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## THE CULTURE SECTOR SPEAKS UP CONCERN WITH THE SETTING UP OF THE CULTURE BUREAU & CANDIDACY FOR THE SECRETARY OF CULTURE

Culture Sector Joint Conference 2.0 – “For a Bureau, For Change” Post-Forum highlights



More than one hundred people from the **culture and academic sectors** attended the Forum on “For a Bureau, For Change” organized by the **Culture Sector Joint Conference 2.0** yesterday (May 12, 2012). They include **Danny Yung**, Artistic Director of Zuni Icosahedron and member of the Culture Sector Joint Conference in the 1990s, from the academic sector, **Kurt Chan, Anson Mak, Linda Lai, Phoebe Man, Szeto Mei, Jimmy Choi, Sunny Lam, Chan Ji Hung**; renowned artists **Choi Yan Chi, Daniel Yeung, Justin Wong**, Best New Director of the 31st Hong Kong Film Awards **Jessey Tsang**, critics **Leung Wai Sze, Bernice Chan**, architect **Raymond Fung**, activists **Chan King Fai, Tse Pak Chai**, artists from the fields of theatre, dance, music, literature; representatives of the relevant government departments and the Chief Secretary Elect Office, and many more. This is the second full house since the last culture sector gathering “Kick out Timothy Fok – Our Representative is Invisible” organized by the Factory Artists Concern Group in April.

The forum was kicked off by convener **Chow Chun Fai** introducing the difficulties the culture sector faces when there is no relevant government bureau to address. He said, “On the one hand, Secretary for Development Carrie Lam says it’s alright for artists to stay in factories. On the other hand, the Lands Department and the Fire Services Department keep going to the factories for inspection. Recently, the Commerce and Economic Bureau says the Copyright Ordinance is nothing to be worried about. But it is the Customs and Excise Department that will eventually execute the law.” The forum aimed at engaging with past concerns, but it also put forth new agenda with regard to the proposal put forth by the Office of the Chief- Executive elect to reorganize the Government Secretariat. The Joint Conference convener emphasized two key concerns:

- **How does the Culture Bureau ensure that all government departments commit to culture as a factor in policy design and implementation?**
- **Cultural space – incubate conditions that accommodate such broad issues as freedom of speech and such specific areas as the planning and management of land use**

The Forum was moderated by *May Fung*. Many participants shared their views. The main directions of the views are summarized as follows:

- The need to set up a Culture Bureau to foster the development of Hong Kong’s culture and society was affirmed;
- Participants were concerned not only with the interests of the culture sector itself, but also how it could contribute to the overall development of the Hong Kong society;
- The Culture Bureau isn’t just an Art Bureau; it isn’t just a combination of existing government departments relevant to the arts;
- The Culture Bureau should initiate cultural perspectives within the government and communicate them to all policy-making bureaus on a regular basis;
- The proposed “Re-organization of the Government Secretariat” is inadequate; there should be time for communication between the government and the people;
- Participants are concerned who would become the Secretary for Culture because his/her cultural vision is crucial to the implementation of cultural policies;
- Participants urged that the Joint Conference develop into a platform for the discussion of cultural policy and they called for the second meeting.

*\*A full transcript of the discussion is being prepared and will soon be uploaded on the website.*

Convener of the Culture Sector Joint Conference 2.0 and Chairman of the Factory Artists Concern Group **Chow Chun Fai** appealed to all culture and arts practitioners to voice their views and monitor the proposed Culture Bureau.

After the Forum, Joint Conference members further considered the views of the participants and discussed the possibility of turning the Joint Conference into a long-term organization. At the moment, it will act as the convener to facilitate the making of cultural policies and the integration of the people’s views on the mandate of the new Culture Bureau.

The Culture Sector Joint Conference 2.0 expresses strong concern over the proposed Culture Bureau and the Secretary of Culture. Recently, there has been a lot of talk about the candidacy of the Secretary. **The Joint Conference strongly urges the government to ensure that the future Secretary for Culture demonstrate the following qualities:**

- commands wide recognition within the culture sector
- has a professional background in culture
- is closely connected with the culture sector
- has a cultural vision
- advances cultural diversity
- safeguards cultural freedom