

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2690/07-08
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 14 March 2008, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Hon TAM Heung-man
- Members absent** : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Item III
Home Affairs Bureau

Mr Donald TONG Chi-keung
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Miss Christine CHOW Kam-yuk
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic
Affairs)2

Education Bureau

Dr Catherine CHAN Ka-ki
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development)

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau

Mrs Elina CHAN Ting-ting
Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and
Mainland Affairs (1)

Mr Victor NG Hon-wing
Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and
Mainland Affairs (5)

Item IV

Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Esther LEUNG
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3)

Miss Polly KWOK
Principal Assistant Secretary (Culture)2

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr CHUNG Ling-hoi
Deputy Director of Leisure & Cultural
Services (Culture)

Ms Mandy TONG
Chief Manager (Cultural Presentations)

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Mr Louis YU
Chief Executive

Clerk in attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Senior Council Secretary (2)2

Ms Anna CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2)2

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I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1147/07-08(01), CB(2)1325/07-08(01) and (02)]

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last regular meeting -

- (a) e-mail sent by a member of the public commenting on the proposed relocation of Hong Kong Maritime Museum and the Administration's response [LC Paper No. CB(2)1147/07-08(01) and CB(2)1280/07-08(01)];
- (b) information paper on "Tseung Kwan O Complex in Area 44, Tseung Kwan O" [LC Paper No. CB(2)1325/07-08(01)]; and
- (c) information paper on "Reprovisioning of Pak Tin Public Library, Sham Shui Po"[LC Paper No. CB(2)1325/07-08(02)].

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1310/07-08]

2. Members agreed to discuss the redevelopment of the Hong Kong Sports Institute at the next regular meeting scheduled for Friday, 11 April 2008, at 10:45 am.

3. Members also agreed that, as the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) would not be available to attend the next regular meeting, the subject of "Strengthening the software and humanware for culture and the arts" originally scheduled to be discussed at that meeting would be deferred to the regular meeting in May.

III. National education and human rights education

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1310/07-08 (01) and (02)]

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4. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) (DSHA(1)), Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development) (PAS(CD)), and Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (5) (PASCMA(5)) briefed members on the Administration's work on national education and human rights education of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), the Education Bureau (EDB) and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) respectively as detailed in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)1310/07-08 (01)]. Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (1) (PASCMA(1)) further briefed members on the implementation of Basic Law education by CMAB.

Discussion

Administration's approach to promotion of national education

5. Miss TAM Heung-man considered that, except the television announcements in the public interest (TV API) series on "Our Home Our Country", few people could remember what other programmes related to national education had been implemented by the Administration. Miss TAM said that, while agreeing to the need for strengthening national education, the content of national education should not simply be imposing national values and eulogies of the country. She, however, considered that the content of the TV API series under reference was a case in point. She said that the Administration should not make use of the implementation of national education for the purpose of political propaganda. She further asked whether the Administration had drawn up benchmarks for evaluation of the effectiveness of its implementation of national education and what policy goals were intended to be achieved through national education.

6. DSHA(1) explained that, in implementing national education, the Administration sought to enhance general understanding of the Mainland. He said that, other than the TV API series under reference, the Administration had organised a wide range of activities and programmes to promote national education. He said that, as some people in Hong Kong, especially the younger generation, were not very familiar with the Mainland, the Administration had sponsored 169 projects involving study tours to the Mainland for the youth in 2007-2008 aiming to promote exchanges between young people in Hong Kong and on the Mainland, and to foster a stronger sense of national identity among them. He stressed that there was no hard-selling of any political ideology and there were no specific requirements regarding the organisations to be visited.

7. PAS(CD) also said that there was no hard-selling in EDB's approach to national education. She explained that national education related closely to human rights education as the former also embedded concepts of rights and duty. She explained that the approach to national education adopted by schools was informative and aimed to develop students' critical thinking skills.

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8. Ms Emily LAU requested the Administration to provide textbooks and school syllabus that illustrated the above approach adopted by the Administration and schools as well as information on the study tours and youth exchange programmes for members' reference.

9. DSHA(1) informed members that, based on the findings of a survey conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2007 to gauge the public's opinions on the TV API series on "Our Home Our Country", the majority of respondents had indicated that they liked the series. He agreed to provide the findings of the survey for members' reference.

(Post-meeting note: the Administration has provided the full survey report including an executive summary of the findings as well as information on the study tours and youth exchange programmes sponsored by HAB which were issued vide LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1460/07-08(01) and CB(2)1537/07-08(01) respectively.)

10. Referring to paragraph 3 of the Administration's paper, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern that the Administration seemed to have adopted a selective approach in providing learning and teaching resources that only capitalised on contemporary achievements of the Mainland, such as "thirty years of gaige kaifang (改革開放三十年)", space development, 2008 Olympic Games, etc. He considered that learning and teaching resources on the first 30 years after the establishment of the People's Republic of China should also be provided, as this period of history explained the background to China's reform and opening-up and allowed students to have a full picture of the historical developments of China. He added that the Administration should not evade touching on historical events such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Miss CHAN Yuen-han also considered that the Administration should present the facts of history to students and must not adopt a biased position in its national education work.

11. PAS(CD) explained that the current year was the 30th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up. Thus, the Administration had provided learning and teaching resources that capitalised on contemporary achievements of the Mainland. She pointed out that the secondary school History syllabus covered up to the year of 2000 and the historical events mentioned by Mr CHEUNG were within the syllabus. She added that, the Liberal Studies curriculum for secondary students included over 50 core hours on studies about Hong Kong, China and the world in order to widen students' horizon and to enhance their appreciation of different cultures and viewpoints.

12. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that the content of the learning and teaching resources for promotion of national education should not be designed entirely by government officials. He suggested that representatives from non-

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government organisations should be invited to participate in the design and production work so as to ensure a more balanced approach would be adopted. PAS(CD) responded that the producers of the learning and teaching resources were often the professional organisations or academics teaching in universities.

13. The Chairman said that the approach to national education should be positive and aim to promote a person's love for his homeland rather than building up hatred against it. She considered that national identity should be built on the basis of love for the Chinese race and the country as well as national pride. She suggested that the Administration should conduct studies to understand what areas of knowledge about China that people lacked and enhance people's knowledge in those specific areas.

14. PAS(CD) reiterated that the approach to national education in schools was a balanced approach, emphasising the development of students' critical thinking skills as well as enhancing their appreciation of the achievements of China and its efforts made. DSHA(1) said that the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE) had implemented various programmes to enhance general understanding of China, to strengthen the sense of national identity, and to foster the sense of belonging.

Importance of heritage conservation to promotion of national education

15. Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that some historical relics in Hong Kong were monuments reminding people of certain historical events. She, however, failed to see that the Administration had made adequate efforts in preserving important historical heritage, such as the Kowloon Walled City and Nga Tsin Wai Village. She further said that the Mass Transit Railway was going to demolish three graded heritage items in Diamond Hill, despite the fact that these heritage items were related to the history of Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in the 1940s.

16. DSHA(1) responded that the Development Bureau (DEVB) had been taking active measures to enhance heritage conservation. He added that HAB and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), which were responsible for the provision and management of public museums, had been strengthening museum collections of historical significance. Miss CHAN requested HAB to relay her concerns to DEVB and provide information on the efforts made by DEVB in preserving heritage which could help build up people's sense of cultural identity and enhance understanding of past history

The right to return to one's hometown

17. Ms Emily LAU said that she agreed with the former SHA who had once said that a person's love for his country should originate from his heart and not to be forced upon. She considered that the Administration, instead of funding

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heavily publicity programmes to promote national education, should first understand why Hong Kong people in general did not have a strong sense of national pride. She also called on the Administration to assist in resolving the issue of the Central Government's refusal to issue the Home Visit Permit to some people in Hong Kong without reasons. She emphasised that it was the right of a Chinese national to travel freely to and from the Mainland. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed support for her suggestion.

Display of the national flag and singing of the national anthem

18. Referring to paragraph 14(c) of the Administration's paper, Mr WONG Ting-kwong said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) supported increasing opportunities for more uniformed groups to participate in the pilot scheme for flag-raising at the Golden Bauhinia Square regularly.

19. Mr WONG Ting-kwong further said that, when he travelled overseas such as in the United States of America, he had observed that the display of national flags and singing of the national anthem during special occasions were much more common than in Hong Kong. He also recalled that, before the Reunification, the British national flag had been flown in all government schools everyday whereas, after 1997, schools were not required to do the same and some schools only raised the flag of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. He noted that the Administration was only appealing to schools to raise the national flag. He asked whether such an approach was effective.

20. PAS(CD) said that, according to the latest survey, it was estimated that the number of schools which raised the national flag on important days, such as the National Day and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day, had increased from less than 50% in 2003 to 80% in 2007. Mr WONG Ting-kwong, however, pointed out that these schools were not making the same arrangements before 1997, i.e. to have the national flag flown everyday. He noted that these schools only conducted flag-raising ceremonies undertaken by scouts on important days. The Chairman said that the survey showed that there were still 20% of schools which did not even conduct flag-raising ceremonies, and few schools had the national flag flown everyday. She asked whether the Administration had tried to understand the reasons behind and what would be done to encourage more schools to participate.

21. PAS(CD) said that, only government schools, which made up about 10% of schools in Hong Kong, had the national flags flown everyday before 1997. She said that the Administration would continue to make sustained efforts in appealing to schools to raise the national flag more frequently, particularly, on special occasions and important days. She further said that a minority of schools were unable to install the flag masts because of physical constraints such as the small size of schools or lack of necessary facilities. She

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said that EDB would provide assistance to these schools as far as possible.

22. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked whether the Administration had a picture of how many people in Hong Kong who were familiar with the national anthem and knew how to sing it. He suggested that the Administration should organise activities, such as national anthem singing competitions, to promote the national anthem. DSHA(1) responded that EDB had been working on the promotion of the national anthem in schools, whereas CPCE had produced publicity materials to promote understanding of the national flag, national emblem and national anthem for distribution to the public. He pointed out that the TV API series on "Our Home Our Country" had succeeded in promoting the national anthem to people in Hong Kong, and the playing and singing of the national anthem was now bound to be included in any activities organised by CPCE and uniformed groups. DSHA(1) added that the Administration would follow up on the promotion of the national anthem with CPCE.

Administration's approach to promotion of human rights education

23. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that, while emphasis was put on the promotion of the Basic Law in the implementation of national education, he failed to see the same emphasis was put on the promotion of general awareness of the international human rights treaties applicable to Hong Kong as well as the existing anti-discrimination ordinances and the proposed racial discrimination legislation. He considered that such work was also important in human rights education and should not be neglected.

Survey on human rights awareness among the people in Hong Kong

24. Referring to SHA's reply (LC Paper No. CB(2)1310/07-08(02)) to a question on human rights education at the Council meeting on 9 January 2008, Ms Emily LAU asked whether there was still a plan to conduct the public perception survey on human rights, and which party would take over the work of the human rights education working group under CPCE after disbandment of this working group.

25. DSHA(1) responded that CPCE had conducted a detailed discussion in December 2007 and, having regard to the restructuring of the policy bureaux and the need to streamline CPCE's existing structure, decided to assign the work on human rights education to the CPCE Publicity Subcommittee and to disband the human rights education working group. He further said that CPCE had already decided to terminate the public perception survey on human rights having regard to the transfer of the policy portfolio on human rights to CMAB, and the decision had been conveyed to the University of Hong Kong that had originally been commissioned to conduct the survey.

Funding allocation for national education and human rights education

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26. Miss TAM Heung-man and Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that implementation of national education and human rights education should be given equal importance. They expressed concern about whether the allocation of funding resources to these two areas of work was balanced or whether the Administration was being preferential against human rights education.

27. DSHA(1) responded that HAB currently allocated an annual provision of about \$10 million for implementing various national education initiatives. He said that HAB also worked closely with CPCE in promoting civic education which covered a wide range of subjects including human rights education. He informed members that, CPCE in the previous year had allocated some \$100,000 to support human rights promotional activities. In 2008-2009, CPCE had also approved a funding allocation of \$300,000 to eight publicity schemes for the promotion of human rights.

28. PAS(CD) said that, while it was mentioned in the Administration's paper that EDB was setting aside an annual provision of about \$38 million for implementing national education initiatives, the \$38 million covered funding for both national education and human rights education initiatives and it was difficult to provide a breakdown on the two areas. PASCMA(5) said that CMAB had spent about \$10 million in the previous year on implementation of human rights educational initiatives.

29. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern about whether there was duplication of efforts as the Administration's work on national education and human rights education was shared amongst three policy bureaux. DSHA(1) explained that the three bureaux had different emphases in their respective scopes of work. For example, EDB was responsible for the relevant promotional work in schools whereas HAB targeted the community including youth groups and community groups in its promotional work.

Administration's approach to implementation of Basic Law education

30. Miss TAM Heung-man criticised the Administration for devoting a large amount of funding each year to the promotion of the Basic Law as she noted that few overseas places did so in promoting their constitutions. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong criticised the official song for the promotion of the Basic Law for being hard-selling and the lyrics of the song were poorly written. He suggested that the Administration should change it for a better one. Miss TAM added that the Administration should not just rely on pop song singers to appeal to the public for their support for the Basic Law.

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31. PASCMA(1) said that CMAB would continue to organise different publicity and public education programmes for promotion of the Basic Law in the community. She said that the Administration did not simply rely on pop song singers to promote the Basic Law but had organised various kinds of activities, including seminars and quiz shows on the radio, which emphasised a more interactive approach. DSHA(1) added that CPCE had recently organised, e.g. short film competitions for participation by students and the public to promote the Basic Law in the community. He pointed out that, as the Basic Law was related to protection of the rights of an individual, the Administration was obliged to promote understanding of the Basic Law. As regards Mr CHEUNG's comments on the official song, PASCMA(1) said that it would be conveyed to the Administration for consideration.

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IV. The Promotion of Cantonese opera and other Xiqu
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1310/07-08 (03)]

32. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3) (DSHA(3)) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper setting out the Administration's efforts in the promotion of Cantonese Opera and other Chinese Xiqu.

Discussion

33. Referring to paragraph 13 of the Administration's paper, Mr WONG Ting-kwong considered that the nurturing of talents should best start from a young age. Noting that the entry qualifications for courses on Cantonese Opera offered at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts included completion of Form five secondary school studies, Mr WONG asked the Administration whether this would hinder the training of Cantonese Opera professionals. He also asked whether the Administration would enhance training opportunities for script-writers, composers and musicians in the field of Cantonese Opera in order to promote the development of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong.

34. DSHA(3) said that parents in Hong Kong were not keen about the idea of arranging their children to undertake formal professional training in Cantonese Opera at a young age. She, however, pointed out that there were ample opportunities provided for students to get to know and learn Cantonese opera and other Xiqu at school, and HAB would explore in collaboration with EDB the feasibility of enhancing such opportunities. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (CE/HKADC) informed members that HKADC had since 2005 sponsored educational programmes for promotion of Xiqu in schools. In 2007-2008, \$0.85 million would be spent on such work. In addition, \$1 million had been applied from the Arts and Sport Development Fund to provide opportunities for budding artists to stage new productions of Cantonese Opera in 2008-2009 with a view to nurturing new talents, e.g. script-writers and composers, in this field.

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35. Referring to paragraph 18 of the Administration's paper, Ms Emily LAU asked about the guided tours organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) for visitors to enjoy Cantonese Opera performances and whether these performances were well received by visitors.

36. Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Culture) (DDLCS(C)) said that, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum (HKHM) organized Cantonese opera performances every Saturday in collaboration with HKTB for visitors as well as locals. The audience were also shown to the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall in HKHM where heritage items related to Chinese opera were displayed on a regular basis. In addition, HKHM organised from time to time thematic exhibitions of artifacts related to Cantonese opera. DDLCS(C) said that LCSD also promoted other Chinese Xiqu to visitors by making English and Chinese surtitles available in most of the Xiqu performances organised by the Department in order to attract more local and overseas audience. Ms LAU considered that all these programmes would also be appealing to locals and she supported promotion of these programmes to locals as well.

37. DSHA(3) informed members that the Tourism Commission and HKTB were collaborating to launch a publicity programme overseas to publicise the current and coming performances by local performance organisations including Chinese opera troupes in order to facilitate advance purchase of tickets by visitors planning to travel to Hong Kong.

38. Ms Emily LAU asked whether the Sunbeam Theatre would be demolished soon and, if so, what measures would be taken to address concern about shortage of performance venues for Cantonese Opera.

39. DSHA(3) responded that, according to available information, the private owner of the Sunbeam Theatre might decide to close down the theatre in 2009. She said that, while the issue would be resolved in the long term by the provision of a Xiqu Centre in the West Kowloon Cultural District as a dedicated permanent venue for the Cantonese Opera sector and other Chinese Xiqu, the transitional arrangements to be taken before completion of construction of this Xiqu Centre would include the construction of an Annex Building for the Ko Shan Theatre, inclusion of the Cantonese Opera sector as an important "venue partner" of LCSD, and conversion of Yau Ma Tei Theatre and Red Brick Building into a Xiqu Activity Centre as detailed in the Administration's paper.

40. Noting that the conversion project and construction of an Annex Building for Ko Shan Theatre were scheduled for completion in 2011 and 2012 respectively whereas the Sunbeam Theatre might be demolished in 2009, Ms Emily LAU asked what would be done to address the venue shortage in the interim.

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41. DSHA(3) explained that the Administration would actively encourage the Cantonese Opera sector to take part in the LCSD's Venue Partnership Scheme such that Cantonese Opera performances and related activities could take place mainly at a suitable LCSD venue, such as Sha Tin Town Hall, in the next few years. She said that applications under the scheme were being processed and the results would be announced by mid-2008. DDLCS(C) supplemented that, if the Sunbeam Theatre were to be closed down in 2009, the existing Ko Shan Theatre which had a seating capacity of 1 000 could be used to stage more Cantonese Opera performances. Besides, the Administration would reserve slots of some major venues, such as the City Hall, Hong Kong Cultural Centre and Kwai Tsing Theatre, around the Chinese New Year and in other periods during which more Cantonese Opera performances could be staged by Cantonese Opera troupes.

42. The Chairman said that she and Miss CHAN Yuen-han, who had left the meeting, shared the same concern over the shortage of venues in Tin Shui Wai, Tuen Mun, Kowloon East and the Hong Kong Island for staging of Cantonese Opera performances, as such venues were mostly located in West and Central Kowloon.

43 The Chairman further expressed concern about the inadequate funding allocated to the work of promotion of Cantonese Opera and other Xiqu. She cited the examples that, since the establishment of the Cantonese Opera Development Fund, it had only approved about \$6 million to sponsor over 110 productions, and the resources for the Xiqu Art Form Group (including Cantonese Opera) in 2007-2008 stood for only 10% (or \$7 million) of the total allocation among the ten art form groups supported by HKADC. The Chairman said that even the financial provision of HKADC for the development of Xiqu (including Cantonese Opera) in 2008-2009 would be over \$8.8 million as set out in the Administration's paper, the amount was still very inadequate. She said that all these had reflected the lack of importance attached to the promotion of Cantonese Opera and other Xiqu in the past. She stressed that the promotion of Cantonese Opera and other Xiqu was important as this would help forge the cultural and national identity of Hong Kong people.

44. DSHA(3) said that the resources allocated to the development of Cantonese Opera in 2007-2008 amounted to some \$35 million, and the amount of funding allocation in 2008-2009 was expected to be increased. DDLCS(C) said that, in 2007-2008, the total number of Cantonese Opera performances and related activities supported by LCSD was some 300 involving about \$15 million in cost. For other Xiqu, the total number of performances supported by LCSD was about 70, involving some \$6 million in cost. CE/HKADC supplemented that the resources allocated by HKADC for the Xiqu Art Form Group in 2007-2008 included \$6.1 million for Cantonese Opera and about \$0.58 million for other Xiqu, e.g. Jing Opera and Qun Opera.

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45. DSHA(3) further said that the Administration was considering the provision of a major regional performance venue with over 1 000 seats as part of the redevelopment project of the Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate. This new venue would be able to meet the needs of the performing arts sector, including those of the Cantonese Opera sector. This venue was also intended to serve a number of districts such as Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon City and Sai Kung. She said that, as the existing venues in Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun were not yet fully utilised, there was room for LCSD to stage more Cantonese Opera performances at these venues. As for the Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, DSHA(3) explained that, given the scarcity of land resources in urban area, the Administration had to adopt a regional approach in planning for the provision of leisure and cultural facilities

46. DDLCS(C) supplemented that it was convenient for residents in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long to go to the Yuen Long Theatre which had a seating capacity of about 1 000 to watch Cantonese Opera performances. He said that the Tuen Mun Town Hall had two theatres which were also suitable for staging Cantonese Opera performances of different scale. He added that the North District Town Hall, Tai Po Civic Centre, Sha Tin Town Hall, Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre and Sheung Wan Civic Centre were all suitable for Cantonese opera or operatic singing performances. The Chairman, however, clarified that she and Miss CHAN Yuen-han were concerned about the shortage of large venues suitable for staging Cantonese Opera and not Cantonese operatic singing shows. She also pointed out it was very difficult to book venues such as the City Hall for use due to over-demands.

47. The Chairman considered that there was vacant land available on the Hong Kong Island, such as the ex-North Point Estate site, for building a new facility for staging Cantonese Opera performances after the demolition of the Sunbeam Theatre. Noting that the Administration had earlier announced that an existing premise in Oil Street was being considered for the establishment of an interim M+ (Museum Plus) in 2008, the Chairman suggested that the new facility should also accommodate a performance venue for staging Cantonese Opera.

48. DSHA(3) explained that the project of establishment of an interim M+ only involved provision of exhibition space and not facilities for staging performances due to physical constraints of the premise concerned. She further explained that, taking into account the planned provision of a major performance venue in Kowloon East and the proposed Xiqu Centre in West Kowloon Cultural District, it would be difficult to justify the provision of another additional performance venue on the Hong Kong Island.

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49. The Chairman disagreed with the Administration. She pointed out that, if a major performance venue was provided on the Hong Kong Island, not only residents there would benefit but also residents of the Islands District would benefit too, as it would be more convenient for the latter to go to the Hong Kong Island than to the future major venue in Kowloon East. The Chairman considered that Cantonese Opera had not been given adequate support in terms of venues and resources to facilitate its development, which in her view contradicted the policy goal of promotion of cultural identity and national education. She urged the Administration to give serious consideration to her suggestion and members' views expressed at this meeting.

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50. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:50 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
24 July 2008