

For information on
11 May 2012

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Cultural Exchanges with the Mainland and Other Places**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on Government's efforts in promoting cultural exchanges with the Mainland and other places.

Overview

2. Hong Kong is a vibrant cultural hub rooted in Chinese traditions and enriched by different cultures from the East and the West. As an international city at the heart of Asia, Hong Kong has built strong cultural links with the Mainland, Taiwan and other countries, and has actively engaged in different forms of cultural exchanges across a wide spectrum.

3. The Government is highly committed to promoting cultural cooperation and exchanges with different places. We have been establishing cultural cooperation frameworks and platforms with different places as well as collaborating with cultural organisations and institutions around the world in presenting cultural programmes in and outside Hong Kong. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) and other relevant parties are engaged in promoting such exchanges to further enrich the development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong.

Cultural Cooperation with the Mainland

4. We have been putting in a lot of effort in developing cultural exchanges with the Mainland. This includes establishing collaboration frameworks and platforms with the relevant Mainland authorities and other places in the Mainland, organising cultural exchange activities and cooperating performing arts and visual arts programmes and activities in collaboration with relevant organisations and arts groups of various parts of the Mainland.

5. We have been working closely with the Ministry of Culture of China (MoC) in promoting cultural cooperation with the Mainland. For instance, MoC and HAB, together with the relevant authority in Macao, jointly organised the visual arts exhibition of Hong Kong and Macao in Beijing in 2010. The Minister of Culture, Dr Cai Wu, attended the seventh Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum (ACCF) (please see also paragraph 21) organised by HAB in 2011 to share with the participants from Hong Kong and other parts of Asia the Mainland's experience on the protection of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Along with the seventh ACCF, a large scale cultural event "Genesis and Spirit: A Showcase of Intangible Cultural Heritage of China" was jointly presented by MoC and HAB, comprising an exhibition featuring the historical development and safeguarding measures of ICH in the Mainland and the safeguarding work in Hong Kong as well as related performances and a seminar on ICH. Both parties will join hands again in June 2012 in co-organising another major exhibition cum performance event "Genesis and Spirit: A Showcase of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Sichuan".

6. To collaborate more closely with the Mainland on the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage, HAB and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage signed the Agreement on Enhancing Exchange and Co-operation in the Area of Cultural Heritage in 2011. Under the framework of this agreement, we will take more active steps to bring in large-scale exhibitions from the Mainland and enhance liaison and exchanges between the professional personnel of the two sides.

7. LCSD has been collaborating closely with the Palace Museum and the National Museum of China respectively to enhance exchange and cooperation on exhibitions, professional training, researches, publications, etc. and will bring two mega exhibitions from the Mainland to Hong Kong later this year. “A Lofty Retreat from the Red Dust: The Secret Garden of Emperor Qianlong” Exhibition, jointly presented by LCSD and the Palace Museum, will be held from June to October 2012 at the Hong Kong Museum of Art. “The Majesty of All Under Heaven: The Eternal Realm of China’s First Emperor” Exhibition, jointly presented by LCSD and Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, will be held from July to November 2012 at the Hong Kong Museum of History. The former will feature 77 sets (95 pieces) of treasures from the Forbidden City in Beijing, revealing to the public the Garden which Emperor Qianlong built specifically for his enjoyment after retirement. The latter will feature 120 sets of relics including terra cotta figurines, introducing the history and culture of the Qin dynasty, which was an epoch-making era in Chinese history witnessing the unification of China.

Cultural Cooperation of the Greater Pearl River Delta

8. To enhance cultural cooperation of the Greater Pearl River Delta (GPRD), Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have established a cultural cooperation platform for the three sides to hold meetings, implement and follow up on the collaboration initiatives. The 13th GPRD Cultural Co-operation Meeting was just held in Hong Kong this April. At the meeting, the three places agreed on a number of new initiatives in the areas of performing arts, exhibitions, library services, cultural information and ticketing services, ICH preservation as well as the creative industries.

9. Under the umbrella of the GPRD Cultural Co-operation Meeting, a number of major cultural events have been held in recent years. For example, the “In Search of the Ideal Nation – Dr Sun Yat-sen and Guangzhou after the 1911 Revolution” Exhibition, jointly presented by LCSD, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference Guangzhou Committee, and the Administration of Culture, Press, Publication, Radio and Television of Guangzhou Municipality, was held at the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum in Hong Kong from September 2011 to March 2012. Another major exhibition “Maritime Porcelain Road -

Relics from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Museums” will be staged at the Macao Museum from May to October 2012, at the Guangdong Provincial Museum from November 2012 to June 2013, and at the Hong Kong Museum of Art from July 2013 to February 2014. The exhibition will present the importance of the Chinese export ceramics and its impact on South-east Asia, Middle East and Europe.

10. On performing arts, Cantonese opera artists from the three places in GPRD performed in “A Showcase of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Cantonese Opera Masters” at Sha Tin Town Hall in December 2011. Jointly presented by the Department of Culture of Guangdong Province, HAB and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the performance attracted a full-house audience. Given the enthusiastic response, the three places have agreed to stage the event once every two years starting from 2013. Besides, the annual “Cantonese Opera Day” will celebrate its 10th anniversary in November 2012 in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to further enhance the appreciation of Cantonese opera among the general public of the three places. Suggestion was also made for sharing the initial programme plan of both the International Arts Carnival and the autumn thematic arts festival organised by LCSD to our counterparts in Guangdong and Macao in February and May each year for consideration of possible touring programme engagement.

11. Furthermore, the GPRD Cultural Information Website (www.prdculture.org) was officially commissioned in 2009 to facilitate prompt dissemination of information on cultural activities in the region. The website provides a more effective means to foster cultural exchange and collaboration among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. As agreed in the GPRD Cultural Co-operation Meeting this April, the three places will further enrich the content of the website to enhance the effectiveness of this platform in disseminating cultural information.

12. On library services, the LCSD Public Libraries and the Shenzhen Library continues to hold creative writing competitions to celebrate the “4.23 World Book Day”. In 2011, winning entries of the competitions were displayed in libraries of both cities. Such collaborative programme is to be further extended to the Sun Yat-Sen

Library of Guangdong Province and Macao Central Library. In addition, a major library exhibition about “Thirteen Hongs of Guangzhou”, jointly organised with the Sun Yat-Sen Library of Guangdong Province, is being planned to be held at the Hong Kong Central Library in January / February 2013.

Cultural Exchanges with Other Provinces and Municipalities

13. Apart from the above, we also actively promote cultural exchanges with other provinces and municipalities in the Mainland. For example, we recently signed an agreement on cultural exchange and co-operation with Shanghai. Under the agreement, both sides agreed to, amongst other things, establish a communication mechanism for the discussion and formulation of implementation plans to further strengthen cultural cooperation and exchange, and proactively encourage arts and cultural research institutes to establish cooperation mechanisms for academic research, teaching personnel exchange and nurturing of talents. We will continue to foster cultural exchange and cooperation with other provinces and municipalities and put in place suitable collaboration frameworks when the opportunities arise.

Other Major Cultural Exchange Activities Organised / Supported by LCSD

14. At the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, LCSD coordinated the participation of over 1 200 artists from local arts groups which presented 20 performing arts programmes and two visual art exhibitions carrying the theme “Creativity, Connectivity and Vibrancy”. The performing arts programmes comprised Cantonese opera, Chinese and Western music, dance, chamber opera and drama, while the exhibitions featured works of ink art and contemporary art in various media. The variety of art forms from some of Hong Kong’s most well-known and respected cultural talents, as well as the next generation of young and emerging stars, highlighted the uniqueness of Hong Kong’s cultural scene and provided a cultural exchange platform for artists in Hong Kong and the Mainland. As the largest cultural extravaganza LCSD has ever staged outside Hong Kong, it provided an excellent opportunity to showcase to the international audience the richness and diversity of Hong Kong’s cultural

and creative talents.

15. Apart from outbound cultural exchanges, LCSD also invites outstanding Mainland performing arts groups and artists to perform in our cultural programmes and festivals regularly. Recent examples include dance performances “Ballet Gala”, “The Red Detachment of Women” and “Swan Lake” by the National Ballet of China as the opening programme of the World Cultures Festival 2011 and its closing performances of a selection of yueju favourites by the Shanghai Yueju Opera House, as well as the return to the Chinese Opera Festival of the renowned Suzhou Kunqu Opera Theatre of Jiangsu Province to perform in the opening programme of the festival in 2012.

16. On visual arts, LCSD have been bringing various outstanding exhibitions from the Mainland to Hong Kong. For instance, the animated version of the “Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival” was brought to Hong Kong immediately after the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, which received overwhelming response from the public setting a number of ticket sales records for Hong Kong. Over 900 000 Hong Kong people and visitors were able to see the exhibit during the three-week exhibition period. From May to October 2012, LCSD will jointly present the “Imperishable Affection: The Art of Feng Zikai” Exhibition with the Zhejiang Provincial Museum. More than 200 exemplary works of Feng Zikai covering a wide range of subjects and created at different stages of his life will be showcased at the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

17. One of the major cultural exchange programmes of the LCSD Public Libraries with the Mainland in 2011-12 was the “Exhibition of Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China”, bringing in selected precious cultural relics in China’s long history for close access by the public to promote the Chinese civilisation and heritage.

Cultural Cooperation with Taiwan

18. We will continue to strengthen the promotion of cultural exchange between Hong Kong and Taiwan through the “Hong Kong–Taiwan Cultural Cooperation Committee” (HKTCCC), established under the “Hong Kong–Taiwan Economic and Cultural Cooperation and Promotion Council” in August 2010. The first Hong Kong – Taiwan Cultural Co-operation Forum was held by the HKTCCC and its Taiwan counterpart in May 2011 in Hong Kong. Both sides mapped out together an action agenda, setting out initiatives such as conducting regular visits to the other side; organising the Forum in the two places alternatively; fostering the organisation of thematic exchange projects such as large-scale performance and exhibitions; and promoting youth exchange. The HKTCCC is planning to organise a “Hong Kong Week” in Taipei in November / December 2012 to showcase Hong Kong’s arts and culture to the Taiwan audience, and introduce to them the cultural characteristics of Hong Kong and the latest developments of our creative industries.

19. Besides, Create Hong Kong of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau works with the creative industries in organising promotional activities to facilitate exchanges with their counterparts in Taiwan. For example, a delegation formed by Hong Kong designers attended the 2011 International Design Alliance Congress Taipei held in October 2011.

Cultural Cooperation with Other Places

Establishing Cultural Cooperation Frameworks

20. To enhance art and cultural cooperation with other places, we have established respective cultural cooperation frameworks, including the signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation (MoU), with various countries. So far, we have signed MoUs with 13 countries¹, the latest one with Russia in September 2011. Further to the

¹ These include Canada, Croatia, Egypt, France, Hungary, Italy, Israel, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam.

signing of MoU with Russia, there have been more opportunities for people in Hong Kong to experience Russia's unique and fascinating culture. One recent example is the "I Love Lyuba: Baby Mammoth of the Ice Age" Exhibition held in the International Financial Centre from April to May 2012, which displayed a well preserved baby mammoth Lyuba from the Ice Age on loan from the Shemanovsky Museum in Russia.

Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum

21. ACCF is one of the Government's key initiatives for fostering regional cultural cooperation. It has been well received by delegations from Asian countries and the Mainland. The seventh ACCF with the theme of "Intangible Cultural Heritage - Continuation and Enhancement" was held in October 2011. Cultural ministers and senior officials of 11 Asian countries came to Hong Kong to share their insights and experiences of supporting the continuation and enhancement of ICH.

Major Cultural Exchange Activities Organised / Supported by LCSD

22. To provide opportunities for local arts groups and artists to showcase their works to audience outside Hong Kong and provide arts sector and the general public with opportunities to appreciate works of overseas arts groups and artists, LCSD takes an active role in promoting cultural exchanges and cooperation with other places. LCSD presents diversified arts festivals featuring world-renowned visiting performing arts groups and artists throughout the year. Major annual arts festivals in Hong Kong include the International Arts Carnival, the thematic arts festivals of New Vision Arts Festival and World Cultures Festival as well as the LCSD-subsidised Hong Kong Arts Festival. In 2011, the fourth edition of the World Cultures Festival carried the theme of 'Enchanting Arts of Asia', showcasing the multi-faceted gems and beauty of Asian arts and cultures. 22 visiting and 72 local artists and arts groups presented more than 146 events, which attracted over 143 000 audience. The Hong Kong Arts Festival celebrated its 40th anniversary in early 2012, presenting 170 ticketed performances by over 1 500 artists from 54 performing groups all over the world including 12 world premieres / new works and 10 Asian premieres. The total audience number of the

festival exceeded 150 000.

23. The Music Office (MO) of LCSD organises youth cultural exchange programmes regularly. For example, MO sent its Youth Choir to participate in the 4th International Choral Festival “A Voyage of Songs” in Malaysia in 2009. Besides, MO has provided assistance to a number of youth music groups from Singapore by arranging exchange activities for them in Hong Kong over the past years. In July 2012, MO will arrange its Hong Kong Youth Strings to participate in the “Summa Cum Laude” International Youth Music Festival in Vienna and Prague.

24. Museums under LCSD have organised inbound exhibitions from overseas and outbound exhibitions to promote the arts and culture in Hong Kong. For inbound exhibitions, the “Albert Einstein (1879-1955)” Exhibition was held in 2011 at the Hong Kong Science Museum. Provided by Historisches Museum Bern, this exhibition introduced the life of Albert Einstein and his important theories through hundreds of objects, replicas, documents, animations and movies. Besides, the “Fantastic Creatures from the British Museum” Exhibition was held from January to April 2012 at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, featuring a dazzling array of some 170 artefacts of mythical creatures from all over the world, which included the dragon and phoenix of China, the unicorn and centaur in Western mythology, and the demigods of ancient Egypt and Greece. For outbound exhibitions, Hong Kong Museum of Art collaborated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York to jointly organise “The Art of Dissent in 17th Century China: Masterpieces of Ming Loyalist Art from the Chih Lo Lou Collection” Exhibition from September 2011 to January 2012 with the Chih Lo Lou Art Promotion Ltd, featuring more than 60 painting and calligraphy gems at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The “In the Mood for Cheongsam: Modernity & Singapore Women” Exhibition is staged from March to June 2012 at the National Museum of Singapore with exhibits on loan from the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Film Archives under LCSD.

25. LCSD has also been providing support to various Consulates / Consulate-Generals in Hong Kong to organise different types of cultural programmes. A notable example is LCSD’s long-time support to the

Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macau for its annual Le French May Arts Festival, which marks its 20th anniversary in 2012. As a Major Partner of the Le French May 2012, LCSD and the Consulate General will co-present the blockbuster exhibition “Picasso – Masterpieces from Musée National Picasso, Paris” from May to July at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. LCSD will also provide venue and ticketing sponsorship to both performing arts programmes and exhibitions of the festival. Another example is the outdoor carnival “Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances” organised by LCSD annually since 2001. In cooperation with Consulates / Consulate-Generals of the Asian countries, the carnival showcases traditional music and dance performances by Asian ethnics residing in Hong Kong. In 2011, the Carnival staged ethnic performances of eight Asian countries featuring more than 150 local Asian artists.

Initiatives Being Planned by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

26. To realise the vision of making the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) a world-class integrated arts and cultural hub, WKCDA has attached importance to promoting the project in the international arena and bringing in wisdom from around the world.

27. The arts and cultural facilities in WKCD are expected to be completed in phases starting from 2014/15. To dovetail with the commissioning of these facilities, WKCDA is keen to build international networks and partnerships in the interim period. Areas of interest include participation in international events, research and staff development and other capacity building programmes.

28. In the years ahead, WKCDA will actively showcase Hong Kong’s arts and culture and create a sense of presence in the global arts scene. One example is to take part in the Venice Biennale 2013 in collaboration with HKADC. WKCDA also strives to maintain on-going communication with foreign parties in related fields to explore cooperation opportunities.

29. A rich base of knowledge and skills of international standard is vital to the success of WKCD. Partnered with established institutions worldwide, WKCD will arrange for its staff to go on overseas study trips to learn about latest trends and practices, extend their networks and adapt foreign experience to the development of WKCD. Similarly, overseas training/attachment/research programmes will be launched to nurture artistic and administrative leaders of local arts groups, benefitting Hong Kong's arts and cultural development as a whole. On this front, WKCD and HKADC have jointly launched an "Overseas Training / Research Programme for Leaders from Local Arts Groups on Future Arts Development in Hong Kong".

30. To enable international interaction on issues pertaining to cultural development, WKCD intends to organise symposiums and forums on a regular basis. WKCD also supports local programmes involving overseas experts, such as the Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme in association with the Clore Fellowship Programme and the Cultural Leadership Summit organised by the Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association. These programmes and initiatives consolidate the foundation for sustainable cultural cooperation.

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

31. HKADC promotes Hong Kong's cultural exchange with the Mainland and overseas countries through various grant schemes and projects. In 2011-12, HKADC approved a total grant of about \$4.3 million under the Project Grant Scheme for supporting cultural exchange activities of arts groups or local artists. It also supports artists to engage in international exhibitions and arts festivals in the Mainland and beyond. For example, HKADC has participated in the Venice Biennale (Visual Arts) since 2001, and in 2012, HKADC will join hands with the Hong Kong Museum of Art to participate in the Liverpool Biennial in the United Kingdom, which is a major contemporary arts exhibition in Europe.

32. To develop professional skills of local arts administrators and their networks with overseas arts organisations, HAB has commissioned

HKADC to implement a pilot Cultural Internship Scheme since 2009-10 to sponsor local arts managers with leadership potential to participate in structured internship and training programmes in arts administration outside Hong Kong. So far, four programmes including the Clore Leadership Programme, the Sage Gateshead Internship, the Whitechapel Gallery Internship and the Japan Mori Art Museum Internship have been supported under the scheme.

33. HKADC also launched the Visual Artist-in-Residence Programme in 2009 to create opportunities of overseas exchange and further development for local visual artists. Under the programme, artists are sponsored to have short-term residency in an arts organisation in New York or in other places of their choice.

Arts Development Fund

34. HAB also administers the Arts Development Fund (ADF), which is a sub-fund under the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation, aiming at advancing cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and other places, promoting local arts and culture outside Hong Kong, and enhancing Hong Kong's international image. In 2011-12, 46 outbound cultural exchange projects have been funded with a total grant of \$3.17 million. The approved projects range from performing arts, visual arts to multi-disciplinary arts.

Major Performing Arts Groups

35. HAB provides annual subvention to nine major performing arts groups² to support their work, including participation in cultural exchange activities to showcase the arts and culture of Hong Kong. In 2010-11, the nine major performing arts groups participated in a total of 37 tours to the Mainland, Taiwan and overseas with a total 150 performances.

² The nine major performing arts groups are namely, 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 Company and Zuni Icosahedron.

Way Forward

36. We will continue to enhance our cultural exchange and cooperation with the Mainland and other countries to foster the development of the arts and culture in Hong Kong.

Home Affairs Bureau
May 2012