

LONG TERM CULTURAL POLICY IN HONG KONG

Proposed Submission Paper to Legco

1. The Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council.
2. The HKTA believes that a thriving arts, cultural and entertainment sector is as vital to the development of the tourism industry of every great international city as it is to the inhabitants who live and work there.
3. The importance of tourism to the economy of Hong Kong as a whole is well documented. Less well known is the increasing role tourism is now playing - and will continue to play - in the development of arts, culture and entertainment in the SAR. For example, Provisional Urban Council surveys show that 30% of all visitors to the Hong Kong Museum of Arts are visitors.
4. HKTA Visitor Exit Survey Statistics for 1996 show that approximately 1.3 million visitors were interested in arts, cultural, entertainment and other 'events' in Hong Kong. A key element of the HKTA strategy for developing tourism into the 21st century is to ensure that in future a much larger percentage of this potentially huge new audience is made aware of and is encouraged to attend the many arts, cultural, entertainment and other 'events' taking place in Hong Kong, with a consequent benefit to Hong Kong's professional performing companies, its arts facilities and its private sector entrepreneurs.
5. The HKTA welcomes the increasing recognition by the Municipal Councils of the importance of 'event'-related tourism and is pleased that all parties are now working together on a number of specific initiatives. Particularly important to the tourism industry is the need to encourage event organisers to bring more international events to Hong Kong, as is the urgency of providing tourists with a consumer-friendly and easy-to-use advance booking ticket system.
6. The HKTA has for years been aware that additional venues for the performing arts and for sport are urgently required. In this respect, the HKTA at the request of the government is in the process of completing an extensive report on a major new venue complex. Such a facility will have an enormous benefit to the community and the tourism industry.

7. The HKTA proposes that the Panel also considers the important role the private and non-profit making sector plays in the provision of and development of arts, culture and entertainment and in the management of cultural facilities. This has been proven as a successful approach in almost every major international city. The HKTA believes that private sector entrepreneurs need more encouragement so that they can more effectively complement the work of the Municipal Councils and thereby offer to citizens and tourists a greater volume and variety of all types of international 'events'.
8. HKTA also would like to highlight the importance of locally produced films and movies as part of the culture of Hong Kong. There should be an integrated culture policy including this component.
9. International culture exchange is a very important element in promoting Hong Kong overseas and to establish Hong Kong as an international city. This will further promote the tourism of Hong Kong and strengthen the attractiveness of Hong Kong as a destination. International cultural exchange should also be part of the overall culture policy.

Prepared by the Hong Kong Tourist Association
5 September 1998