

**Speaking note for the meeting on 16 May 2011**

The Hong Kong Arts Festival has been running for 39 years, presenting performances of both local and international artists in large and small scale venues in February and March each year, with an audience of over 160,000 in 2011.

A major challenge we are encountering is the limitations of performance venues in HK which leaves much to be desired both in quality and quantity. Our existing venues are outdated both in design and concept. Many advances have been made since they were built and there is serious catching up to do. We therefore urge that the project moves forward quickly to improve the situation. A caveat however is that speed is not the only consideration. Simply adding more of the same to what we have is not the solution. Unless the new venues embrace a paradigm shift in quality as well as an improvement on quantity, this will be an important opportunity lost.

Response to discussion:

Many things are required to support the development of the sector in Hong Kong. 'Software' development is required in education, creation, administration and appreciation. Community outreach and free educational events are helpful. At the same time, the practice of buying tickets should also be encouraged. For the sector to develop in a healthy way, it is necessary to have a ticket buying public who appreciates the value of the arts.