upgrade people’s cultural qualities as well as artistic tastes, so as to establish Hong Kong’s cultural edge and status; in order to build Hong Kong into a sustainable regional cultural hub, this Council urges the Government to:

Perfection of framework and policies –

- (a) explore the establishment of a cultural and education bureau to co-ordinate the policies and resources presently scattered among other government departments, and explore and formulate territory-wide and regional policies as well as development strategies for culture and the arts;
- (b) enhance the professional composition of the Advisory Committee on Arts Development and its function as a think tank;
- (c) formulate a checklist with culture and arts as the core to assist various government departments in giving more attention and consideration to the needs of local culture and arts in the process of policy evaluation and project implementation;
- (d) reform the Hong Kong Arts Development Council’s method for selecting members from the community, and step up the studies on and implementation of local arts and community development strategies, so as to improve the operation of existing cultural hardware and its ancillary facilities;

Resources allocation and market development —

- (e) increase participation and investment in culture and arts by requiring the Government and major public bodies to spend 1% of the construction expenses of their public works projects on public arts;
- (f) provide major performing arts groups with venues that suit their needs and financial support, so as to foster their sustainable and healthy development and drive the upgrading of Hong Kong's overall cultural level;
- (g) assist in building a vibrant cultural and arts market, and allocate resources to train talents of the relevant industries, and attract more people to participate in the relevant intermediary industries and professional services;
- (h) enhance support for young art workers, so as to encourage more young people to join cultural and artistic industries;
- (i) promote arts popularization, with a view to enlarging Hong Kong's arts appreciation population;
- (j) train local talents engaging in culture and arts administration, and set up scholarships for people aspiring to develop in the areas of culture and arts to pursue overseas studies on arts administration and venue management, etc., so as to nurture talents for Hong Kong in this regard and meet the demand for arts administration talents after the completion of WKCD;

Facility and space enhancement —

- (k) establish regional cultural and arts resources centres in various districts, so as to more effectively foster the promotion and education on traditional folklores, festivals and customs in the districts, encourage the development of budding arts talents and provide room for community activities;
- (l) through various policies, encourage private developers to provide cultural and arts facilities, and flexibly utilize the existing district resources for increasing the number of cultural and arts venues, so as to progressively form a cultural ambience in society;
- (m) open more public space to street performers, so as to enable performing arts to enrich streets in Hong Kong, and relax the existing legislation on street performances, so as to encourage public arts to enter the communities;

- (n) strengthen inter-departmental co-operation, and use existing premises or resources for providing more exhibition space, including public space not designated as formal exhibition venues, so as to enable arts workers to have more opportunities to display their works to the public;

Promotion of public arts education —

- (o) promote public arts education, and intensify public education and promotion, so as to reacquaint people with arts and culture as well as their professional nature and status;
- (p) station in each secondary school and primary school a sufficient number of professionally trained teachers, and provide ample teaching facilities and room, so as to facilitate the full-scale, universal and professional conduct of arts education;
- (q) establish a close partnership among the WKCDA, arts organizations and The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, so as to bring in professional perspectives to assist in the development of the WKCD and promote culture and arts education, and to strengthen the professional development of local arts and culture in the WKCD;
- (r) develop the WKCD into an international cultural district with Asian, Chinese and Western cultural features;

Provision of an information and exchanges platform —

- (s) establish a systematic and free public cultural channel, including a public television channel and an arts web, so as to enable the arts sector to conduct publicity and exchanges;
- (t) through the Broadcasting Authority, encourage free television channels to provide daily newscasts on cultural affairs; and

Relationship with arts organizations —

- (u) regard various arts organizations as partners, maintain close co-operation with them, and request the WKCDA to face up and proactively respond to the views put forward by arts organizations on the WKCD, so as to allay their concern about the present ‘black hole in WKCD’;

Perfection of framework and policies —

- (v) review the role, functions and composition of the Advisory Committee on Arts Development, and introduce the participation of more people with professional cultural and arts backgrounds;

- (w) review the functions and composition of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council as a territory-wide statutory public cultural organization, improve its structure and composition, bring in more members with professional cultural and arts background, and review the system for selecting representatives from the arts interest;

Promotion of public arts education —

- (x) conduct studies on offering cultural and arts education programmes at more universities and tertiary institutions; and

Provision of an information and exchanges platform —

- (y) conduct studies on establishing an artwork resources platform for collecting local artists' works, and arrange for the identification of appropriate artworks by organizations interested in borrowing or renting artworks for exhibition purposes, so as to enable local artists to display their works in more places.