

**Opening Remarks by the Chief Executive Officer
of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
at the meeting of the LegCo Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the
Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District on 26 August 2011**

I. Overview

- It is a pleasure and honour to be here before this committee with my colleagues.
- I have just been in HK for over a month (first day July 25th) but I have been spending much time in meeting people from a cross section of the community, especially those in the arts community, to get to know the place and the culture here better and understand their hopes and concerns for WKCD.
- I am here because this is an important project, not just for HK, but the region and the world. In fact it is a massive undertaking and commitment, both challenging and with limitless potential.
- Unlike similar cultural projects in the rest of the world where money has to be raised to take them off the ground, HK has been fortunate in that we were given a substantial endowment to realize its cultural vision on a hugely valuable site that only has Sydney Harbour and the Sydney Opera House site as its peer.
- Having worked in Sydney Opera House and Southbank and now coming to HK, one of the features of the Foster Plan that excites me is the creation of a large park with not just greenery but vibrant cultural activities in the middle of the city. Another important feature is the design to put roads and facilities underground to free up 40 hectares of pedestrian space for public enjoyment and cultural use.
- We are now at the final stage of preparation for this great vision and it is my task to take it forward and my mission to see facilities springing up on the site a few years down the road.

II. Progress to date

- A lot of progress has been achieved to date. We now have a full management team in place.
- Project Delivery team has been working hard to prepare the development plan for submission to the Town Planning Board by around end of this year. We are now at the final stages of preparation to meet that target.
- Also busy working on Stage 3 Public Engagement exercise (PE3), the finale of the public engagement exercise for the planning of WKCD, for roll-out in autumn.
- On the staffing side, we now have 80 staff working in a new office, employing people prudently to match with the progress of the project.
- Since my arrival, I have discerned a strong message from the community, urging us to get the project going.

III. My immediate focus and priority

- Understand the complexities of the project and the fabric of the city.
- Lead PE3 and ensure our proposals could meet stakeholders' and the general public's aspirations, so that they would support us to get the project going.
- Build relationship with local arts and culture groups – listen to their hopes, concerns and aspirations.
- Eager to obtain short term tenancy for part of the site and to breathe life into it with community and performing arts activities and putting up temporary facilities for performances and visual arts displays.
- Devote efforts on sustainability issues to turn WCKD into a social, economic and environmentally dynamic model for Hong Kong and the region and to show our commitment to contribute to a sustainable future for our future generations.

- Information Technology will be another focus. WKCD has the potential of becoming a world leader for IT for similar undertaking as we have the opportunity of planning the District from scratch. To this end, an Information Communications Technology (ICT) Sub-committee tasked to study and make recommendation on ICT needs for the District has been set up.
- Education – another priority. Extensive educational programmes are undertaken by arts groups, community groups, schools, tertiary institutions. Our role would be to tap these existing resources and use WKCD as a platform to further enhance these programmes in a structured, strategic and co-ordinated way. Nearly all core arts and cultural facilities in the District will have supporting educational facilities.
- Work on a prudent financial strategy and will make every effort to ensure the most effective use of the endowment. Understand that members are interested in the financial arrangements for the project. Will focus on the financial issues with my colleagues Dr Chan and Dr Lam in the second part of this meeting.
- Happy to discuss any other aspect of the West Kowloon Project.

ENDS