

9 November 2012

For information

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Cultural Work of the New-term Government**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the major cultural work of the new-term Government.

Cultural policy

2. Sharing the same language and same blood with the Mainland, Hong Kong, due to historical reasons, is a place where the east meets the west and has formed a unique culture of its own. Our vision is to turn Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis, where life is celebrated through cultural pursuit and creativity is a constant driver of progress in the community. Objectives pursued include providing opportunities for wide participation in culture and the arts, providing opportunities for those with potentials to develop their artistic talents, creating an environment conducive to the diversified and balanced development of culture and the arts, supporting the preservation and promotion of our traditional cultures while encouraging artistic creation and innovation, as well as developing Hong Kong into a prominent hub of cultural exchanges.

3. We observe a people-oriented principle. We foster the vibrancy and diversity of our cultures, and maintain our artistic freedom and enhance the protection of intellectual property. Adopting a holistic approach, we encourage all sectors of the society to be involved and seek to establish partnership among the Government, the business community and the cultural sector.

4. Some major initiatives implemented over the past years by the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) according to the above policy included: devoting resources to provide opportunities for public participation in culture and the arts, supporting the sustainable development of the arts groups, and backing individuals with potentials to develop their artistic talents; taking an active role in conserving intangible cultural heritage, promoting traditional cultures while encouraging artistic innovation; fostering cultural exchanges, and enhancing Hong Kong's position as a platform for cultural co-operation in the region.

Key work of the new-term Government

5. On top of the above, the new-term Government will enhance cultural development by optimising and increasing resources allocated for cultural purposes, entrenching culture and the arts in the community, encouraging participation of all sectors, as well as fostering external cultural exchanges and co-operation.

Optimising resources allocated for cultural purpose

6. We will optimise the resources allocated for cultural purpose, create an environment conducive to the diversified development of culture and the arts, and take a holistic approach to promote the development of all disciplines relating to culture and the arts. Specific initiatives to be introduced include:

(a) **Improving the funding mechanism for the major performing arts groups (MPAGs):**

We will continue to provide recurrent subvention to the MPAGs to develop quality programmes, strengthen audience building, cultivate artistic and administrative talents, and conduct cultural exchange activities. We have also launched a contestable funding pilot scheme earlier this year to encourage the MPAGs to implement new initiatives that will help promote their sustainable development. We will also improve the performance evaluation system of the MPAGs.

(b) **Supporting the development of small and medium arts groups:**

(i) We will continue to support the development of small and

medium arts groups and nurturing of budding artists through the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC). In 2011-12 alone, the HKADC subsidised over 330 arts groups or arts practitioners in 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 some \$25.42 million. The HKADC has also continued to implement a variety of projects with a view to identifying promising budding artists for all disciplines. This year, the HKADC has also launched some new initiatives. For example, it co-organised the Manhattan Hong Kong Music Festival with the Manhattan School of Music which introduced Hong Kong's talented musicians and excellent composition to the New York community. In co-operation with the Hong Kong Museum of Art, it also took part in the Liverpool Biennial for the first time, which showcased the unique creativity of Hong Kong artists. The HKADC will explore ways to improve the grant schemes for the small and medium arts groups (such as whether a three-year grant scheme should be introduced on top of the existing One-year/Two-year Grant Scheme), as well as other subsidy schemes and proactive projects.

- (ii) The HAB makes use of the annual investment returns (around \$60 million annually) generated from the Arts and Sports Development Fund (Arts Portion) to subsidise the long-term development of culture and the arts. Apart from granting an additional \$30 million to the HKADC, we have introduced the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS). Under the Scheme, around \$30 million is to be disbursed annually to support large scale and cross-year arts and cultural initiatives/activities, so as to enhance capacity development of promising arts groups and arts practitioners. We will consider advice given by the Advisory Committee on Arts Development (ACAD) and keep on enhancing the Scheme from time to time.
- (iii) In the 2011/12 financial year, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) hosted approximately 4 100 performances and activities, and the provision used in supporting the small and

medium arts groups was around \$98 million. Building on the existing arrangements, the LCSD will further enhance collaboration with the small and medium arts groups as well as individual arts practitioners. Through presenting/sponsoring year-round cultural presentations and arts festivals, enhancing the Venue Partnership Scheme, organising free cultural and entertainment activities, and strengthening audience building and arts education, we will provide them with resources and performance venues, encourage them to create, experiment, perform, share and conduct arts education activities, so that they may have a broad based development. Furthermore, we will identify emerging artists, provide them with a platform to work with and learn from established artists, and enable them to perform in LCSD and non-LCSD performance venues to gain professional experience.

(c) Nurturing talents:

- (i) The Government will provide additional funding to enable the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) to move from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate degree structure starting from the 2012/13 academic year. The number of its full-time equivalent students is expected to increase to 979 by 2016/17 as a result. In addition, we have earmarked \$444.8 million for the HKAPA's on-site campus expansion project. The works are expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2015.
- (ii) On nurturing arts administrators, the LCSD introduced the Arts Administrator and Museum Trainee Programmes this year for the second term (2012-2014). The number of training places has increased from 23 to 33. The LCSD also separately offers funding to 21 existing venue partners (arts groups) to take part in the Programme, with a view to cultivating administrative personnel to manage arts groups.
- (iii) The HKADC has also launched the Internship Schemes and the Cultural Internship Scheme, which respectively sponsors the

engagement of budding and promising art workers by arts groups to take up work attachments at local arts groups and overseas institutions.

(d) **Strengthening public cultural facilities and services:**

- (i) **The development of libraries:** We will continue to devote efforts to provide comprehensive library services, with a view to meeting the public's needs in pursuit of knowledge, information, lifelong learning and research. We will also actively strengthen the facilities and services of public libraries with the use of advanced technology.

In respect of the development of information infrastructure, a significant reform has recently been carried out to the computer system of Hong Kong Public Libraries. The new system is one of the largest library computer systems in the world. With its enhanced features, the new system is able to provide comprehensive automated library service for the public, including enhanced search function, more search options, book cover images shown in search results and option for readers to receive due date reminders from the system via email, etc. New services will be introduced at the second stage, now in full swing, which include: print management system, electronic reference service system, electronic resources management system, inter-library loan system, online electronic payment and management information system, etc. It is expected the whole project will be completed in 2013.

In addition, the Hong Kong Public Libraries has launched the pilot scheme on application of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in six libraries, offering more convenient self check-in and check-out services so as to reduce readers' waiting time for counter service. After completion of the review on this pilot scheme, we will conduct further study on full-scale application of the RFID technology to assess the feasibility of extending it to all public libraries.

(ii) **The development of museums:** The public museums of the LCSD has developed the first five-year Corporate Business Plan (2012-2017), setting forth new directions for museums and drawing up long-term strategies. With the measures developed by the three Museum Advisory Panels, the Business Plan aims at strengthening the public mission of museums and establishing a clear positioning for branding of the museums. In addition, we will continue to organise more large-scale exhibitions and apply new technology in presenting the exhibitions, with a view to attracting audience from different age groups and expanding the audience base. Individual museums have mapped out their Annual Plans in accordance with the Business Plan and implemented tasks in various areas. Major exhibitions to be organised by the LCSD in 2013 include the exhibitions of Andy Warhol: 15 Minutes Eternal, Hong Kong Contemporary Art Awards, The Eternal Tao: New Dimensions in Chinese Contemporary Art, The Wonders of Ancient Mesopotamia, The Splendors of Imperial Costume: Qing Court Attire, Russian Treasures from the Summer Palace of the Csars, and The Imperial Fabergé, etc., which exhibit Chinese and overseas cultural and art treasures, and showcase the talent of local artists.

(e) **Providing additional cultural venues and exploring ways to optimise the existing facilities:**

The new cultural facilities provided by the LCSD this year and the coming year include the Yau Ma Tei Theatre (with 300 seats and opened in July 2012) and the Ko Shan Theatre Annex Building (a medium theatre with 600 seats expected to be completed in 2013) which are dedicated venues for the development of Cantonese opera. Together with the existing facilities, the additional performance venues under planning/construction will provide more performing spaces for local artists.

The LCSD has been carrying out a conversion project at the former Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club (a Grade 2 historic building), located at Oil Street in North Point with a total area of 1 970 m². The building

is being converted into an art space and will open in mid-2013, providing a platform for training of visual arts talents and for artists and collaborators to meet up for artistic creation and exchanges.

In addition, the LCSD has been providing performing spaces for medium and small arts groups other than the performance venues operated by the LCSD, enabling these arts groups to build their audiences in the community. From 2009/10 to 2012/13, the LCSD has explored 17 alternative spaces for holding performances, including Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery, Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, Cattle Depot Artist Village, Nan Lian Garden, Black-box Theatre at the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, Jockey Club Auditorium and Chiang Chen Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon Walled City Park, and Tom Lee Academy Hall, etc. The LCSD will continue to identify other venues to support the performances of medium and small arts groups.

The Government has provided additional resources for HKADC since 2012/13 to identify appropriate premises for art spaces. These spaces will be leased to arts groups and arts workers at a concessionary rent for using as offices, workshops or rehearsal venues. The HKADC has set up a working group to follow up on the details of the plan.

(f) Strengthening the publicity and promotion of the arts:

The HKADC has rolled out the programme of promoting arts through mass media. For instance, the HKADC has worked with the Television Division of Radio Television Hong Kong to produce a series of culture and arts television programmes and special features. These programmes and features, which have been broadcasted through local free television channels, introduced the activities of arts groups and the works of local artists to audience, and enhanced the public's awareness and interest on the arts. We will actively work on the project of creating a cultural and arts channel so as to promote cultural and arts activities through multi-media channel.

Entrenching culture and the arts in the community

7. The following measures will be carried out in the community:

(a) **Cooperation with District Councils:**

Our aim is to enable the District Councils (DCs) to take up a much more active role in promotion of culture and the arts, with a view to promoting culture with a district flavour. Initiatives include supporting the HKADC in strengthening community cultural and arts activities, and encouraging more arts groups to organise and promote community arts programmes in the 18 districts. The Entertainment Office of the LCSD will continue to assist the 18 DCs in organising over 600 local free cultural and entertainment programmes in the districts per annum. In addition, the LCSD will provide professional advice and assistance in the other cultural and entertainment programmes planned and organised by the DCs, such as district arts festival and cultural activities that feature local characteristics of individual districts.

(b) **Enhancement of cultural and arts programmes implemented in the community and schools:**

The LCSD has been implementing “Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme” and “District Cantonese Opera Parade” at the district level. To further enhance the sustainability of community arts, the LCSD will encourage the art groups participating in the “Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme” to work out a community arts entrenchment programme. The LCSD will also continue to provide more targeted programmes and services for different communities, in particular the ethnic minorities, youngsters and elders, so as to meet the needs of neighbourhood communities. In addition, the LCSD will strengthen various arts education programmes at the school level to nurture students’ interest in the arts, for example, to continue organising programmes tailor-made for students, including the “School Culture Day Scheme”, “School Arts Amateur Scheme”, “Arts Experience Scheme for Senior Secondary Students”, “Let’s Enjoy Cantonese Opera in Bamboo Theatre” and “Performing Arts

Criticism Project for Senior Secondary Students”, etc. In the 2011/12 academic year, a total of 188 000 students participated in these programmes. In the 2012/13 academic year, the LCSD will introduce a “New Synergy Arts Animateur Pilot Scheme”, aiming at providing advanced training courses for students who have previously enrolled in composition or script-writing training programmes under the “School Arts Animateur Scheme” to further cultivate their knowledge in the arts.

(c) Mobilizing community efforts and encouraging different community groups to have cultural and arts experience:

In 2010/11, the LCSD organised the “Community Oral History Theatre Project - Sham Shui Po District”, which was a production fusing elderly theatre, verbal history and local lives. The script was based on the real lives of the elderly and the story was acted out by the elders themselves. Some of the elderly actors were hence given the chance to have a part in the award-winning movie “A Simple Life”. The LCSD continued this project in Kwun Tong District in 2011/12, and plans to extend this project to other districts in 2013/14.

With the objectives to enhance social harmony and cultural exchange, the LCSD will continue to organise the programmes of “Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances” and “Concert in the Park”, etc. Through the collaboration with the Consulate-Generals concerned, national residents from various Asian countries in Hong Kong will be invited to showcase their ethnic music, dances and other traditional arts.

In addition, the programme offices, public libraries, museums and Art Promotion Office of the LCSD will continue to work with different organisations to organise programmes for different communities to experience culture and arts. As for the promotion of intangible cultural heritage, the LCSD will work on the promotion of the four items inscribed on the national list of intangible cultural heritage (i.e. the Jiao-festival of Cheung Chau, the dragon boat water parade of Tai O, the fire dragon dance of Tai Hang and the Yu Lan Ghost Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community) jointly with the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the representative organisations concerned. The

libraries will continue to work with the NGOs in exploring the development of community libraries. The Art Promotion Office, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Heritage Museum and Hong Kong Museum of History will continue to cooperate with the organisations concerned, providing arts accessibility service and inclusion programmes for the disabled, so as to enable them to enjoy the fun of appreciating culture, arts and history.

(d) Promotion of public art in the community:

Over the years, the Art Promotion Office of the LCSD has been actively working with different organisations, including government departments, cultural and art groups and private organisations, etc., in promoting public art. The programmes organised include Artists in the Neighbourhood Scheme, Public Art Project – Tamar and Art@Government Buildings, placing public art works at government buildings and public facilities; Park Déco Scheme and ArtAlive@Park, injecting art elements into more public spaces in Hong Kong and bringing art to the community. The LCSD is about to launch the new Art@Government Buildings programme, so as to bring art elements to more government buildings. Also, the LCSD has partnered with the MTR Corporation to call for artwork proposals for the new railway lines so as to provide a more aesthetic environment for passengers.

(e) Encouraging cultural volunteer work:

It is hoped that people who are zealous in culture and arts can participate in different types of cultural volunteer work (e.g. docent, promoting/teaching culture and arts, etc.) after work/school. To promote the public awareness of conservation, the Conservation Office of the LCSD recruits conservation volunteers every year to help with a variety of conservation projects. Also, the LCSD will recruit volunteers through Agency for Voluntary Service, providing support for the large-scale outdoor shows (such as Cantonese Opera Day and Dance Day) and other audience building programmes, etc. In addition, the Hong Kong Public Libraries offers training for organisations/groups (and their members) participating in the Reading Ambassador Programmes in the community, enabling them to assist in

promotion of community reading and library service.

(f) **Promoting arts of the underprivileged**

The LCSD frequently organises/sponsors various performing arts programmes that facilitate the integration of the disabled in the society. For example, Theatre of the Silence was invited to stage drama performances in 2009, 2011 and 2012, as well as taking part in the 2011 “Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme”, while the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong (ADAHK) participated in the 2008 and 2010 “Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme”. The LCSD’s Art Promotion Office has also jointly organised “ArtAlive@Park 2012 - Joyful Dance Fusion” with ADAHK, inviting artists with disabilities to perform different types of dances and music in parks under the guidance of an artistic director. The LCSD is now planning to introduce a pilot programme to offer sign language translation for suitable dramas in 2013/14. Meanwhile, the libraries are also actively exploring suitable extension activities, such as seminars and exhibitions, to facilitate the integration of the persons with disabilities in the society.

(g) **Further promoting the reading culture**

The major and district libraries of LCSD organise reading promotion programmes every year under the sponsorship of 18 DCs. Through active cooperation with the DCs, non-profit organisations and cultural groups in each district, the libraries organise events of various types, including storytelling sessions, thematic seminars and exhibitions, to develop closer partnerships. It is hoped that citizens of different age, gender and ethnic groups in the neighbourhood may enhance their understanding in and usage of the public library services through participation in activities, and eventually cultivate an interest in reading among residents that will spread the reading culture and foster a habit of lifelong learning.

Encouraging Community-wide Participation

8. We have started introducing the matching grant model that matches community sponsorship with Government funding into the arts and cultural arena. Among these are the Springboard Grants under the newly launched Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS), which offers matching grants to arts groups to enhance their capacity development and encourage various sectors and enterprises in society to sponsor the arts and culture. We will also study policies and measures to attract social resources to arts and cultural activities, such as facility naming regimes, scholarships for further studies, recruitment of artists, and so forth.

9. Moreover, we will encourage launching an assortment of arts festivals of different themes by the Government and the public throughout the year with a view to providing a variety of cultural programmes to the 7 million Hong Kong citizens and over 30 million visitors to Hong Kong each year, and showcasing Hong Kong's essence as an international metropolis. We will also continue to support the Hong Kong Arts Festival and other thematic arts festivals organised by the LCSD, such as the annual "Chinese Opera Festival" and "International Arts Carnival", and the biennial "New Vision Arts Festival" and "World Cultures Arts Festival Series".

Enhancing Exchanges and Cooperation with Other Regions

10. So far, we have signed Memoranda of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation with 13 countries. In the future, we will further strengthen cultural cooperation with other countries and neighbouring regions, especially Mainland China and Taiwan, as well as cultural exchanges and cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. We will promote overseas performances of Hong Kong cultural and performing arts groups, and join in the effort to bring Chinese culture to the international stage. The 8th Asian Cultural Co-operation Forum will be held in Hong Kong next year, offering a platform for senior cultural officials across Asia to exchange their views on specific cultural issues. The "Hong Kong Week 2012" will be held in Taipei from 23 November to 2 December this year, presenting some of the best productions and performances of Hong Kong to the Taiwan audience. Themed on culture and creativity, the 10-day "Hong Kong Week 2012" will present eight different types of arts programmes with 19 performances and an arts and cultural

seminar, actively promoting cultural exchanges between Taiwan and Hong Kong.

11. Meanwhile, through the “World Cultures Arts Festival Series”, the LCSD will partner with the consulates of relevant countries and regions on specific themes in conducting in-depth and wide-ranging cultural exchanges, so as to give local artists and the public more exposure to different cultures. In 2013, the festival will be themed on Eastern European arts and it will facilitate exchanges and sharing between artists of Hong Kong and the respective countries.

12. We will also step up cultural cooperation with Guangdong Province and Macao. Over the past years, through the sharing of cultural resources, we have opened up more opportunities for performing artists as well as strengthened the influence and competitiveness of the cultural industries of the Greater Pearl River Delta in the Mainland and beyond. As such, we have consolidated our respective advantages on various aspects such as performing arts, museum and heritage, cultural information, libraries, the preservation and development of Cantonese Opera, cultural and creative industries, and so forth. In the future, cultural cooperation between the three places will focus on three areas, namely co-organising more outstanding performing arts programmes; strengthening the network of public cultural service systems; and developing a healthy and vibrant Internet culture. For example, we will further refine the mode of cooperation for staging more selected touring performances in the three places. In addition, to enhance cultural cooperation between museums of the three places, we have jointly organised the exhibition “Maritime Procelain Road – Relics from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Museums”, which will be rotated in the three places from 2012 to 2014.

13. In the meantime, Hong Kong Public Libraries, Macao Central Library, Shenzhen Library and Sun Yat-Sen Library of Guangdong Province have jointly established links to the websites of Pearl River Delta Libraries News Express and Pearl River Delta Libraries Internet Reference Enquiry Service, as well as setting up the database enquiry service of Pearl River Delta Library Catalogue. These services give library users of the three places access to reference enquiry services and catalogues of libraries in the three places through the catalogue terminals and hyperlinks on the websites of local libraries. Looking ahead, libraries of the three places will strengthen

cooperation on library service development. Moreover, the LCSD and Sun Yat-Sen Library of Guangdong Province are planning on a library exhibition about “Thirteen Hongs of Guangzhou”, which will be held at the Hong Kong Central Library in January 2013.

14. Taking into account the creative features of various arts and cultural areas, we will facilitate more exchanges to bolster Hong Kong’s cultural publicity outside the city in general and promote the cultural brand of Hong Kong. As for performing arts, the LCSD will bolster exchanges with major arts festivals and venues in the Mainland regarding programme information, such as overseas arts groups’ plans on visits to the Mainland and Hong Kong, so as to utilise resources more effectively.

West Kowloon Cultural District Project

15. To realise the vision of making the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) a world-class integrated arts and cultural hub, we will continue to facilitate the work of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) and provide the necessary support, with a view to completing the Phase 1 arts and cultural facilities of WKCD as soon as possible for the enjoyment of the public and visitors.

16. The statutory planning process of the WKCD project has reached an advanced stage. In the meantime, WKCDA is also embarking on design competitions for various arts and cultural facilities, so that construction works can start as soon as possible upon completion of the statutory planning process. Among these, the design competitions for Xiqu Centre and M+ have already been launched. WKCDA plans to launch the design competition for Arts Pavilion next year.

17. Prior to the commissioning of the Phase 1 arts and cultural facilities, WKCDA will organise a series of arts and cultural programmes and activities in collaboration with arts groups, educational institutions and local communities to build audiences and groom local arts talents for the integration of cultural software and hardware.

18. In addition, WKCDA will continue to promote the project in the international arena, to bring in wisdom from around the world and to attract

talents. WKCDA will also strive to establish international networks and partnerships as well as to explore cooperation opportunities.

Conclusion

19. Building on the past and looking ahead, we will continue to devote resources under the abovementioned policy directions and measures to push for arts and cultural development, with a view to enhancing our cultural atmosphere, improving the quality of life among the public, and making Hong Kong a cultural metropolis where the East and the West meet and merge.

Home Affairs Bureau

November 2012