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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 17 July 2015**

Capacity building and stakeholder engagement for the West Kowloon Cultural District

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on issues relating to capacity building and stakeholder engagement for the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD").

Background

Capacity building for WKCD

2. By virtue of section 4(2) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601) ("WKCAO"), the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCA") is required to perform its functions in ways which aim to achieve various objectives. They include, among others, cultivating and nurturing local talents in the arts (including local artists), local arts groups and arts-related personnel; facilitating the development of cultural and creative industries; and facilitating and enhancing co-operation between any government or non-government body or organization and providers of the arts within and outside Hong Kong.

3. According to WKCA, in tandem with the planning and construction of the arts and cultural venues in WKCD, it has been striving to enhance Hong Kong's artistic capacity through organizing various pre-opening programmes including seminars, workshops, training programmes, internship programmes and other collaborative projects. These programmes seek to advance the

artistic and professional development of artists, arts groups and arts practitioners; extend their professional network; facilitate knowledge and cultural exchange; and raise the awareness of different arts forms in the community. The Administration has also advised that to tie in with the development of WKCD, the Administration and its collaborators (such as the Hong Kong Arts Development Council ("HKADC") and the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts ("HKAPA")) have stepped up efforts in enhancing support for arts groups and strengthening the grooming of arts talents and arts administrators for the WKCD project and the local arts sector as a whole.

Stakeholder engagement

4. The Legislative Council ("LegCo") has attached importance to the work undertaken by the Administration/WKCDA in engaging the arts community and other relevant stakeholders in the development of WKCD. In its Report on Phase I Study issued in July 2005, the former Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development ("the former Subcommittee on WKCDD") formed by the Third LegCo 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 former Subcommittee on WKCDD recommended, among others, that there should be at least two consultation panels: one for stakeholders and one for the general public. In response to the recommendation by the former Subcommittee on WKCDD, WKCDA established in 2009 the Consultation Panel ("CP") in accordance with section 20(1) of WKCDAO to gather public views on matters relevant to the functions of WKCDA.

5. According to WKCDA, to ensure that the future arts and cultural facilities in WKCD will meet the expectations of the public and users, it has been constantly communicating with the public and stakeholders to gather their views and update them on the latest development of the WKCD project. Apart from roundtable discussions, engagement meetings and public forums, WKCDA's communication and engagement with stakeholders also take the form of attending local arts and cultural events, giving lectures in various institutions and universities, participating in public panels as well as small group/one-on-one discussions with members of the arts community, and giving interviews with local as well as international media.

Members' concerns

6. Issues relating to capacity building and stakeholder engagement for WKCD have been raised in the context of the discussions of the Joint

Subcommittee on the Development Plan ("DP") of WKCD; the development of Xiqu Centre, M+ and the Park; WKCD's planning application for minor relaxation of the development intensity of the WKCD site; the artistic characteristic and partnership framework of performing arts ("PA") venues in WKCD; the integration and connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts; and the role and functions of CP at various meetings held between February 2013 and July 2015. Besides, the Joint Subcommittee received deputations' views on the subjects of "Communication and co-operation with the arts community" and "Development of cultural software" at its meetings on 10 June 2013 and 9 June 2014 respectively. The major views and concerns expressed by members in relation to capacity building and stakeholder engagement for WKCD are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Capacity building for WKCD

Nurturing of local arts talents and arts-related personnel

7. Some members expressed worry that there might still be a lack of sufficient arts professionals/administrators in Hong Kong upon the delivery of the first batch of WKCD facilities. Members considered that apart from enhancing the nurturing of local artistic talents, the Administration and WKCD should also attach importance to strengthening the training of arts administrators and facility management professionals to meet the manpower demand arising from the phased commissioning of the WKCD facilities in the next few years.

8. The Administration advised that the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") had all along been maintaining close liaison with the Education Bureau in nurturing arts professionals. Local tertiary institutions had offered various programmes in arts administration, which should help nurture arts professionals to cope with the manpower demand arising from the development of WKCD. To provide further support for the grooming of local arts professionals, the Administration had provided an additional funding of \$150 million to offer more than 600 new training opportunities to strengthen the training of arts administrators for five years starting from 2013-2014. The training programmes ranged from local/overseas internships/attachments, scholarships for overseas/local arts or cultural Master's degree or professional training programmes, to in-service training for up-coming arts leaders and staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") in charge of relevant duties. The Administration had also increased its annual subvention to HKAPA to nearly \$300 million in 2013-2014 to support its migration from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate degree structure and commissioned HKADC to organize internship/training opportunities for local arts practitioners. In addition, WKCD had supported and funded various capacity-building initiatives to provide more learning opportunities for practising professionals and to train new talents.

9. Members in general considered that the Administration and WKCDA should provide more opportunities for local arts talents to take part in the WKCD project, so that they would be able to benefit from the transfer of knowledge and expertise from the foreign talents engaged in the project. WKCDA advised that 90% of its serving staff members were from Hong Kong. It had always tried to recruit locally and would bring in talents from other places only when the requisite expertise could not be found in Hong Kong. In WKCDA's view, bringing in overseas expertise would not only fill the gaps in the skills required for the success of the WKCD project, but also facilitate the transfer of knowledge to local talents over time, thereby helping build up local expertise.

10. Enquiries had been raised about the programmes organized by WKCDA to nurture young artists for the future Xiqu Centre, and whether adequate channels and training opportunities were available for interested young people to widen their exposure to Cantonese opera. WKCDA advised that as part of its ongoing effort to provide support and training opportunities to young artists, WKCDA had organized two programmes in 2015, namely the Rising Stars of Cantonese Opera 2015 and the Tea House Theatre Taster, to provide a platform for young artists to showcase their performance. WKCDA would organize more such activities in collaboration with HKAPA and the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong ("CAAHK"), its partners in young artist training projects, in the run-up to Xiqu Centre's completion targeted in 2017.

11. Members were also advised that the Administration had introduced various initiatives in recent years to cultivate young talents in Cantonese opera. In addition to the four-year Chinese opera degree programme recently launched by HKAPA, CAAHK had been selected as the Venue Partner of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre for a second three-year term to groom up-and-coming Cantonese opera performers. Furthermore, a New Cantonese Opera Play Scriptwriting Competition was recently organized by the Cantonese Opera Development Fund to nurture budding playwrights in Cantonese opera.

12. In response to Mr Alan LEONG's enquiry about M+'s plans and strategies, especially in terms of curatorial policy and arrangements, for grooming local visual culture artists, WKCDA advised that M+ would provide a suitable platform and backing for talented Hong Kong artists to showcase their works to the public as well as to the international arts community. It would also bring artists from other parts of the world to Hong Kong to present their works to the local community, providing a platform for artistic inspiration and exchanges.

Support for arts groups

13. Members were of the view that funding support for various arts groups should aim at promoting diversity and balanced development of the local arts scene. The Administration was urged to increase the subvention to HKADC to strengthen its support for budding artists and small and medium-sized arts groups.

14. The Administration advised that to strengthen support for arts groups, the Administration had in the 2013-2014 financial year increased its recurrent subvention to the major PA groups by \$30 million and allocated an additional \$30 million to HKADC to enhance its support for small and medium-sized arts groups. Besides, the Administration had since 2011 introduced the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme to disburse an annual provision of around \$30 million to support larger scale and cross-year arts and cultural initiatives/activities proposed by promising arts groups and arts practitioners. LCSD had also increased its funding support for young artists and small and medium-sized arts groups to stage performances in LCSD's arts and cultural programmes and activities.

15. Concern was also expressed that as many local arts groups and arts practitioners were no longer able to operate in industrial buildings owing to the rental increase in recent years, the Administration should step up efforts to make available more arts space for them in districts. According to the Administration, additional funding had been earmarked for HKADC to renovate and make available arts space for artists in an industrial building in Wong Chuk Hang. HKADC would undertake renovation works and operate a scheme to enable new and budding artists to lease the units for arts creation at a concessionary rate¹.

Stakeholder engagement

Communication and co-operation with the arts community

16. Members expressed concern whether the Administration/WKCDA had consulted and taken heed of the views of the local arts community in the development of WKCD. Members stressed the importance of putting in place an effective mechanism for the local arts groups and artists to convey to the

¹ According to the information provided by the Administration for the policy briefing cum meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs on 6 February 2015, HKADC has since the fourth quarter of 2014 launched the first arts space scheme under which arts studio workspace in a building in Wong Chuk Hang were leased to local visual and media artists at a concessionary rate. HAB is also supporting the collaboration between the Tai Po District Council and HKADC to convert a vacant school building in Tai Po into an arts development centre in order to provide space for performing artists and arts groups for arts creation, rehearsals, arts promotion activities. In addition, HAB is exploring the feasibility of reserving a certain portion of floor area in the future development of a site in Aberdeen to provide space for HKADC to support arts development.

Administration/WKCDA their views on various aspect of the WKCD project. Noting the view expressed by some deputations attending the Joint Subcommittee meeting on 10 June 2013 that the communication between the Administration/WKCDA and the local arts community was ineffective, members called on the Administration/WKCDA to review and enhance its communication and consultation with the art community to build consensus and enlist their support for the WKCD project. The Administration and WKCDA were also urged to respond to the concern of local arts groups about whether they could access the future PA venues in WKCD and how such venues would be managed.

17. WKCDA assured members that it had all along attached importance to stakeholder engagement and was committed to engaging and building partnership with the local arts community in the course of taking forward the WKCD project. Extensive consultation on the WKCD project had been conducted during the three-stage public engagement exercise from 2009 to 2011 as well as through CP. The proposed mix, size, location, phasing and artistic positioning of the facilities in the WKCD DP were the result of close discussions with the arts community. Subsequent to the approval of the WKCD DP in January 2013, WKCDA had continued communications with the stakeholders from the arts sector and other relevant disciplines to gather their requirements for and expectation on the future venues in WKCD and update them on the latest development of the project and beyond. Discussions had been initiated among WKCDA, LCSD and different PA groups on issues relating to the future use and management of the PA venues in WKCD, including the feasibility of implementing a partnership framework at individual venues in WKCD, with a view to putting in place appropriate arrangements for the venues before their scheduled completion in phases.

18. Members urged the Administration and WKCDA to carefully devise the facility and artistic partnership framework for the PA venues in WKCD such that both major and small arts groups would be provided with the opportunity to become partners of the venues. WKCDA advised that it would first develop and establish the artistic positioning and business model for each PA venue in WKCD, based on which the requirements to be fulfilled for becoming resident or associate partners would be drawn up. WKCDA assured members that an open, objective and professional mechanism would be set up under the WKCDA Board's supervision for the selection of partners.

Consultation with the District Council and local residents

19. Members considered that the Administration and WKCDA should implement the WKCD project in close consultation with the Yau Tsim Mong District Council ("YTMDC") and residents of the Yau Tsim Mong district, especially on issues relating to the accessibility of WKCD and the connectivity

of WKCD with its neighbouring areas, so as to ensure that the views and concerns of the local community would be duly considered and addressed as the WKCD project developed. Members expressed concern about the traffic impact of WKCD's planning application for minor relaxation of the development intensity of the WKCD site, and urged the Administration and WKCD to conduct more consultation with the parties concerned in planning the road improvement works for tackling the potential traffic problems that might arise in the West Kowloon area. Dr Helena WONG suggested that WKCD should consider gauging the views of the local residents more directly through, for instance, issuing information pamphlets on matters relating to the WKCD project to the residents.

20. WKCD advised that it had constantly consulted and solicited comments from YTMDC on, among others, matters relating to the accessibility of WKCD and the connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring areas. Representatives of the Transport Department had also attended meetings of YTMDC to respond to questions raised on the subject. The proposed connectivity plan of WKCD had been formulated having regard to the views and suggestions of YTMDC. In preparing the planning application for minor relaxation of the development intensity of the WKCD site, WKCD had held consultation meetings with a number of key stakeholders, including YTMDC and local resident representatives, on the proposed major planning parameters and impacts of the proposal on the surrounding areas.

Role and functions of CP

21. Concern had been expressed that due to the limited functions of CP as prescribed by WKCD and its mode of operation, CP had not been able to perform its intended role since its establishment in 2009. Mr Alan LEONG pointed out that during the deliberations of the former Bills Committee on the WKCD Bill, CP had been generally expected to perform a role similar to that of Metropoli-30 in the Abandoibarra project in Bilbao of Spain and serve as an open platform for engaging stakeholders and members of the public in an ongoing, systematic and transparent manner, with a view to striking a proper balance among various interests and building consensus on major matters relating to the development of WKCD and the work of WKCD. Ms Cyd HO suggested that CP should invite LegCo Members belonging to different political parties and encourage members of the public to attend its meetings, which was a more effective way to promote understanding of the WKCD project. Members called upon WKCD to critically review the work of CP and seek to enhance its role and functions.

22. When the Joint Subcommittee received an update on the work of CP at its meeting on 7 July 2015, WKCD advised members that after reviewing the role and functions of CP, it was decided that CP should continue to serve as a

bridge between WKCDA and the public, and to reflect public expectations and views to WKCDA. Specifically, it was agreed that CP should focus on engaging young people and the community. To achieve this aim, CP established a Working Group on Youth and Community Engagement in January 2015 to devise detailed implementation plans. Regarding the openness and transparency of the work of CP, the Administration advised that all CP meetings were open meetings. The CP Chairman further advised that CP had all along carried out its work in an open and transparent manner and would continue to do so in future.

23. Members generally considered it important for WKCDA to gauge and take into account the views of young people and enlist their support for the WKCD project. They sought information on CP's plans and strategies for reaching out to the youth community. According to WKCDA, it had in the past two years made extensive use of its website and online social media to raise awareness of WKCD and reach out to wider audience including the youth community. It had also organized a range of pre-opening programmes and events, such as Freespace Fest, which were attended by many young people. The Working Group on Youth and Community Engagement was currently contemplating two pilot programmes targeting university students/fresh university graduates and secondary school students respectively.

Latest development

24. The Joint Subcommittee will receive a briefing from the Administration and WKCDA on the progress of their work in capacity building and stakeholder engagement for WKCD at the meeting on 17 July 2015. The Joint Subcommittee will also receive deputations' views on the subject at the meeting.

Relevant papers

25. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

**Relevant papers on
Capacity building and stakeholder engagement
for the West Kowloon Cultural District**

| Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project | 25.2.2013 Item II | Agenda Minutes |
| | 8.4.2013 Items II & III | Agenda Minutes |
| | 10.6.2013 Items III & IV | Agenda Minutes |
| | 10.7.2013 Item II | Agenda Minutes |
| | 29.11.2013 Item III | Agenda Minutes |
| | 28.3.2014 Item II | Agenda Minutes |
| | 25.4.2014 Item I | Agenda Minutes |
| | 9.6.2014 Items I & II | Agenda Minutes |
| | 23.7.2014 Item I | Agenda Minutes |
| | 24.11.2014 Item II | Agenda Minutes |
| | 19.5.2015 Item I | Agenda Minutes |
| 7.7.2015 Item II | Agenda | |