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Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 10 June 2013**

Communication and co-operation between the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and the arts community

Purpose

This paper provides information on the communication and co-operation between the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCD Authority") and the arts community in the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD"), and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project formed in the Fourth Legislative Council ("the former Joint Subcommittee") on the subject.

Background

2. The Legislative Council ("LegCo") has attached importance to the communication and co-operation between the Administration/WKCD Authority and the arts community in the WKCD development. In its Report on Phase I Study issued in July 2005, the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development ("the Subcommittee on WKCD Development"), established under the House Committee in the Third LegCo to study and follow up issues relating to the WKCD development, called on the Administration to conduct structured and extensive consultation with the general public, in particular the relevant professional sectors and the arts community, to map out the priority of needs in the development of the WKCD project and the financial implications arising therefrom. In its Report on Phase II Study issued in January 2006, the Subcommittee on WKCD Development recommended, among others, that there should be at least two consultation panels: one for stakeholders and one for the general

public.

3. In October 2008, WKCDA was established under the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601) ("WKCDA Ordinance") to implement the WKCD project. Under WKCDA, there are the Performing Arts Committee and the Museum Committee responsible for formulating the vision, mission and mode of governance of the performing arts ("PA") venues and museums of WKCD respectively. These two committees are also tasked to consider and recommend the development strategies and policies relating to partnership with governments, cultural organizations, other PA venues as well as PA groups and individual artists within and outside Hong Kong. Besides, in response to the recommendation by the Subcommittee on WKCD, WKCDA established in June 2009 the Consultation Panel in accordance with section 20(1) of the WKCDA Ordinance to gather public views on matters relevant to the functions of WKCDA, including the preparation of the Development Plan ("DP") for WKCD. The DP was submitted to the Town Planning Board for consideration in December 2011 and approved by the Chief Executive-in-Council in January 2013.

4. At its meeting on 23 April 2012, the former Joint Subcommittee was briefed by WKCDA on its communication and cooperation with the arts community. Members were advised that with the aim of ensuring that the future arts and cultural facilities in WKCD would meet the aspirations of users and the public, WKCDA conducted a total of 87 stakeholder engagement meetings with 91 arts and cultural groups/institutions during the three-stage Public Engagement exercise from 2009 to 2011. WKCDA had also organized a number of roundtable discussions, public forums, talks as well as informal meetings with individuals or small groups of stakeholders from the arts sector and other relevant disciplines to gauge their views and update them on the latest development of the WKCD project. Members further noted that WKCDA intended to establish strategic partnership with the arts groups in the design and development of various PA venues and would consider inviting PA groups to join possible residency schemes including long-term residencies, performance-based or short-term residencies, and education partner schemes. In addition, since 2010-2011, WKCDA had been organizing and supporting different interim programmes such as bamboo theatre, music events, community cultural projects, forums and workshops in co-operation with the PA community to build talents and audiences, and to develop cultural software for the benefit of WKCD.

Members' concerns

5. The former Joint Subcommittee had discussed issues relating to

WKCDA's communication and co-operation with the arts community at a number of meetings between 2009 and 2012. Members' major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Communication with the arts community

6. Members were concerned about whether WKCDA had put in place a regular mechanism to gauge the views of the local arts community and its mode of communication with them, particularly whether focus group meetings and consultation sessions with the arts and cultural groups had been held. Concern was also raised as to whether WKCDA had been responsive to the views and needs of the local arts community.

7. According to the Administration, WKCDA had been maintaining close communication with stakeholders through various channels such as focus groups. WKCDA had held engagement meetings with PA stakeholders every five to six weeks in the form of one-to-one meeting or focus group on, among others, the phasing and priority of the arts and cultural facilities in WKCD. WKCDA would continue to receive views from stakeholders through such engagement meetings. In addition, WKCDA would ensure that the facilities in WKCD would meet the cultural and artistic needs and related requirements. The views of the relevant committees under WKCDA would also be taken into consideration in the design and planning of the facilities.

8. In response to members' enquiries about the main concerns of local arts groups, WKCDA advised that the arts community in general was concerned about whether the vision of the WKCD project would be realized and how WKCDA would collaborate with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council ("HKADC"). However, their concerns in this respect had been eased after the DP of WKCD had been finalized. WKCDA assured members that it would continue dedicating its efforts to maintaining effective communication with stakeholders, the relevant government departments and HKADC to tie in with the commissioning of the first batch of PA facilities starting from 2015-2016.

Partnership with and support to local arts groups

9. As the local arts groups attending the former Joint Subcommittee's meeting on 16 May 2011 indicated that they did not consider WKCDA as their partner, some members raised concern about how WKCDA could convince local arts groups that it was their partner, so that both sides would share a common vision to take forward the WKCD project together. It was suggested that the Administration and WKCDA should consider conducting a survey to gauge the views of local arts groups on their relationship with WKCDA, and

formulating measures to enhance WKCDA's partnership with the arts community, with a view to promoting the vision of WKCD. At the meeting of the former Joint Subcommittee on 23 April 2012, concern was also expressed about the support to small and medium-sized arts groups and non-main stream art groups and the distribution of funding resources amongst arts groups.

10. In WKCDA's view, it was not surprising that local arts groups had not treated WKCDA as their partner, as WKCDA had not indicated to them the phasing arrangements for WKCD and the impact of the project on their operation and relationship with LCSD. The Chief Executive Officer of WKCDA had engaged in on-going discussions with local arts groups to understand their concerns and would continue his dialogue with the arts community. The Administration stressed that it had all along maintained close collaboration with the arts community and treated it as a partner in the promotion of arts and culture in Hong Kong. Besides the recurrent funding for the nine major performing arts groups,¹ the Administration also provided funding support to small-and-medium-sized arts groups and budding artists.

Provision of venues

11. Noting the concern of the arts community about how the venues in WKCD would be managed, members sought information on WKCDA's strategy for venue management, including whether to adopt the artistic accountability system and outsource the management of arts and cultural venues in WKCD. Enquiries were also raised about WKCDA's provision of venues to arts groups for training purposes and how the existing venues managed by LCSD would complement those in WKCD.

12. According to WKCDA, it would build and run the arts and cultural venues in WKCD. WKCDA had been consulting stakeholders on the facilities to be built in Phase I of WKCD and due regard would be given to the provision of small and medium-sized performance venues and black box theatres to address the needs of performing arts groups. The increase in the number of performance venues after the launch of WKCD would provide more flexibility to LCSD in assisting small and medium-sized arts groups in accessing such venues.

Cultural programming

13. Members considered that the success of WKCD, to a large extent,

¹ The nine major performing groups are the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, the Hong Kong Dance Company, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Hong Kong Ballet, the City Contemporary Dance Company, the Chung Ying Theatre Company and Zuni Icosahedron.

would hinge on its cultural programming. They were concerned about WKCDA's strategy for programming and expressed worry that WKCDA would merely support the production of profitable programmes to cope with its financial pressure or act as an operator to lease venues to artists. According to WKCDA, the Executive Director, Performing Arts of WKCDA had been heavily involved in the discussion with artists and arts organizations on the programming for WKCD. To make the WKCD project work, WKCDA should play a significant role in the development of an artistic policy and programming. Its role was not to create a central command which would produce all programmes but to collect and reflect the aspirations of the arts community.

Latest development

14. The Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project of the Fifth Legislative Council will meet with deputations, the Administration and WKCDA to discuss the subject of communication and co-operation between WKCDA and the arts community at the meeting on 10 June 2013.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks at LegCo's website is in the **Appendix**.

**Relevant papers on
Communication and cooperation between
the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and the arts community**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
House Committee	8.7.2005	Report of the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development on Phase I Study
	6.1.2006	Report of the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development on Phase II Study
	20.6.2008	Report of the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development on Phase III Study
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	13.1.2009 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	14.4.2009 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	19.6.2009 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	7.9.2009 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	16.4.2010 Item II(b)	Agenda Minutes
	20.9.2010 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	16.5.2011 Item II	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	11.7.2011 Item I(a)	Agenda Minutes
	26.8.2011 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	23.4.2012 Item III	Agenda Minutes

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