

Consultative Committee on the  
Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the  
West Kowloon Cultural District

Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group

The Report to the Consultative Committee

**CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON THE  
CORE ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES OF THE  
WEST KOWLOON CULTURAL DISTRICT**

**PERFORMING ARTS AND TOURISM ADVISORY GROUP**

**REPORT TO THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Background**

1.1 This report sets out the recommendations of the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (“The Advisory Group”) to the Consultative Committee (“Consultative Committee”) on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities (CACF) of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) and other non-museum arts and cultural facilities to be built in the WKCD. The recommendations have been drawn up following a series of intensive deliberations of the Advisory Group, which have taken into account public views including those from the arts and cultural sector as well as the tourism industry on the subject.

- **Terms of Reference**

1.2 The Advisory Group was established under the Consultative Committee in April 2006 to advise the Consultative Committee on the need for, and the major specifications of the various performance venues defined as CACF in the WKCD in the Invitation for Proposals (IFP) issued in September 2003, in particular from the perspectives of enriching performing arts and promoting tourism. Its terms of reference is at **Annex 1** and its membership is at **Annex 2**.

- **Invitation for Proposals**

1.3 In September 2003, the Government launched the Invitation for Proposals (IFP) for the development of the WKCD into a world-class arts, cultural, entertainment and commercial district. The IFP which was discontinued in February 2006, had specified the following CACF as Mandatory Requirements of the project -

- (a) **A Theatre Complex** comprising three theatres with seating capacities of at least 2,000, 800 and 400 seats respectively;
- (b) **A Performance Venue** with a seating capacity of at least 10,000 seats;
- (c) **A Museum Cluster** comprising four museums of differing themes with a total Net Operating Floor Area (NOFA) of at least 75,000 square meters;
- (d) **An Art Exhibition Centre** with NOFA of at least 10,000 square meters;
- (e) **A Water Amphitheatre**; and
- (f) At least four **Piazza Areas**.

1.4 In deciding on the CACF in the IFP, the Government had taken into account the objectives of developing the WKCD into a cultural hub in Asia with world-class facilities attracting renowned artists and visitors to Hong Kong; and promoting the long-term cultural development of Hong Kong by nurturing local talents and providing a wide range of activities for the community's enjoyment and cultural enrichment.

1.5 In addition, the Administration had also made reference to the five winning entries of the Concept Plan Competition held in 2001, views of the Culture and Heritage Commission Policy Recommendation Report, ex-Municipal Councils, results of formal and informal consultations with the arts, cultural, tourism and business sectors in late 2002, existing cultural facilities in Hong Kong and four consultancy studies<sup>(Note 1)</sup>.

1.6 The major recommendations of these consultancy studies on the provision of new performance venues are as follows:

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(Note 1)

The consultancy studies are –

- (a) Culture and Heritage Commission Policy Recommendation Report in 2003 and the views considered by its WKCD and Museum Working Groups;
- (b) “Cultural Facilities: Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines” commissioned by the Planning Department in 1999;
- (c) “Feasibility Study on a New Performance Venue for Hong Kong” commissioned by the then Hong Kong Tourist Association in 1999; and
- (d) “Consultancy Study on the Provision of Regional/District Cultural and Performance Facilities in Hong Kong” commissioned by the Home Affairs Bureau and Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2002.

Details of these studies are available at PATAG/04/2006.

- Commercial cultural facilities for major international performances which are also significant tourist attractions;
- A 1,500 to 2,200-seat theater for sophisticated performances, such as musicals, theatre shows, cultural performances, dances and plays (it was also proposed to have a 1,700 seat theatre for commercial long runs);
- Purpose-designed medium-scale performing venues of 600 to 1,000 seats (500 to 900 seats in another study);
- Small-scale performance studio venues with 100 to 300 seats;
- Semi-outdoor open venue capable of accommodating 6,000 – 8,000 audiences for a wide range of events, such as concerts, cultural performances, circuses, acrobatic shows, festivals and exhibitions; and
- A medium-sized concert hall.

1.7 In order to form a critical mass of arts, cultural and entertainment venues in WKCD, the IFP also stipulated that arts and cultural facilities other than those specified as CACF above would also be considered. Facilities proposed by various parties and the public include concert hall, Cantonese Opera/Xiqu Centre, Book City, Performing Arts School, commercial galleries, Creative Industries Centre,

design shops etc.

### *Hong Kong's Cultural Policy*

1.8 The Advisory Group has formulated its recommendations with due regard to Hong Kong's existing cultural policy, as well as the cultural vision and objectives of the WKCD, which are summarized below:

- Hong Kong's cultural policy refers to the policy on culture and the arts. The policy objective is to create an environment which is conducive to the freedom of artistic expression and creation, and the wider participation in cultural activities. The policy comprises four major elements:
  - ✦ respect for freedom of creation and expression
  - ✦ provision of opportunities for participation
  - ✦ encouraging diversified and balanced development
  - ✦ providing a supportive environment and conditions (venues, funding, education and administration)

1.9 The Government's objective of developing the WKCD is to develop a world-class arts and cultural district comprising local, traditional as well as international elements, to enrich the arts and cultural life for the people in Hong Kong and neighbouring areas, to create job opportunities and

benefit the tourism industry, and to make Hong Kong an international cultural metropolis. This is effectively a major initiative to implement the existing policy on culture and arts. This is also in line with Hong Kong's cultural position and vision, i.e. a metropolis in China which is most capable of bridging China and the world.

1.10 An elaboration of Hong Kong's Cultural Policy is at **Annex 3**.

- **The Current Performing Arts Scene**

1.11 Hong Kong has a vibrant performance arts scene. In a typical year, some 3,800 indoor and outdoor performances are presented by Leisure & Cultural Services Department (LCSD), while around 4,000 performances are presented by hirers of major facilities in LCSD venues. Furthermore, more than 2,500 programmes are provided in other major non-LCSD performing arts venues. A rough estimate shows that there are more than 1,000 performing arts groups in Hong Kong, the majority of which are small-scale and amateur.

1.12 The Government has been providing various kinds of funding support to major, medium, small-scale and budding performing arts groups. Some major professional performing arts groups are receiving recurrent funding directly from the Government while a number of the others

are receiving various types of grants from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Besides, a large majority of performing arts groups are non-profit-making organizations which are receiving programme and/or venue related subsidy from the Government, including performance fees, programme sponsorship with free use of venues, ticketing services and assistance in publicity, sponsorship fee, and rental reduction or subsidy in hiring Government performing arts venues. Through various kinds of support, some 500 performing arts groups staged a total of 4,200 performances or activities, reaching some 1.8 million audiences in 2004-05. Barring unforeseen circumstances, it is expected that these local performing arts groups, particularly the small and budding performing arts groups, would continue to rely on such support in their activities which are crucial in sustaining and promoting the diversity and vibrancy of the local performing arts scene. The design and planning of performing facilities in WKCD should be conducive to maintaining and sustaining the plurality and diversity of art forms as well as performing arts groups in Hong Kong.

1.13 The various forms of subsidy and support seek not only to support the running of performing arts programmes, but also to subsidize the ticket prices of the audience. The objective is to bring a rich and diverse range of quality traditional and avant-garde performing art forms to the general public, which would otherwise not be able to compete with popular entertainment programmes in the commercial

market. The performing arts venues and facilities should be planned and designed having regard to the need to ensure the accessibility and affordability of a broad and pluralistic range of performing arts programme to the community at large.

- **Acute Shortage of Venues**

1.14 At present, there are 26 performance venues in Hong Kong with a total seating capacity of 75,626. Among these venues, 15 are managed by LCSD and their major facilities have a maximum seating capacity of 33,379. The other 11 non-LCSD venues account for the remaining 42,247 seats (See **Annex 4** for details). The high utilization rates and the unsuccessful booking applications of these venues especially at prime venues indicate there is an acute shortage of performing arts facilities in Hong Kong. This shortage, coupled with the fact that there have not been any new performing arts facilities for many years, resulting in the demand for the use of these facilities not being met.

1.15 The local performing arts community has repeatedly been expressing the need for large-scale performance venues for long-run productions, medium and small-sized theatres, and black-box studio theatres for experimental works. On the other hand, the major performing arts companies are requesting for resident facilities in venues to facilitate their long-term development.

Since these requests cannot be accommodated within existing LCSD performing art venues, these performing arts groups have high aspirations that their demands would be addressed through the new performance venues in WKCD.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Public Views**

2.1 The Advisory Group noted that during the last round of public consultation exercise on the development of the WKCD project from December 2004 to June 2005, views expressed were generally in support of the development of the West Kowloon reclamation area as an arts and cultural district but the discussions focussed more on the development approach of the WKCD than the need for, and major requirements of CACF. To embark on the task of re-examining and re-confirming, if appropriate the need for CACF, the Advisory Group decided to hold open consultative forums and a number of sector-specific focus group meetings to gauge public views, particularly those from the arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism sectors. It also invited written submissions from mid May to mid June 2006. The Advisory Group had considered views received prior to and after the inception of the Advisory Group in the deliberations.

2.2 The list of Advisory Group's meetings, focus group meetings, the briefing by the international presenter and open consultative forums is at **Annex 5**.

2.3 Summary of discussions of the focus group meetings, the briefing and the two open consultative forums

are at **Annex 6**.

2.4 In general, the great majority of the views supported the government in developing the WKCD and looked forward to its early implementation. The major views are summarized as follows-

***Public Aspirations of the WKCD***

- (a) WKCD should be developed into an integrated world-class arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism district. Action has to be expedited to enable its early implementation;
- (b) Software development should be accorded equal priority, if not higher, alongside with the hardware development in the WKCD. The CACF in the district should be designed in pursuit of excellence;
- (c) The arts and cultural facilities in WKCD should factor in elements of nurturing budding artists, promoting arts education and enhancing audience building;
- (d) The arts and cultural, entertainment and commercial facilities should cluster together to create an environment conducive to attracting people flow day and night. There is a need for an

intra-district transport hub to facilitate people flow;

- (e) The clustering effects of the arts and cultural, entertainment and commercial facilities should help to build up the WKCD as an international icon and a 'must-go' for tourists;

### ***Core Arts and Cultural Facilities***

- (f) There should be more small-sized theatres to meet the needs of different performing troupes;
- (g) There should be multi-purpose venues to allow flexibility for different performing art forms but there were also people who advocated purpose-built venues to attract the audience by their venue characteristics;
- (h) There should be adequate backstage and storage facilities in the performance venues;

### ***Specific Performing Arts Facilities***

- ***A Xiqu Centre (戲曲中心)***
  - (i) An overwhelming majority of the views mentioned the need of the Cantonese Opera sector for a

dedicated performing venue for Cantonese Opera. There was a need for the provision of a dedicated performance venue for Cantonese Opera and other Chinese Operas in the WKCD. Venue availability was essential to the preservation of this traditional Chinese art form and the training of budding artists and audience building, particularly among the younger generation;

- (j) A purpose-built Xiqu Centre for the Chinese Operas was proposed. There should be a theatre for Xiqu performances; a small theatre for training budding artists and staging Cantonese Opera excerpts for tourists. There should also be ancillary facilities including a small Xiqu exhibition area; a library, souvenir shop and a tea house. Reference should be made to the mode of operation of Laoshe Tea House (老舍茶館) in Beijing;
  
- (k) The Cantonese Opera sector proposed a range of 1,000 to 1,500 seats in the theatre for Xiqu performances. The Chinese Artists Association (八和會館) suggested 1,200 to 1,400 seats for the Xiqu theatre and 400 seats for the small theatre;

- ***Concert Hall***

- (l) A concert hall which had been regarded as a ‘must’ for a world-class arts and cultural district like WKCD should be included. A purpose-built concert hall of high acoustics standard must be provided in the WKCD;

- ***Theatreland***

- (m) The Idea of ‘theatreland’- theatres to spread across a few streets with a number of performing venues of various seating capacities – was put forward. Not only could this idea offer various sizes of performing venues to cater for the needs of different performing groups and different art forms, it also fitted in well with the atmosphere of diversity and creativity advocated in WKCD. The suggested seating capacities of these theatres ranged from 200 to a maximum of 1,000;
- (n) There should be restaurants, cafes and commercial art galleries in close proximity to the theatres. They could even be intertwined with the theatres to enhance people flow and enhance the cultural vibrancy in the district;

- ***Performance Venue with 10,000 seats***

- (o) There is a need to retain the performance venue of 10,000 seats as one of the CACF in the WKCD. The venue had to be provided with good acoustic design, lighting configuration and a spacious backstage. There were also opinions that the venue should have 15,000 to 20,000 seats for multi-purpose performances;
- (p) The design of the 10, 000 seats venue should factor in the configuration of separating the 10,000 seats venues into two venues each with 5,000 seats;
- (q) a few expressed reservations about having a 10,000 seats venue in the WKCD because the market might not be able to support another 10,000 seats performance venue in addition to the Hong Kong Coliseum;

- ***Outdoor Performance Venue***

- (r) Views from the entertainment industry considered it essential to provide outdoor performance venues in the WKCD for staging world-class outdoor performances. Members of the public supported the Water Amphitheatre and four Piazza Areas as they could accommodate free entertainment and

the fusion of high arts and popular arts in the district;

- (s) Special attention to acoustic design and sound treatment was crucial for outdoor performance venues and this issue must be seriously addressed;

### ***Complementary Facilities***

- (t) There were suggestions to provide education venues, including arts-related institutions to nurture young talents in WKCD. They could also help in audience building for appreciation of different art forms;
- (u) There were suggestions for a Book City and a wide range of high quality restaurants for developing the WKCD into a gourmet centre;
- (v) There was a suggestion to build a sight-seeing tower in WKCD to attract the local community and the tourists; and
- (w) It was generally felt that there would be a need to provide different categories of hotels in WKCD to cater for the needs of different types of tourists and overseas performers.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Vision, Guiding Principles and Key Considerations**

- **Vision**

3.1 Taking into account the existing arts and cultural policy, the performing arts scene, the performing arts venues proposed at sector-specific focus groups meetings and the consultative forums, the Advisory Group considered the following to be the vision of performance venues in the WKCD.

*“WKCD shall be an integrated world-class arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism district with a must-visit appeal to both local residents and visitors.”*

- **Guiding Principles**

3.2 To realize the above vision, we have come up with some guiding principles on which the recommendations on the arts and cultural facilities in Chapter 4 should be broadly based. The Advisory Group’s guiding principles have responded positively to public views aired before the formation of the WKCD Consultative Committee as well as those submitted to the Group upon its invitation, and some of the principles put forward by the CHC, which include ‘people-oriented’, ‘partnership’ and ‘community-driven’ in the

planning and development of the WKCD.

3.3 The guiding principles are as follows –

**Development of performing arts**

- (a) The performing arts facilities in WKCD should be capable of meeting the long-term development needs of arts and culture in Hong Kong; and contribute to maintaining and sustaining the diversity and vibrancy of the performing arts scene in Hong Kong;
- (b) Both the hardware and software of arts and cultural facilities in WKCD should promote artistic excellence which ties in with WKCD's objective of becoming a world-class arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism district;
- (c) The performing arts facilities should be conducive to making WKCD a hub for local and international creative talents. It should provide an enabling environment to nurture creative talents and promote creative industries;
- (d) The performing arts facilities should be capable of fostering strategic partnerships with other international arts and cultural organizations;

- (e) There should be capacity for arts education and audience building both inside and outside Hong Kong with a view to developing the WKCD into a regional and international arts and cultural hub;
- (f) The performing arts facilities should be generally affordable to both performing arts groups and audience so as to encourage maximum participation from both the arts community and the general public;
- (g) Training of people of the right calibre is essential. The performing arts venues should adopt non-Government modes of management and operation so as to encourage more community participation and engaging creative talents, artists, professionals and business people from outside the Government in the development of WKCD venues;
- (h) The performing arts facilities should strive to operate on a self-financing basis with a level playing field and a healthy degree of competition amongst venues and performing arts groups;

**Positioning of performing arts venues and facilities in a cultural district**

- (i) The performing arts venues and facilities should be suitably clustered together and integrated with the commercial facilities in the WKCD so as to attract people flow both during the day and night, thus creating synergy and vibrancy. The original idea of segregating the district into three distinct areas (a cultural headland, an entertainment spine and a commercial gateway) to separately locate the different kinds of facilities is not conducive to achieving this integration effect and should no longer be pursued;
- (j) There should be emphasis on the concept of a 'central cultural district' when planning and designing the arts and cultural and other related facilities in the WKCD;
- (k) The concept of organic growth and sustainable development should be taken into account. Sufficient space should be reserved for further development of arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD;
- (l) The performance venues should enable WKCD to be developed into an attraction for the local residents which would in turn attract tourists into the district; and

- (m) Efforts should be made to integrate the arts and cultural facilities in WKCD with the neighbouring areas for the sake of cultivating a cultural ambience in the district and its vicinity.

- **Key Considerations**

*Resident Companies*

3.4 The Advisory Group is aware of the long-standing requests from the major performing arts groups for residency in performing arts venues. We see the need to accommodate resident performing arts groups in the performing venues of WKCD so as to put such venues on a par with other world-class performance venues. As such, suitable space and facilities should be provided for rehearsals, workshops, storage and offices in connection with the residency arrangements. The question of which performing arts groups should be the resident companies of any particular venues should be left to the future management of the venues ( further discussion on this issue is in para. 6.3 ).

*Artistic Character of Performance Venues*

3.5 The Advisory Group considers the artistic character would be vital in determining whether the venues could be operated successfully with due regard to

composition of the programmes they present and their artistic excellence. The future mode of operation of the performance venues in the WKCD will not just be one of hiring out the venues. Their venue management should be proactive in building up the artistic character of the venues by sourcing and marketing their programmes, and soliciting sponsors.

3.6 In line with the recommendations of the Committee on Performing Arts (CPA) Recommendation Report I, the Advisory Group advocates the establishment of a partnership between the venue operators and performing arts groups (as programme providers) to help establish the artistic character of individual venues, enlarge the audience base; develop venue-based marketing strategies and facilitate the securing of corporate/private sponsorships. To complement the future mode of governance of the performance venues in the WKCD, the venue management is expected to curate and present a certain percentage of their programmes as opposed to mere hiring to outside presenters. This approach would contribute to building up venue identity and allow the venue management to have artistic control and ability to build and develop its own audiences.

3.7 The Advisory Group considers it important that the venue management should be able to enjoy autonomy in determining their programmes and be allocated enough resources to carry out their work. Healthy competition among

the performance venues should be encouraged in order to maximize the artistic impact of the facilities.

### *Development of Cultural Software and Talents*

3.8 Generally speaking, development of cultural software includes, but is not limited to, nurturing of arts practitioners, training of arts administrators, discernment of excellence in programming, provision of arts education, audience building, promotion and marketing of events. During the public consultation, many of the views received emphasized that cultural software should be developed in parallel with the hardware to be in place in the WKCD.

3.9 There are currently insufficient creative and technical talents of various art forms. There is also an acute shortage of arts-related management talents i.e. the arts administrators who should play a crucial role in ensuring the effective management and sustainable operation of the performing arts facilities in the WKCD. The Government should increase its investment in cultural software, lest we would face the challenge of not being able to bridge the gap between the demand for and the supply of these talents by the time the facilities in the WKCD are in place.

3.10 The Advisory group considers that the efforts in nurturing talents in arts and culture should start with arts education. Due weight should be given to arts and culture

and literature subjects in primary and secondary education to enhance the ability of arts appreciation amongst the younger generation and help to identify and develop young talents. It is recommended that the Home Affairs Bureau, Education and Manpower Bureau and LCSD should take more proactive steps and put in more resources on this front. This would not only pave the way for the development of WKCD, but also enhance the quality of life of Hong Kong people as a whole and lay a solid foundation for the development of creative industries in Hong Kong.

3.11 To ensure the successful operation of the performance venues in the WKCD, it is important that the future WKCD Authority should include this function of developing cultural software as top priorities and an essential element of its primary responsibility of managing arts and cultural facilities. To this end, the WKCD Authority needs to be provided with sufficient resources for the purpose.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Recommendations on Arts and Cultural Facilities**

- **Essential Concerns**

4.1 The Advisory Group considers it important to plan and design venues and facilities which should cater for the needs of the long-term development of the arts and culture in Hong Kong. We consider the arts and cultural facilities should be developed in an organic manner and have to be in place by phases. Therefore, the recommendations and cultural facilities proposed in this chapter which are most imminently required are proposed to be in place at the start of the WKCD development project ( phase I development ). As for those venues required in the longer term, we do not consider it necessary to specify precisely when they should be in place, for it should be a matter to be determined by the future WKCD Authority having regard to the changes in the market response as reflected by the then prevalent utilization of the facilities and subject to regular review.

4.2 The Advisory Groups is aware that there are examples that the performance venues have not been put into their best use upon completion because the there are a lot of constraints which render them not user-friendly. Given the sophisticated and demanding technical

requirements of the performing arts venues proposed to be located in WKCD (such as the acoustic requirements of concert hall), there is a practical need to adopt the approach of according a higher priority to facilities' technical requirements over building and architectural concerns, such as through tendering for the technical requirements in advance of the construction tender, in order that the internal technical requirements are thoroughly defined and designed for subsequent incorporation in the architectural design ('building from the inside out' approach). This approach will ensure that the technical and operational requirements of the relevant art forms to be supported by the performing venues would not be unduly compromised. Moreover, it is necessary to take into account users' input in the design brief so as to ensure that the performing arts facilities are viable and practicable when being put to use.

4.3 The arts and cultural facilities recommended in the WKCD are set out in the paragraphs below.

**(I) Xiqu Centre (戲曲中心)**

• **Artistic and Strategic Significance**

4.4 Cantonese opera is one of the major categories of regional Chinese opera, which flourished in Southern China's Cantonese culture. Like all other categories of Chinese opera, it is a traditional Chinese art form, involving

music, singing, martial arts, acrobatics and acting. This indigenous art form is locally bred and is indigenous to Hong Kong's culture. The Cantonese Opera sector has been very vocal about their need for a dedicated performance venue, especially in view of the closure of the Sunbeam Theatre in 2009.

4.5 All the public views received supported the provision of a dedicated and purpose-built venue for Cantonese Opera which should also cater for all Chinese Opera (Xiqu) in the WKCD. Xiqu covers Cantonese opera, Kunju ( 崑曲 ), Peking opera ( 京劇 ) and other kinds of Chinese opera. The venue should serve to both preserve and promote these valuable traditional Chinese art forms to the local community as well as the tourists.

4.6 The Xiqu Centre in the WKCD has been proposed in response to views of the public and those of the Cantonese Opera sector about the need for suitable performance venues and the promotion and development of Cantonese operatic art. Strategically, the Xiqu Centre should help establish WKCD as a place where the Chinese traditional culture are given recognition and social status. Xiqu, a traditional Chinese art form, will create synergy with other art forms to make the WKCD a pivotal part of Hong Kong as an international metropolis. It also signifies the support for preservation and development of traditional Chinese culture.

- **Hardware Description**

4.7 There were different views about the design, seating capacity of the theatres and the ancillary facilities of the Xiqu Centre as expressed at the consultative forums and focus group meetings. After deliberating on the views of the Chinese Artists Association (八和會館) and other views from the Cantonese opera sector, the Advisory Group recommends a purpose-built Xiqu Centre in the WKCD. The facilities in the Centre will create an ambience for the appreciation of Xiqu and help to develop this traditional Chinese art form and attracts people flow in the district. The outlook and the architectural design of the Xiqu Centre should be iconic and fully demonstrate the characteristics and unique cultural identity of Chinese Xiqu. The Xiqu Centre should include the following facilities-

- (a) a theatre with a seating capacity of 1,200 to 1,400 seats;
- (b) a small theatre with a seating capacity of 400 seats;
- (c) a place like the Xiqu Tea House (戲曲茶座) to attract locals and tourists;
- (d) well-equipped rehearsal rooms and spacious backstage and other ancillary facilities;

- (e) a small exhibition hall on the history of Xiqu history;
- (f) souvenir shops selling Xiqu-related souvenirs; and
- (g) catering outlets.

*(a) A theatre with a seating capacity of 1,200 to 1,400 seats*

4.8 The theatre will be used for Xiqu performances by professional performing troupes. Having regard to the existing usage rate of full-length Cantonese operas/opera excerpts in the LCSD venues (Ko Shan Theatre in particular) and non-LCSD's venues (Sunbeam Theatre in particular which stage 300 performances annually), and the projected usage, the theatre should be almost fully utilized by the professional performing troupes. Furthermore, the Advisory Group has also taken into account of the impact of the loss of a suitable and conveniently located venue for Cantonese Opera performances after the closure of Sunbeam Theatre in North Point in early 2009.

4.9 For seating capacity, taking into consideration the need to ensure audience's comfort and the commercial viability of the performances, we consider the range of 1,200 to 1,400 seats appropriate.

4.10 An orchestral pit should be provided in the front part of the stage.

4.11 The acoustics design should be good and be able to address the requirements of Chinese orchestral performances in the theatre.

4.12 The auditorium of the theatre should be designed with no more than two tiers of audience seating.

4.13 Comparing the usage rate of existing venues among other forms of Chinese operas, it is obvious that the theatre would mainly be utilized for Cantonese opera performances. However, the theatre should also be open for use by other art forms when it is not occupied. It is possible that Chinese instrumental music performances may use this venue quite frequently because of the compatibility of the art form with the artistic identity of the venue. Meanwhile, we suggest to adopt a more innovative approach in promoting and fostering the development of Xiqu, particularly the genre of Cantonese opera. Efforts should be made to develop cross-over performances involving both Cantonese Opera and other art forms like Chinese orchestral music, music and drama etc, both to optimize potential for creativity and to embrace traditional culture with contemporary culture.

*(b) A small theatre with a seating capacity of 400 seats*

4.14 The small theatre would target budding artists and performing groups for both performance and training purposes.

4.15 The Advisory Group shares the concerns expressed by both the Cantonese opera sector and the public about the imminent succession problem facing the sector. The intention is for the budding artists/performing groups to perform and practice their skills at the small theatre. This should be conducive to grooming performing talents and audience building for the long-term development of Chinese opera particularly Cantonese opera. When their skills become mature, these performing groups will be encouraged to perform in the large theatre of 1,200 to 1,400 seats. In addition, this theatre can be a platform for performances of other Chinese music e.g. Hakka songs, Chiu Chow music. This accords with the positioning of this Xiqu Centre for the preservation of traditional and indigenous culture.

4.16 The small theatre can also be used occasionally for children Cantonese opera and Cantonese operas sung in English.

4.17 The co-location of the small theatre with the large theatre for professional performances in the Xiqu Centre would enable the budding artists to learn from the

professional artists. The high usage rate of the small-sized theatres run by LCSD and non-LCSD venues for full-length Cantonese opera, Cantonese opera excerpts, face-changing and puppet shows indicates that a 400-seat theatre for Xiqu in the WKCD can help to meet the unmet demand and fulfill the mission of nurturing young and budding artists in the field of Xiqu particularly Cantonese opera.

*(c) Xiqu Tea House*

4.18 A Xiqu Tea House style of venue could accommodate tailor-made traditional Chinese cultural performances such as Xiqu excerpts, where the audience could be served Chinese tea and snacks while enjoying performances in a relaxed atmosphere.

4.19 The Xiqu Centre could be very attractive from the tourism perspective. Local traditional and indigenous performing art forms like the Cantonese opera do not only appeal to local people but also tourists. Views received particularly those from the tourism sector advocated that performance venues for the Cantonese opera and other forms of Chinese operas in the WKCD could be integrated with catering and retail outlets and other tourists activities. The Advisory Group has therefore come up with the idea of having a Xiqu Tea House type of venue to attract both the locals and the tourists.

*(d) Ancillary facilities*

4.20 For ancillary facilities, there should be well-equipped rehearsal rooms, spacious backstage and dressing rooms.

4.21 The location of the dressing rooms should be on the same floor with the performance stage to spare the inconvenience of the artists moving up and down the stairs in their bulky costume.

*(e) Small exhibition hall*

4.22 The small exhibition hall should display the history and the development of Xiqu. Docent services should be provided to enhance the interest of the visitors.

*(f) Xiqu-related souvenir shops*

4.23 The Xiqu-related souvenir shop could be made a spontaneous extension of the Xiqu Centre for the local people and tourists. Suggested items for sale are Chinese opera masks, costumes and Chinese musical instruments.

*(g) Catering outlets*

4.24 There should be catering outlets inside the Xiqu Centre to draw people into it and to create people flow.

4.25 The software in the Xiqu Centre should be primarily directed towards the pursuit of excellence. The Advisory Group considers that the future venue management of the Xiqu Centre, like other performance venues in the WKCD, should build up the artistic character and promote the artistic excellence of the Xiqu Centre.

- **Work to be done in the Interim**

4.26 The Advisory Group is fully aware of the lead time required to put in place the Xiqu Centre in the WKCD. In the interim, all parties concerned including the Government, the Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee and the Cantonese opera sector should continue to make concerted efforts on all fronts on the preservation of this indigenous art form, training of budding artists for succession and building audience for the Cantonese opera. These efforts are crucial to ensure that the software development would keep pace with that of hardware of the Xiqu Centre in WKCD.

## **(II) Concert Hall**

4.27 The need for a Concert Hall in the WKCD stems from the high usage rate of the venues for orchestral music and the aspiration to put the arts and cultural facilities of WKCD on par with, if not better than, those in other countries. At present, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC)

concert hall ( 2,019 seats) and the Hong Kong City Hall (HKCH) concert hall ( 1,434 seats) are the only centrally located venues in that are acoustically equipped for orchestral performances. Although the auditoriums at Sha Tin Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Kwai Tsing Theatre and Tuen Mun Town Hall also suitable for orchestral performances, they are situated in suburban or outer-suburban areas and not purpose-built for orchestral performances. Usage rates in these four venues indicate that they are unable to cope with the excess demand for the concert hall in HKCC and HKCH.

4.28 The arts-related usage rate of the concert hall of HKCC and HKCH reached 97% and 92% in 2005-06 respectively. The orchestral performances of these venues are mainly presented by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HKPO), Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (HKCO) and Hong Kong Sinfonietta, for which the Government has been providing direct or indirect funding support. Furthermore, demand for bookings on prime performance nights (mainly Friday and Saturday evenings) far exceeds supply, with a great number of requests for bookings being denied annually. It is quite clear that the current provision of concert hall facilities is unable to cope with demand at present. Over the next decade or so, the orchestral performing groups in Hong Kong are projecting a significant growth in audience number, thereby creating an even greater demand for orchestral performances and venues.

- **Artistic and Strategic Significance**

4.29 The Advisory Group recommends to have a Concert Hall with a maximum seating capacity of 2,000 seats (including choir stall) in the WKCD. The reasons are-

- (a) The concert hall should have the iconic effect of branding the WKCD as a world-class integrated arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism district. Public views received have expressed that a concert hall should not have been left out as one of the mandatory requirements in the original IFP and they strongly support that a dedicated concert hall with good acoustics is an essential facility for a world-class arts and cultural district like the WKCD;
- (b) One of the Advisory Group's guiding principles of the performing arts facilities in the WKCD is to cater for the long-term development needs of the arts and culture in Hong Kong. The Advisory Group is aware of the criticisms that the acoustics and design of the concert hall of HKCC have some insurmountable difficulties. The proposed Concert Hall is needed to meet the existing and projected demand for venues of this art form;

- (c) Strategically, Hong Kong needs to have a high quality concert hall in the WKCD to bring it on par with other internationally renowned performing arts centres like the Lincoln Centre in New York, the Barbican Centre in UK and the Sydney Opera House. Meanwhile, first class concert hall have already been in place in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Shanghai. Since the 1970s, Japan has constructed more than a dozen first-class concert halls, and new halls are under construction in major Chinese cities, including Shenzhen and Beijing. We need to have a Concert Hall in the WKCD. Otherwise, we will lose our competitive edge to our neighbouring cities on this front; and
- (d) Unlike some other art forms, orchestral music requires purpose-built performance venues and we consider that this art form cannot be adequately accommodated in dual or multi-purpose halls or theatres. Furthermore, venues with a clear artistic character can facilitate audience building and lead to greater participation of the community. A dedicated concert hall can also contribute to the promotion of arts education in orchestral music.

- **Hardware Description**

*Seating Capacity*

4.30 Reference has been made to the acoustic requirement of the internationally renowned concert halls and the Advisory Group proposes a maximum seating capacity of 2,000 seats (including choir stall).

*Design and Technical Requirements*

4.31 We recommend that priority should be given to the technical and acoustics design of the hall in order to achieve the goal of having a first-class concert hall in the WKCD. The acoustic design should also be able to address the different requirements for Western and Chinese orchestral music, possibly by incorporating some adjustable acoustics elements.

4.32 In addition to the standard requirements of a modern orchestral hall such as excellent acoustic quality both on-stage and in the body of the hall, a grand organ and the provision of choir stalls, facilities for recording and broadcasting, the design should also accommodate the specific needs of Chinese orchestral music by incorporating the large-scale, traditional Chinese instruments, especially bells and drums.

## *Ancillary Facilities*

4.33 We recognize that orchestras require significant amount of storage space for large instruments such as harps, drums, bells, double basses, grand pianos etc and for music libraries, and the provision of such space would be essential to ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the WKCD concert hall.

4.34 There should be at least two rehearsal rooms for full-scale orchestral rehearsals.

4.35 The backstage should be spacious enough to accommodate the large number of musicians of the performing groups and a decent meeting place should be provided in close proximity to the stage for the performing groups to meet the press or prestigious guests as well as a backstage canteen or 'green room'.

4.36 Dressing rooms need to be provided to accommodate the maximum number of artists for large-scale productions. Musicians of the resident orchestras should have permanent, dedicated areas for lockers and storage.

4.37 Space should be provided to place the Bianzhong ( 編鐘 ) on the stage of the concert hall.

4.38 Front-of-house facilities should include a convenient and appropriate space for pre-concert talks, a dedicated space for sponsor receptions, excellent catering and service facilities for the audience and dedicated areas for promotional materials.

### **(III) Chamber Music Hall**

- **Artistic and Strategic Significance**

4.39 The Advisory Group recommends to have a Chamber Music Hall with a seating capacity of 600 to 800 which could also cater for ensemble performances in the WKCD. The Advisory Group notes that Hong Kong lacks a dedicated venue for performances of chamber music. A wide range of musical performances, ranging from solo piano recitals, through song and instrumental recitals to string quartet, large ensemble and chamber orchestra performances currently take place in different kinds of non-dedicated venues. The larger existing halls such as the HKCC Concert Hall and the HKCH Concert Hall are too large to be suitable for these more intimate performances while other venues like the APA Concert Hall, with a capacity of only 300 seats, are considered too small. More importantly, the high acoustics requirements of chamber music make it impossible to share use with other music art form like pop music and musicals.

4.40 The Chamber Music Hall in the WKCD will fill the gap in the current provision of venues for recitals and chamber music performances. The Chamber Music Hall will also be used for smaller performances, contemporary music programmes (while artistically vital, frequently attract only small but highly discerning audience) and a large number of educational activities. It is envisaged that it would help to energize and induce audience development of chamber music. Recent experiences in other major cities have demonstrated that the building of a first-class dedicated chamber music hall could stimulate and re-invigorate the musical life of the city by offering a wide range of programmes which had previously failed to make an impact in larger or otherwise unsuitable venues. Sydney's City Recital Hall, Angel Place serves as a good example, and has been responsible for the renaissance of recital, chamber music and chamber orchestral activity in that city.

- **Co-location of the Concert Hall and the Chamber Music Hall**

4.41 The Advisory Group considers that the purpose-built concert hall and the dedicated chamber music hall should have their distinct identity for orchestral music performances. These two performance venues should be co-located in the same complex in the WKCD to create synergy and enhance image-building of this art form.

#### **(IV) The Concept of Theatreland**

4.42 In the original IFP issued in September 2003, the specified CACF have included, inter alia, a Theatre Complex comprising three theatres with seating capacities of at least 2,000, 800 and 400 seats respectively. The Theatre Complex was intended to address to the findings of the consultancy studies mentioned in Chapter 1 above, usage rate of existing facilities, public views as well as opinions from the arts and cultural sector.

4.43 Upon critical re-examination of the need for the Theatre Complex, the Advisory Group has the following observations-

- (a) As the performing arts facilities in the WKCD are planned for the future, the provision of only three theatres in the Theatre Complex in the original IPF would not adequately address the future demand. With the continuous efforts on all fronts in performing arts education and audience building, we are projecting a growth in audience numbers in different art forms. More venues would be needed and suitable space should be reserved to cater for the organic growth of the theatres in the WKCD;
- (b) The performing arts facilities in the WKCD have the mission of nurturing the budding artists and

providing opportunities not only for the established performing arts companies but also the budding small and medium-sized companies with good quality work. This is vital to sustaining the vibrancy and diversity of our performing arts scene. We need to construct more theatres with different ranges of seating capacities to meet users' needs; and

- (c) To achieve the integration and clustering effect, the TheatreLand concept (like that in the West End) for performance venues instead of a stand-alone theatre complex is considered appropriate.

4.44 The TheatreLand concept embodies the street theatre concept. It is a place where high art and popular art forms meet to make available a platform for different art forms, as well as small and medium-sized performing arts groups to showcase their performances. The place should consist of theatres of various sizes, the small and medium-sized theatres in particular, and the configurations of the theatres have to be very flexible. They are not solely for drama performances but also various art forms like, opera, dance, pop music, jazz, stand-up comedy, multi-media performances, experimental drama and tourist shows etc. Furthermore, two or three of these theaters of various sizes can cluster together in one building where catering and commercial facilities are also provided. These theatres will

cover two to three streets in the district and the design of the streets should be performance-friendly to cater for street-performances to attract visitors and tourists.

4.45 Views received indicated that the three theatres proposed in the IFP were not adequate and they are in favour of the idea of having a number of theatres of various sizes. Besides, the Theatreland concept is generally well received by the arts and cultural sector. The acute shortage of theatre venues and the present booking arrangements of LCSD venues have been deterring long-run international musicals from according high priority to staging touring performances in Hong Kong. For long-run musicals that are operated on a highly commercial basis, they need venues capable of accommodating performances running for at least two to three months in order to be financially viable. The Advisory Group considers that there is a need to provide a theatre for overseas long-run musicals in order not to lose out in our competitiveness with our neighbouring cities.

**(a) Great Theatres**

4.46 The Advisory Group recommends to have a Great Theatre [ “the Great Theatre I” ] with a seating capacity of 2,100 to 2,200 in the WKCD. At present, we have the Grand Theatre of 1,734 seats in HKCC and the Lyric Theatre of 1,181 seats in the Academy for Performing Arts as the only centrally located venues for large-size theatrical

performances. It is noted that the usage rate of arts-related activities of the Grand Theatre in HKCC in 2004-05 reached 100 % and the unsuccessful booking applications in 2005-06 amount to a total of 197 days. These centrally located venues are always in great demand, and to ease the demand, the existing concert hall in HKCH is often used for theatrical performances not requiring sophisticated stage facilities.

4.47 As Asia's World City, Hong Kong should have its appeal to international touring performing groups. As expressed by the Really Useful Company (RUG) Ltd at an experience-sharing meeting with the Advisory Group, the lack of suitable performance venues (in terms of seating capacity and location); the LCSD's booking policy which was not compatible with the requirements of long-run musicals and the high venue rental have very often discouraged them, among others, from staging their long-run shows in Hong Kong.

4.48 There should be a performance venue for staging international (such as West End and Broadway) as well as home-grown long-run musicals to attract audience not only from the local community and overseas but more conveniently from the Pearl River Delta where there is great market potential. Both the local arts and cultural sector and the renowned overseas presenter support the provision of the Great Theatre I in the WKCD for long-run musicals and commercial productions which would find a profitable niche.

The Great Theatre I is not intended to be an exclusively dedicated venue for long-run musicals. Other types of presentation, such as musical performances and operas can also be staged there.

- **Hardware Description**

4.49 The Great Theatre I will be a proscenium theatre mainly for overseas long-run musicals/shows; homegrown musicals; large scale theatrical productions, operas, ballets, and musical presentations. The seating capacity of 2,100 to 2,200 seats is recommended having regard to audience comfort and the commercial viability of staging performances there.

4.50 The layout of the Great Theatre I should preferably consist of different levels to allow presenters the flexibility of closing part of the seating areas of the Great Theatre, if required. There is no need for very elaborate stage facilities as overseas long-run productions will usually pull in their own sets and props. However, up-to-standard technical facilities, flexible flying systems and good loading and unloading facilities should be provided. There should be spacious backstage for the cast and the crew to move around.

4.51 As the Government should like to explore the feasibility of using PPP approach in the WKCD, the Advisory Group thinks that this proposed Great Theatre I should have considerable potential of development by PPP because it has

the potential of attracting private sector's participation in building and operating the venue, as the venue is expected to be used mostly for staging long-run musicals run on a commercial basis.

**(b) Medium-sized Theatres**

- **Artistic and Strategic Significance**

4.52 The Advisory Group recommends to have two medium-sized theatres each with a seating capacity of 500 to 800 seats. Regarding the current provision of performance arts venues in Hong Kong, there is a considerable number of medium-sized performance venues in the centrally located area of the territory which fall within the range of 200 to 500 seats for example the Studio Theatre of the HKCC (496 seats), the Theatre of the HKCH (463 seats), the Shouson Theatre of the HK Arts Centre (439 seats), the Drama Theatre of the APA (415 seats) etc. In 2004-05, the usage of the HKCC Studio Theatre and the Theatre of the HKCH reached 99% and 95% respectively and the other two non-LCSD venues mentioned above are always in great demand. The Advisory Group notes the gap in performance venues with seating capacity from 500 to 800 seats. According to the statistics of the unsuccessful booking applications received for the LCSD's medium-size theatres in 2005-06, the total number of unsuccessful bookings for arts-related activities is 1,127 days. The number of days of unsuccessful bookings

for the HKCC Studio Theatre and the HKCH Theatre are 306 days (27%) and 383 days (33%) respectively. The situation of oversubscription should be even more serious if telephone enquiries for bookings have been included in the above figures. For the Shouson Theatre of the Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC), the estimated unmet demand in 2005-06 is about 50% of the successful bookings.

4.53 The two medium-sized theatres should be able to fill the existing gap of medium-sized theatres. They would also be able to create new demand for the venues. They would play an important role in ensuring the development of a vibrant performing arts scene and medium-sized performing groups.

- **Hardware Description**

4.54 These two medium-sized theatres will be multi-form theatres to cater for a wide range of performances including dance, Canton pop concerts for up and coming artists, jazz, stand-up comedy, drama, cabaret, opera, children shows and all-day-round shows for tourists etc.

4.55 Their configuration should be as flexible as possible but consideration can be given to provide a higher standard of acoustics for one of the two theatres so that it will become a more preferred venue for music performances. The Advisory Group does not consider it necessary to specify the

art forms for each of these two theatres as this should be a matter for the future venue management to decide when mapping out the artistic characteristics of these venues.

**(c) Blackbox Theatres**

- **Artistic and Strategic Significance**

4.56 There are only a limited number of small theatres (blackboxes) with a seating capacity below 250 seats in Hong Kong and they are non-LCSD venues. For example the Fringe Studio (80 seats) and the Fringe Theatre (100 seats) in the Hong Kong Fringe Club, the Recital Hall (202 seats) and Studio Theatre (240 seats) in the HKAPA. Against this background, the Advisory Group recommends to have four blackbox theatres each with a seating capacity of 150 to 250 seats to cope with the increasing demand.

4.57 These Blackbox Theatres in the WKCD will help to boost the creativity and vibrancy among the budding performing arts groups. Views gauged at the open consultative forums point to the need for blackbox theatres to provide more opportunities for the development of the local small and medium performing arts groups. There is a proven demand of this size of venues which are suitable for small experimental theatrical productions, contemporary dance performances, film screenings, solo recitals, jazz, puppet shows, children and family shows.

- **Hardware Description**

4.58 The design of these Blackbox Theatres should be simple and flexible to maximize flexibility for the users. The seats should be collapsible to allow interactive communications between the performers and the audience when required, for example children and family shows. The floor of the blackbox theatres should be flat. Again, the venue management will have to decide how these venues are to be operated. We are quite confident that the blackbox theatres can help to build up the atmosphere of encouraging up-and-coming performing arts groups to showcase their work and create the kind of synergy expected of the district. It will also attract young audience to go to the district.

- **The Need for Excellence in the Medium-sized Theatre and Blackbox Theatres**

4.59 The small and medium-sized performing arts groups will find the two medium-sized theatres and the four blackbox theatres suitable for small-scale and experimental productions, having regard to the size of the audience and financial affordability. These facilities are intended for the nurturing of budding artists and creative talents. The Advisory Group considers that as a world-class arts and cultural district, WKCD venues should house performances that reach a high threshold of standard and quality. Thus

budding arts groups and their programmes must reach a certain artistic standard before their performances would be staged in the theatres in WKCD.

## **(V) Mega Performance Venue**

- **Artistic and Strategic Significance**

4.60 The Advisory Group recommends to have a mega performance venue with a maximum seating capacity of 15,000. The seating configuration should allow flexibility of converting the venue into a smaller one with less seats (say 5,000) for smaller size performances. At present, there are 26 performance venues (both LCSD and non-LCSD venues) in Hong Kong with a total seating capacity of 75,625 seats. Among these performance venues, there is no single purpose-built performing venue of over 10,000 seats for mega shows and pop concerts.

4.61 The Hong Kong Coliseum, originally designed as a multi-purpose indoor stadium for different sports, entertainment and assembly activities, has become the most popular venue in presenting pop concerts and big entertainment shows since its opening in 1983. The usage rate of Hong Kong Coliseum in 2005-2006 in respect of arts-related activities reached 84%, (out of venue's total usage rate of 98%) and most of it were for pop concerts and entertainment shows presented by the hirers. In recent years,

non-designated venues in the private sector have been adapted for performing arts use to meet market demand, such as convention and exhibition halls in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Hong Kong International Trade and Exhibition Centre as well as the newly-opened arena in the Asia-World Expo.

4.62 Views received at the focus group meeting with the presenters of the cultural and entertainment events are as follows -

- (a) The presenters complain about the venue constraints of the Hong Kong Coliseum, a non purpose-built venue. They include acoustics, lighting, flying systems, storage space for stage set and props etc. Their production costs have been raised because of the need to overcome these constraints. There is a need for a purpose-built mega size performance venue provided with basic acoustics design and lighting configuration and equipment. There is no need for very fine acoustics because considerable adaptation to lighting, sound and the stage design would usually be made to meet the requirements of the productions;
- (b) The presenters of entertainment events prefer to stage their productions in venue of no less than 10,000 seats for they could earn more admissions

income to offset their production cost per seat and make their productions more financially viable. At present, they have no other choice except the Hong Kong Coliseum;

- (c) The absence of a purpose-built mega size performance venue has prevented the staging of international pop concerts, mega entertainment events and touring orchestral performances in Hong Kong; and
- (d) The new performance venue in the WKCD should factor in flexible seating configurations to meet users' requirements. The flexibility of splitting the large venue of no less than 10, 000 seats into two venues of equal seating capacity has been suggested by the presenters, as this size is considered suitable for presenting concerts of up and coming artists.

4.63 Views received during the open consultative forums also supported the need for a purpose-built mega venue. Taking into account the proven market demand for a mega size performance venue for entertainment events, the presenters' views about the limitations of using non-designated venues to stage their productions and the public views, the Advisory Group recommends to have a mega size purpose-built venue of a maximum seating

capacity of 15,000 seats with flexible seating configuration.

- **Hardware Description**

4.64 In order to plan for the future, the Advisory Group recommends a maximum seating capacity of 15,000 seats. We are aware that venue of about 5,000 seats is much sought after for medium-sized entertainment events by the upcoming artists, and have deliberated the suggestion of satisfying the demand by allowing flexible seating and stage configuration of turning the mega venue into two venues of equal seating capacity for performances to be staged simultaneously. However, we consider that it may not be acoustically and technically feasible to build in the requirements for converting the mega venue into two smaller size venues for performances to be held at the same time. Even if it is feasible, the cost involved will be too high to justify such specifications.

4.65 The Advisory Group concludes that the mega size performance venue should have a maximum seating capacity of 15,000 seats with flexible seating configuration to allow the venue to be converted into smaller seating capacity to meet the requirement of the hirers.

4.66 As for the Hong Kong Coliseum, the Advisory Group understands that there will possibly be a review on its utilization after the arts and cultural facilities have been put

in place in the WKCD. We consider it better to let prevailing market forces to decide on the use of the Hong Kong Coliseum at a suitable time in future.

## **(VI) Water Amphitheatre**

4.67 A Water Amphitheatre was included as one of the CACF in the original IFP. The Amphitheatre, covering an area of 10,000 square meters, will make full use of the semi-open space created by the canopy (one of the Mandatory Requirements of the original IFP) so that the skylight provided by the canopy and the magnificent backdrop of the harbour skyline/sea view will become a distinct characteristic of the WKCD. Apart from multi-media, aquatic, light and sound performances at the water area, it can provide a terraced seating area of around 5,000 seats around the water area for live performances.

4.68 According to the consultancy study commissioned by the former Hong Kong Tourist Association in 1999, Hong Kong has a need for outdoor performance venues for festive events. Views recently received from the presenters of cultural and entertainment events and the public at the consultative forums also confirm the need for outdoor performance venues. In fact, the shortage of suitable outdoor venues has made it difficult to attract renowned international touring groups like the Cirque du Soleil to stage their spectacular performances in Hong Kong. Some views

expressed the need to have an outdoor performance venue of 30,000 seats. At the moment, they can only resort to staging performances at soccer pitches at the LCSD parks or the temporary Tamar site, where they have encountered a lot of frustrations over the site constraints.

4.69 We note the beauty of having an outdoor performance venue that takes advantage of the spectacular harbour view. However, we also consider it prudent to take the following factors into account -

- (a) Learning from the experience of the Hong Kong Stadium, noise pollution is a very serious problem that needs to be addressed. The amplification of the noise of the performances facing the residential area adjacent to the WKCD will be an issue;
- (b) Considering the hot and humid climate of Hong Kong and its rainy season, outdoor performances may not be able to be staged as scheduled due to inclement weather, and the unbearable heat could deter the audience from watching outdoor performances;
- (c) There are other ways to satisfy the need for outdoor performance venues in the WKCD yet addressing the problems mention in (a) and (b)

above, such as the erection of collapsible tent-like structures in the open space for outdoor performances; and

- (d) The piazza areas can also serve as outdoor performance venues.

As a conclusion, we do not recommend to have a Water Amphitheatre in the WKCD.

## **(VII) Piazza Areas**

- **Artistic and Strategic Significance**

4.70 The original IPF includes at least four Piazza Areas of a total area site area of 30,000 square meters (3 hectares) in the form of multi-purpose event spaces for cultural and entertainment activities such as visiting circus, mid-autumn and spring lantern festive fair and festival parades. They should also be provided with suitable greenery for public enjoyment.

4.71 Public views gauged supported having a lot of open space/green space in the WKCD. The Advisory Group unanimously agrees that not only does the WKCD present an unprecedented opportunity for cultural development in Hong Kong, it also makes available a vast piece of open space for the public to enjoy. The open space will serve the following

purposes -

- (a) Open green space for public recreation and leisure. There should be comfortably landscaped open space spread throughout the district. The piazza-like space can attract people particularly families to stroll leisurely in the district. It would create a relaxing atmosphere for the public to enjoy the scenery and the space. Reference can be drawn from the Millennium Park in Chicago for artistic recreational piazza-like space;
- (b) The open space has rich artistic potential. Not only can it be used for outdoor tented or open ticketed performances like shows presented by Cirque du Soleil, it can also be used to provide free cultural entertainment performances for the public. It should complement the ticketed performances inside the performance venues. It would also facilitate arts and culture to reach out to the public for arts education and audience development. It will provide opportunities for the creative and budding artists to take part in outdoor performances. The piazza areas could also be used for visual arts display; and
- (c) The open space should enhance people flow and provide space for the audience to hang out before

and after the performances.

- **Hardware Description**

4.72 The Advisory Group recommends to have Piazza Areas with a total site area of at least 30,000 square meters (3 hectares) throughout the WKCD.

4.73 We consider it desirable to cover part of the Piazza Areas under a small canopy or shelter to enable the public to enjoy the open space and free entertainment in a shady and comfortable environment, particularly during the hot and humid summer in Hong Kong. A semi-open space with a small canopy or shelter would also allow more flexible use of the open space.

4.74 Again, the Advisory Group reiterates the importance of addressing the noise pollution problem for outdoor performances when mapping out the master layout plan of the WKCD. The Piazza Areas must not be compromised to allow for the organic growth of the arts and cultural facilities in the district. Rather, land should be reserved separately from the outset for that purpose.

## **(VIII) Related Arts and Cultural Facilities**

4.75 The objective of WKCD project is to develop the WKCD into an integrated world-class arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism district. Some peripheral facilities would need to be built in the vicinity to create the clustering effect. Space could be set aside for facilities to develop and promote creative industries in the WKCD such as publishing, advertising, design centre, visual arts studio, cinema centres etc. The suggestions include a Mega Book City, arts galleries, cinema centres etc. While acknowledging that some of these facilities could be operated on a commercial basis, there is a need for an appropriate leasing policy in favour of arts-related commercial facilities with a view to enabling these facilities to sustain their business under Hong Kong's economic climate, thereby cultivating the cultural ambience in WKCD. The future WKCD Authority should take the above suggestion for peripheral facilities into account.

4.76 There is also the suggestion to set up a Hong Kong Arts and Cultural Information Centre in the district. It will perform the role as a platform for promoting arts and cultural programmes and more importantly it will help to promote local arts and cultural talents, as people around the world could obtain ready information on the respective arts and culture talents through the Centre. This will create business opportunities for the arts and culture sector. The

future statutory body could consider taking this into account.

4.77 In line with the Advisory Group's support for residency in the performance venues, space should be set aside for facilities of the resident performing arts companies and offices for staff and members of the performing art groups. The Advisory Group has a general consensus that there should be residency arrangements for some of the performing arts groups which are frequent users of facilities like the Concert Hall and the Great Theatre I, but facilities of the resident companies need not be provided inside the performance venues, as they can be provided elsewhere in the district. These facilities should be grouped together in one or two buildings in close proximity to the performance venues for creative talents and the staff of the companies to congregate in and frequent the district, thus creating synergy. A 'separate' leasing policy for the resident performing art groups and performing arts groups is needed in order that the rental level is affordable to them.

4.78 There is a need to set aside space for suitable arts education venues e.g. ballet training school and music school etc. to facilitate the promotion of arts education and nurturing of budding artists. On the suggestion of having a dedicated performing arts high school in the WKCD, the Advisory Group recognizes the need to prepare gifted young performers at an early stage but the feeder high school does not need to be

located in the WKCD.

4.79 Space should be set aside for banquet and conference facilities. These facilities can be suitably integrated with the CACF to create the necessary synergy. There is an increasing demand for these facilities and they can generate income to cross-subsidise other less or non-profit-making facilities in the WKCD.

- **Operational and Technical Issues**

4.80 The Advisory Group considers it necessary to take heed of the following operational and technical issues in planning, design and construction of the proposed performing arts facilities:

- (a) To place emphasis on acoustic design and noise abatement measures of the outdoor performance venues in the WKCD to address the noise problem;
- (b) To install stand-alone subtitle viewing system at the back of the seats in suitable venues to cater for the needs of the audience. These facilities have already been available in a number of world-class performing venues overseas;
- (c) To ensure the design of the seats will allow comfortable leg room for the audience;

- (d) To provide an orchestral lift platform with the flexibility of creating traps, for theatres with a seating capacity of over 400 seats;
- (e) To provide sprung floor for theatre stage for dance performances and for dance studio for rehearsals;
- (f) To equip indoor performing venues with facilities for recording and broadcasting of the performances staged in the venues;
- (g) To ensure that the provision of a user-friendly ticketing system, which is able to adequately support on-line booking outside Hong Kong; and
- (h) To ensure adequate provision of toilet facilities in the performance venues in the WKCD.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Leisure and Tourism Perspectives**

5.1 Guided by its vision of making the WKCD a ‘must-go’ for the tourists, the Advisory Group has taken into consideration the leisure and tourism perspective when recommending the arts and cultural and other facilities in the district. The WKCD has presented a golden opportunity not only for cultural development but also for tourism development in Hong Kong. The arts and cultural facilities and other facilities such as catering and retail facilities need to be clustered together to create synergy and vibrancy in the district. Views gauged from the tourism sector indicate that they are eager to see the early implementation of the WKCD development project for Hong Kong has the risk of losing its competitive edge to our neighbouring cities particularly those that have a more vibrant and energetic nightlife.

- **Tourism Appeal of Arts and Cultural Facilities**

5.2 Of the proposed arts and cultural facilities, the Xiqu Centre has rich ‘must-visit’ appeal to the tourists. Not only should the iconic design of the Xiqu Centre be appealing, the facilities inside the Centre should also be attractive to the tourists, in particular the Tea House venue. The tourists will find it an enjoyable experience to visit a place with

tailor-made performances like Xiqu excerpts, Chinese tea and snacks served, an exhibition hall on Xiqu history and Xiqu-related souvenir shops. The proposed Xiqu Centre is welcomed by the tourism sector.

5.3 Furthermore, the provision of world-class performance venues in the WKCD will attract international orchestral groups and touring musicals to stage their performances. Such performances will certainly attract the tourists particularly those from the Pearl River Delta and the neighbouring cities in the Asia Region. Street performances, with local and international flavour and in an open atmosphere, would no doubt be a plus in attracting tourists.

- **Retail Facilities**

5.4 There should be space for retail facilities spreading over the district to achieve the clustering effect for the local visitors and the tourists. It is understood that there are already some shopping malls planned in the adjacent area. The WKCD should avoid replicating the shops commonly found in the shopping malls elsewhere, and the retailing mix should reflect the character of the district as the cultural hub of our city. The future management of WKCD should take these factors into consideration in the provision of retail facilities.

- **Catering Facilities**

5.5 Catering facilities are very important in energizing a district. The WKCD has good potential to be developed into a gourmet centre to attract internationally renowned restaurants to set up their restaurants in the district. The catering facilities have to be suitably integrated with the arts and cultural facilities, to allow both performance goers (pre/post performance supper) and non-performance goers to hang out to create the atmosphere. They should have their special features e.g. thematic restaurants, jazz bars and restaurants for stand-up comedy etc.

- **Other Tourism Facilities**

5.6 The Advisory Group unanimously agrees that the magnificent backdrop of the waterfront harbour view will become a distinctive characteristic of the WKCD and should be maximized to attract among others, the tourists, like the spectacular tourist spot, the Darling Harbour and the Rocks in Sydney. It is worth pursuing the creative idea of ‘promenade of romance’ i.e. to make use of the waterfront promenade to create a romantic atmosphere for lovers to stroll along and appreciate the charming harbour view in the evening. It will become another attraction for the local residents and tourists.

5.7 The hotel facilities being an integral part of tourism facilities should not be missed out. There should be different classes and styles of hotels including boutique hotels to suit the needs of the tourists. Also, the building of a Hong Kong Eye similar to that of London's in the WKCD to be surrounded by catering and retail facilities to draw people flow is an attractive suggestion. We believe that the tourists will be attracted to places where the locals like to go. The WKCD, once developed into an attraction for the local residents, would naturally draw in the tourists.

5.8 There is a need to ensure that the loading and unloading areas for coaches are adequately provided in the WKCD.

- **Cross-sector Cooperation**

5.9 There is a need, as reflected by the tourism sector and the arts and culture sector, for an institutional platform to facilitate ongoing communication and exchange of views between these two sectors. This should help to devise measures to facilitate the tourists to obtain information on the arts and cultural and entertainment events staged in the WKCD. The in-bound agents should have up-to-date information on arts and cultural and entertainment events to facilitate bookings from overseas. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there should be a user-friendly ticketing system to facilitate

on-line purchasing of tickets from outside Hong Kong for performances in the WKCD.

- **Tourism Hub of the Mainland and the Asia Region**

5.10 The Advisory Group is confident that the WKCD, guided by its vision of becoming a ‘must-visit’ appeal to the tourists and supported by its world-class arts and cultural facilities both in terms of hardware and software, will have a the magnetic effect of drawing tourists to the district. Figures show that 23.4 million tourists came to visit Hong Kong in 2005, which represents 7.1 % increase when compared to 2004. Over 83% of the tourists in 2005 came from Asia Region, of whom 64 % were from the Mainland and 36% from other Asian countries. The high percentage of tourists from the Asia Region illustrates Hong Kong’s position as a tourism hub in the Asia Region. The facilities in the WKCD, when in place, will further enhance Hong Kong’s status as an international cultural metropolis. With the Mainland as our hinterland, Hong Kong should be able to make good use of the WKCD to tap the huge tourism market in the Mainland. The furtherance of tourism in Hong Kong is expected to bring about enormous economic benefits to Hong Kong.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Other Issues Considered**

- **Development of Local Performing Arts Groups**

6.1 As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1 about the current performing arts scene, the Advisory Group registers the fact that a large majority of the local performing arts groups, the major and small and medium-sized performing groups alike, are receiving funding support from the Government in one way or the other.

6.2 For the performance venues in the WKCD, we generally agree that they should aim to operate on a self-financing basis whilst being mindful of the affordability of the venues to both the performing groups and audience. The future management is expected to devise appropriate business strategies and secure sponsorships in operating their venues and facilities. In any case, we consider it necessary for the Government and the performing arts sector to put in place suitable measures to facilitate the long-term development of the sector on the one hand, and to ensure the continued diversity and vibrancy of the performing arts scene on the other. This could include areas like the mechanism of funding support, venue management strategy and support, arts education, nurturing of performing arts talents and arts

administration expertise, marketing and promotion, and solicitation of community participation and corporate sponsorship. The Advisory Group notes that the Government has been reviewing these areas in close consultation with the Committee on Performing Arts.

6.3 As for residency arrangements in the performance venues in the WKCD, the Advisory Group recognizes such need for the performing arts groups not only for the benefit of their long-term development but also for the world-class WKCD district to be on par with other world-class performance venues abroad. On resident companies, we have the following observations –

- (a) Not only should the big performance venues like the Concert Hall and Great Theatre I consider to have residency, small performance venues like the blackbox theatres could also have resident performing companies to cater for the needs of the small and medium-sized groups;
- (b) rehearsal rooms and offices of the resident performing companies need not necessarily be housed inside the performance venues, but rather they can be housed together with other performing companies in close proximity elsewhere in the WKCD to create synergy. However, the Advisory Group considers that facilities for

resident companies of the orchestral performing groups may have to be provided inside their performance venues for practical reasons; and

- (c) for storage space for long-term items (not items imminently required for upcoming performances) of the resident performing companies, consideration can be given to provide it outside the district.

- **Mode of Governance and Venue Management Strategy**

6.4 The Advisory Group is aware that the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD, as stated by the Government, will not be operated under the existing mode for government performing arts venues. It is envisaged that an independent statutory body will be set up to oversee the operation of the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD and the Government is exploring the feasibility of adopting a Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach in developing the facilities. The setting up of the new body is in line with CHC recommendations that emphasis should be given to the principles of ‘people-oriented’, ‘partnership’ and ‘community driven’ in the development of the WKCD.

6.5 In examining the need for and specifications of the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD, the Advisory Group considers it necessary to deliberate on mode of governance of

these facilities as it would have implications on their sustainability.

6.6 We are aware that a large majority of the performing arts groups, both major and small and medium-sized ones, are receiving funding support from the Government. As performance venues in the future WKCD would be operated on a non-government model, we consider that the venue management bodies should seek to build up the artistic character of each venue. Instead of merely managing the venue for hire, they should curate and present their programmes in order to build up the venue characteristics and audience. They should also manage the venues in close partnership with the performing arts groups (particularly the relevant resident companies), as well as devise pro-active and entrepreneurial strategies in arts education, audience building and community involvement. While the venues would be intended to be operated on a self-financing basis, there is a need to strike a suitable balance between financial viability and artistic excellence which is essentially important to making WKCD a world-class arts and cultural, tourism and entertainment district. We also consider the need for cross-subsidizations between the more commercially viable performance venues and the less income-generating ones to ensure the overall financial viability of all the arts and cultural venues in the district.

6.7 Having regard to the vision/artistic characteristics

of different performance venues, there should be different modes of operation, mainly self-financed and subsidized modes and the extent of subsidy may vary between different venues. We envisage that the Theatres predominantly for staging long-run musicals may be able to operate on a self-financing basis but the Concert Hall would need to cross-subsidization from other income sources. Some of the venues may find it feasible to adopt a mixed mode of operation.

6.8 It is crucial that the new statutory body for WKCD should be given sufficient resources for the start-up operation and the sustainability of the arts and cultural facilities, both in terms of hardware and software, in the WKCD. The body should have the autonomy to deploy its funds without having to seek approval from the Government/Legislative Council at regular intervals, as long as it is transparent and accountable in the deployment of its resources.

### **Rationalization of existing Cultural Facilities**

6.9 The Advisory Group recognizes the increasing demand for performance venues in Hong Kong and the fact that there is an acute shortage of newly designed venues to respond to market need. The proposed arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD will alleviate the shortage of performance venues, and space should also be reserved in

WKCD for organic development of arts and cultural activities in the district in the long run. With the facilities in place in the WKCD, it is envisaged that the Government will be in a better position to review the existing performing arts facilities under LCSD, having regard to the changing needs of the performing arts market and the evolution of the local culture and arts scene.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Catering for Future Development**

7.1 The performing arts facilities in the WKCD should target at meeting the long-term development needs of arts and culture in Hong Kong. The Advisory Group considers that the following are possible future development directions which could be examined further in due course.

- **A Pearl River Delta / Regional Hub**

7.2 To realize the vision of developing the WKCD into an integrated world-class arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism district, the arts and cultural facilities and their programmes aim to draw in the people from the local community and the tourists. This is conducive to enhancing Hong Kong's position as an international cultural metropolis. The Advisory Group is also aware of the growth potential of the audience in the Pearl River Delta who could be attracted to attend quality and world-class performances staged in the WKCD performances venues. Moreover, the WKCD can establish closer co-operation with the cultural and arts communities in the Pearl River Delta so that the district can be developed into a cultural gateway for the Pearl River Delta area.

7.3 With its world-class hardware and software facilities, the WKCD should aspire to become the regional hub for arts and cultural activities and be able to open up new opportunities on the cultural front.

- **Organic Development**

7.4 One of the guiding principles, as stated in Chapter 3, is that the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD should be developed in an organic manner. The facilities recommended in Chapter 4 should be provided at the upfront of the WKCD and they are facilities included in the Phase I development. For the provision of the facilities in the subsequent phases, the Advisory Group does not see the need to specify its timing for it should better be determined by the prevailing circumstances and market forces. We recommend the following additional facilities be included in the Phase II development –

- (a) a Great Theatre II with a seating capacity of 1,800 to 1,900 seats; and
- (b) two medium-sized theatres each with a seating capacity of 500 to 800 seats.

7.5 In the light of the proven demand for an additional theatre for large-size theatrical performances for overseas

long-run musicals; home-grown musicals, operas, ballets and musical presentations, we recommend the inclusion of a Great Theatre I of 2,100 to 2,200 seats in Phase I development. We suggest to leave it to the usage of the Great Theatre I to trigger the timing for building the Great Theatre II. It is important that such a need is included in the master layout plan, while the seating and other technical capacities could be revised accordingly at a later stage. Drawing up the requirements right at the planning stage would narrow the lead time required to have the Great Theatre II in place. In line with the principle of the mode of operation of the performance venues in the WKCD, the Great Theatre II should be encouraged to be operated in a self-financing manner and make use of avenues like corporate and private sponsorships to offset the operation costs if necessary.

7.6 The same should apply to the two proposed medium-sized theatres in Phase II. We envisage that there would be an increasing demand for medium-sized theatres to cater for the needs of various art forms but should like to let the market force decide the timing of providing the two theatres in Phase II. Again, a marker has to be put down for the requirement of these two theatres right from the start when drawing up the master layout plan. This forward-looking way of planning will not only shorten the time required for building these two theatres but help to minimize the disruption caused to the operation of the

facilities in Phase I when building the facilities required in Phase II.

7.7 To allow for the organic growth of the performing arts facilities in the district, the crucial thing is to set aside sufficient space for the future WKCD governing body to respond to future demand.

- **Chinese Music Centre (中國音樂中心)**

7.8 When deliberating on the Xiqu Centre in the WKCD, the Advisory Group considers that the small theatre of 400 seats can be used to perform other Chinese music e.g. Hakka songs and Chiu Chow music. We also see the potential for the WKCD to contribute to the further development of Chinese culture and become a centre of Chinese Music (中國音樂中心). It can help to enhance both the locals and the tourists' interest in Chinese music, thereby contributing to the preservation of this art form.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Executive Summary**

#### *Vision*

- 8.1 Developing WKCD into an integrated world-class arts and cultural and entertainment and tourism district with a must-visit appeal to both local residents and visitors.

#### *Guiding Principles*

- 8.2 Aiming to meet the long-term development needs of culture and the arts in Hong Kong, and maintain and sustain the diversity and vibrancy of the performing arts scene in Hong Kong.
- 8.3 Promoting artistic excellence in the hardware and software of the arts and cultural facilities.
- 8.4 Providing a hub for local and international creative talents,
- 8.5 Fostering strategic partnerships with international arts and cultural organizations.

- 8.6 Capacity for arts education and audience building within and outside Hong Kong.
- 8.7 Encouraging wider community participation in arts and culture by providing performing arts facilities generally affordable to both performing groups and audiences.
- 8.8 Developing new mode of management and operation of performing arts venue with greater involvement with the arts community and the public.
- 8.9 Striving to operate performing arts facilities on a self-financing basis with a level playing field and healthy competition.
- 8.10 Clustering and integrating the arts and cultural and the commercial facilities together to create synergy and attract people flow.
- 8.11 Emphasizing on the concept of “central cultural district”.
- 8.12 Allowing space for organic growth and sustainable development.
- 8.13 Developing venues and facilities into attractions for local residents and tourists alike.

- 8.14 Integrating arts and cultural facilities in WKCD with neighbouring areas to cultivate cultural ambience in the vicinity
- 8.15 Building up WKCD as a hub for arts and cultural activities in Pearl River Delta and the region.

*Recommendations on Arts and Cultural Facilities*

Phase I Development

- 8.16 A Xiqu Centre comprising a theatre with a seating capacity of 1,200 to 1,400 seats; a small theatre with a seating capacity of 400 seats, and a Xiqu Tea House type of venue.
- 8.17 A Concert Hall with a maximum seating capacity of 2,000 seats including choir stall.
- 8.18 A Chamber Music Hall with a seating capacity of 600 to 800 seats.
- 8.19 A Great Theatre I with a seating capacity of 2,100 to 2,200 seats.
- 8.20 Two Medium-sized Theatres each with a seating capacity of 500 to 800 seats.

8.21 Four Black Box Theatres each with a seating capacity of 150 to 250 seats.

8.22 A Mega Performance Venue with a maximum seating capacity of 15,000 seats with flexible seating configuration to allow converting the venue into smaller size performance venue.

8.23 Piazza Areas of a total area of at least 30, 000 square meters.

#### Phase II Development

8.24 Requirements for a Great Theatre II of a seating capacity of 1,800 to 1,900 seats and two Medium-sized Theatres each with a seating capacity of 500 to 800 seats should also be catered for when planning the upfront arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD. It should be up to the prevailing market force to decide when these facilities will actually need to be in place.

#### *Relevant Issues Considered*

8.25 Highlighting the need for comprehensive strategy and measures to facilitate the long-term development of the performing arts sector, and sustain the vibrancy and diversity of the performing arts scene in Hong Kong.

- 8.26 The need for appropriate mode of governance and venue management strategy for performing arts venues and facilities.
- 8.27 Ensuring the availability of sufficient resources for the start-up operation and sustainability of the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD.
- 8.28 Highlighting the need for development of cultural software and talents to narrow the gap between the demand for and the supply of talents when the cultural hardware is in place.
- 8.29 Enhancing WKCD as a major tourist attraction of the Mainland and the Asia Region.

**Consultative Committee on the  
Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the  
West Kowloon Cultural District**

**Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group**

**Terms of Reference**

Based on the existing arts and cultural policy and having regard to the current provisions in Hong Kong, to advise the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) on the following –

- ◆ the need for and the major specifications of the various performance venues defined as Core Arts and Cultural Facilities in the WKCD in the Invitation for Proposals issued in September 2003<sup>(Note)</sup>, in particular from the perspectives of enriching performing arts and promoting tourism; and
- ◆ the need for other arts and cultural facilities in WKCD (excluding museums and Art Exhibition Centre).

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<sup>(Note)</sup> The performance venues include:

- (a) a Theatre Complex comprising three theatres with seating capacities of at least 2,000, 800 and 400 seats, respectively;
- (b) a Performance Venue with a seating capacity of at least 10,000 seats;
- (c) a Water Amphitheatre; and
- (d) at least four Piazza Areas.

**Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group**

**Membership**

- Convenor : Hon. Mrs. Selina CHOW LIANG Suk-ye, GBS, JP
- Members : Mr. Timothy CALNIN  
Dr. Darwin CHEN, SBS  
Mr. Jim CHIM Sui-man  
Ms. Celina CHIN Man-wah  
Mr. CHOW Fan-fu  
Dr. Stephen CHOW Chun-kay, BBS, JP  
Mr. Douglas GAUTIER  
Mr. KO Chi-sum, MH  
Mr. Edward LAM Yik-wah  
Prof. LO King-man, BBS, JP  
Ms. Helen NG Han-bing  
Mr. Philip SODEN  
Mr. Joseph TUNG Yao-chung, JP  
Mr. Anthony WONG Yiu-ming  
Mr. Mathias WOO  
Ms. YIP Wing-sie, JP  
Mr. Louis YU Kwok-lit
- Secretary : Assistant Secretary (WKCD) 2,  
Home Affairs Bureau
- In attendance : Deputy Secretary (3) / Principal Assistant Secretary  
(WKCD)1, Home Affairs Bureau  
Deputy Director (Culture) / Assistant Director  
(Performing Arts), Leisure & Cultural Services  
Department  
Chief Manager (Special Project), Leisure & Cultural  
Services Department  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning & Lands) 5,  
Housing, Planning & Lands Bureau (changed to  
Principal Assistant Secretary (WKCD)2, Home Affairs  
Bureau on 1 June 2006)  
A representative from the Architectural Services  
Department  
A representative from the Tourism Commission

**Hong Kong's Cultural Policy**

Hong Kong's cultural policy mainly refers to the policy on culture and the arts. Our policy objective is to create an environment which is conducive to the freedom of artistic expression and creation, and the wider participation in cultural activities. The policy comprises the following four major elements:

- respect freedom of creation and expression
- provide opportunities for participation
- encourage diversified and balanced development
- support environment and conditions (venues, funding, education and administration)

This policy is in line with the core values of Hong Kong as a free, diversified and open society.

2. The Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) Policy Recommendation Report released in March 2003 is the blueprint of Hong Kong's cultural policy. Our cultural policy is generally in line with the six principles laid down by the CHC. The six principles are –

- people-oriented
- pluralism
- freedom of expression and protection of intellectual property
- holistic approach

- partnership
- community-driven

The elaboration of these six principles by CHC are as follows –

- People-oriented

The development of culture cannot be separated from the needs of the people and the community at large. The society of Hong Kong inclines towards short-term interests and utilitarianism at the expense of spiritual pursuit. We need a social environment that pays due respect to culture and the arts.

- Pluralism

Hong Kong is an international city in southern China with the overwhelming majority of the population being Chinese. We must assimilate the best of Chinese and other cultures, and build a cultural environment that starts out from local culture, is grounded in Chinese culture but pluralistic and open to the world.

- Freedom of expression and protection of intellectual property

These are essential conditions for the lively development of a thriving cultural scene. Both the Government and the community must maintain and advance the achievement of Hong Kong in these areas.

- Holistic approach

The development of culture is closely related to many policy areas such as education, urban planning, tourism, creative industries, and trade and economic development. The

Government should take cultural development as an important consideration in formulating policies.

- Partnership

The Government must allocate adequate resources on culture, encourage community participation and establish partnership among the Government, the business community and the cultural sector.

- Community-driven

In the long run, non-government organizations should take the lead in cultural development, and the Government should gradually reduce its direct involvement and management in cultural facilities and activities.

3. As a facilitator, the Government will neither impose an official definition on culture and the arts, nor influence the specific operation of artistic creation or contents of creativity. Instead, we are committed to upholding the freedom of cultural and artistic creation and expression, as well as providing an environment that keenly supports the development of culture and the arts. Therefore, we provide platforms and support to both “high culture” with traditional values as well as to those avant garde artistic expressions.

4. The long tradition of Chinese culture has offered a great treasure house for the sustained development of the artists local culture, as well as its pluralistic and international character where contributes to Hong Kong’s unique cultural position, ‘diversity with identity’. Hong Kong people’s cultural identity should start from acknowledging its local character as well as the

deeply-rooted Chinese cultural traditions. It should also possess a global vision which is open and pluralistic. As a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong should position itself as a metropolis in China which is most capable of bridging China and the world. It is on this premise that Hong Kong will be able to open up new opportunities on the cultural front and to achieve the aim of becoming an international cultural metropolis.

**Leisure & Cultural Services Department  
and Non- Leisure & Cultural Services Department  
Performance Venues**

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Seating Capacity</b>
<b>LCSD Venues</b>		
1. Hong Kong Cultural Centre	Concert Hall	2,019
	Grand Theatre	1,734
	Studio Theatre	496
2. City Hall	Concert Hall	1,434
	Theatre	463
	Recital Hall	111
3. Kwai Tsing Theatre	Auditorium	905
	Lecture Room	98
4. Tsuen Wan Town Hall	Auditorium	1,420
	Cultural Activities Hall	280
5. Tuen Mun Town Hall	Auditorium	1,372
	Cultural Activities Hall	300
6. Sha Tin Town Hall	Auditorium	1,372
	Cultural Activities Hall	300
7. Yuen Long Theatre	Auditorium	919
	Lecture Room	100
8. Ngau Chi Wan Civil Centre	Theatre	354
	Cultural Activities Hall	106
9. Sai Wan Ho Civil Centre	Theatre	471
	Cultural Activities Hall	110
10. Sheung Wan Civic Centre	Theatre	480
	Lecture Hall	150
11. Ko Shan Theatre	Auditorium	1,031
12. Tai Po Civic Centre	Auditorium	756
13. North District Town Hall	Auditorium	498
14. Hong Kong Coliseum	Arena	12,500
15. Queen Elizabeth Stadium	Arena	3,600

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Seating Capacity</b>
	<b>Sub-total :</b>	<b>33,379</b>
<b>Non-LCSD Venues</b>		
16. Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre	Hall 3	7,000
	Grand Hall	3,000
	Convention Hall	1,800
	Theatre 1	637
	Theatre 2	336
17. Sunbeam Theatre	Grand Hall	1,033
18. Hong Kong Arts Centre	Shouson Theatre	439
	Agnes b Cinema	193
	McAulay Studio	80
19. Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts	Lyric Theatre	1,181
	Drama Theatre	415
	Concert Hall	382
	Recital Hall	202
	Studio Theatre	240
	Dance Studio I	120
20. Hong Kong Fringe Club	Fringe Studio	80
	Fringe Theatre	100
21. Baptist University	Academic Community Hall	1,346
22. Polytechnic University	Jockey Club Auditorium	1,084
23. Chinese University	Lee Hysan Concert Hall	265
	Sir Run Run Shaw Hall	1,438
24. City University	Wei Hing Theatre	374
25. Hong Kong International Trade & Exhibition Centre (Kowloon Bay)	Exhibition Hall A	1,300
	Exhibition Hall B	1,500
	Ground Floor Plaza	1,000
	Grand Rotunda	1,500
	Universal Plaza	1,000

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Seating Capacity</b>
	Auditorium	702
26. Asia World-Expo	Arena	13,500
	<b>Sub-total :</b>	<b>42,247</b>
	<b>Total :</b>	<b>75,626</b>

**Meetings, Focus Group Meetings and  
Open Consultative Forums held by  
Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (PATAG)**

PATAG Meeting

**Date**

1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting	Monday, 24 April at 10:00 a.m.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting	Tuesday, 16 May at 3:00 p.m.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting	Thursday, 22 June at 3:00 p.m.
4 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	Thursday, 6 July at 10:00 a.m.
5 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	Saturday, 8 July 2006 at 10:00 a.m.
6 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	Monday, 17 July 2006 at 2:30 p.m.
7 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	Friday, 11 August 2006 at 10:00 a.m.
8 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	Friday, 25 August 2006 at 2:30 p.m.
9 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	Saturday, 26 August 2006 at 9:30 a.m.

Focus Group Meeting

- Meeting with Cantonese Opera Sector on 9 May 2006
- Meeting with Tourism Sector on 22 May 2006
- Meeting with Presenters of Cultural and Entertainment Events on 26 May 2006
- Meeting with the Presenters of the Cantonese Opera Sector on 2 June 2006
- Meeting with the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong on 17 June 2006
- Meeting with the Managing Director of the Really Useful Company, Asia Pacific on 13 July 2006

Open Consultative Forum

- 1<sup>st</sup> session at Lecture Hall, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, Hong Kong
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session at Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, Kowloon Park, Kowloon

**Summary of Discussion of the Focus Group meetings  
and Consultative Forums**

The summary of the discussion of the following meetings/forums are attached –

Focus Group Meeting

- Meeting with Cantonese Opera Sector on 9 May 2006
- Meeting with Tourism Sector on 22 May 2006
- Meeting with Presenters of Cultural and Entertainment Events on 26 May 2006
- Meeting with the Presenters of the Cantonese Opera Sector on 2 June 2006
- Meeting with the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong on 17 June 2006
- Meeting with the Managing Director of the Really Useful Company, Asia Pacific on 13 July 2006

Open Consultative Forums

- 1<sup>st</sup> session at Lecture Hall, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, Hong Kong
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session at Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, Kowloon Park, Kowloon

### [Translation]

Date : 9<sup>th</sup> May 2006 (Tuesday)  
Time : 3:00 pm – 5:15 pm  
Venue : 25/F, Wan Chai Tower  
Attendees : Members of the Performing Arts and Tourism  
Advisory Group and members of the  
Cantonese Opera Industry (see attachment)

### **Summary of the Meeting**

- The Convenor of the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (PATAG) made a welcoming remark to the meeting. She then remarked that the PATAG had written to the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong, the most long-standing and most renowned Cantonese Opera association in Hong Kong, to invite the Association to the meeting to discuss matters relating to the development of Cantonese Opera in the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) project. However, the Association of Hong Kong replied that they were unable to attend the meeting due to busy schedule. The convenor expected to convene another meeting with members of the Association soon for exchange of ideas.
- The Convenor remarked that the PATAG treasured the professional opinions from practitioners of the Cantonese Opera industry. Apart from matters in relation to stage performances, the PATAG would like to have further understanding on the needs of the industry on issues ranging from operatic administration, publicity, ticketing as well as training and rehearsal arrangements etc. The Convenor invited views and opinions from the meeting on the development of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong and the development of the core cultural facilities at the WKCD. The comments and opinions expressed in the meeting were summarized as follows:
  1. An attendee cited the example of Foshan Cantonese Opera Training School to illustrate that training for performing arts and musical performance could be provided by similar professional training schools. Furthermore, the kabuki academies in Japan were interesting attractions for tourists apart from fostering the development of the industry. References could be drawn from these examples in the context of developing cultural facilities at WKCD.

2. Another attendee pointed out that Cantonese Opera had had developed in prosperity in the 1940s and the 1950s, after which the popularity had waned. The reason for the prosperity was because of the existence of Ko Shing Theatre and Lee Theatre. However, there had been acute shortage in venues for staging Cantonese operatic performances in recent years, which had greatly hindered the development of Cantonese Opera. Against this background, it was reasonable if the cultural facilities at WKCD should be tilted slightly in favour of the development of Cantonese Opera.
3. A veteran practitioner from the Cantonese Opera industry gave his personal opinions. According to him:
  - 3.1 Training for budding artists was badly needed for the Cantonese Opera industry. Since Cantonese Opera required professional training over a long period of time, budding artists with unsound foundation who rushed themselves on the performing stage would run the risk of not getting support from the audience. Furthermore, veteran Cantonese Opera artists playing supportive roles in plays who partnered with the budding artists would sometimes risk their reputation as well, due to the lower rating normally given to those performances. The government should treasure renowned Cantonese Opera artists in particular, who were knowledgeable and dedicated to Cantonese Opera for a long period of time.
  - 3.2 As regards venues booking, basically applications had to be submitted to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) twelve months in advance, which failed to address to the actual needs of small to medium sized Cantonese Opera troupes. He cited Sunbeam Theatre as an example, saying that its booking procedure was flexible and convenient which was conducive to the development of small to medium sized Cantonese Opera troupes.
  - 3.3 To promote the art of Cantonese Opera effectively in a flexible manner, two Cantonese Opera Theatres of different seating capacity should be in place at WKCD. The larger theatre should have a capacity of 1,200 – 2,000 seats for the purpose of staging major performances, whereas the smaller theatre should have a capacity of 800 seats, which was meant to be a venue for furtherance development and training of Cantonese Opera performance.
  - 3.4 Furthermore, venues similar to that in the former Kai Tak Amusement Park for staging Cantonese operatic performances on a regular basis, would be conducive to the

promotion of Cantonese Opera to a wider spectrum of audience.

4. An attendee who was new involved in Cantonese Opera expressed the following opinions:
  - 4.1 A comprehensive cultural policy would be conducive to the long term development of Cantonese Opera.
  - 4.2 Prior consideration should be given to the positioning of the venues in WKCD. If the facilities were only to be used for large-scale, market-oriented performances, even commercial opera troupes might find the rent expensive and unaffordable.
  - 4.3 Elements from Cantonese Opera should be incorporated into the venues at WKCD, such as staging more exhibitions or providing more visual installations related to Cantonese Opera.
  - 4.4 Consideration should be given to the establishment of a venue for experimental performances to nurture budding artists.
  - 4.5 Differences in ticket prices between LCSD programmes and non LCSD programmes should be narrowed to avoid vicious competition.
5. Another attendee remarked that the Government should not overlook the contributions of Cantonese Opera music, which was a vehicle for training and promotion. He believed members of the profession should adopt a boarder vision in viewing the planning of the WKCD. While rental policy for venue facilities was subject to further discussions, the facilities per se had to be of high quality design.
6. There were comments that performances should be integrated with training, catering, retails and tourist activities. An attendant remarked that the Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee had considered the idea of establishing a “Cantonese Opera City” to promote Cantonese Opera to a wider spectrum of audience. Furthermore, government subvention for an experimental youth Cantonese Opera troupe would be an effective way to nurture budding Cantonese Opera artists. The attendee provided figures to illustrate the point that the Cantonese Opera industry had remained viable throughout the years partly due to its popularity among the general public, and partly due to its ability to leverage on their operating cost through traditional operation model. Quality venue facilities specifically designed for Cantonese Opera at WKCD might

not necessarily be beneficial to the long term development of the industry, for it might increase the cost of production for Cantonese Opera performances as well. He believed the industry should take a long term view and endeavour to increase the number of audience and to enhance their ability in appreciating Cantonese Opera. The Government should consider providing a permanent performance venue for the Cantonese Opera industry, but whether this venue should be situated at WKCD was an issue to be further examined.

7. An attendee agreed that a “Cantonese Opera City” could promote tourism. The current Yau Ma Tei Theatre could be an option for consideration. He further remarked that consideration should be given on how to attract visitors during day time to the performing venues in WKCD in the future.
8. Another attendee suggested that a training platform specifically designed for providing training to budding Cantonese Opera artists should be in place. An integrated theatre with a capacity of about 800 seats and facilities that could cater for the needs of the Cantonese Opera industry would prove to be beneficial to the overall development of the WKCD.
9. Some attendees indicated the Government should allocate more resources to nurture budding Cantonese Opera artists, whereas renowned artists should focus on attracting more audience. In this regard, they agreed if designated Cantonese Opera venues were in place at WKCD, there would be more room for renowned artists to promote Cantonese Opera.
10. Another veteran practitioner suggested that a forward-looking, advance, state-of-the-art theatre should be in place at WKCD for high standard professional troupes and artists could perform on a long term basis. The Laoshe Tea House at Beijing was cited as an example. High standard performances were the key to achieving greater recognition to the art of Cantonese Opera in attracting more audience. He believed training venues and performance venues were two different issues and should be addressed separately. Cantonese Opera could develop along side with the WKCD project only by combining high standard performances and theatres with artistic ambience and

historic associations.

### **Responses from the PATAG and the Administration**

1. Regarding the development of Cantonese Opera, LCSD remarked that on average 150 performances (with sales of tickets) were staged annually. To promote local art activities, LCSD would invite renowned Cantonese Opera troupes to perform in different places from time to time. Furthermore, LCSD regularly commissioned writing of new operatic scripts in order to have more high quality Cantonese Opera scripts.
2. The Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee had also consulted members of the industry and had come to an understanding that a theatre with a capacity of 1,000-1,200 seats would best meet their needs. The Advisory Committee had planned to discuss in details different options for the promotion of Cantonese Opera with members of the industry soon. The Advisory Committee would carefully examine the needs of the industry, whereas the development of Cantonese Opera would not be confined in WKCD.
3. While considerations were given to the hardware facilities at the WKCD project, corresponding software facilities had to be in place as well. Opinions from end users were of paramount importance. The opinions from more end users would be collected on the subject of quality stage venues at WKCD. Furthermore, the idea of a “Cantonese Opera City” would be further examined.
4. Regarding the operation and management of the venues, since a proposed independent authority might take charge of the overall planning of the WKCD project, a multitude of working models was anticipated.
5. The PATAG would arrange to meet with members from the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong and the promoters of Cantonese Opera later. Comments from the Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee would be taken into consideration with a viewing to coming up with the best proposals.

**Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group  
Consultative Committee on the Core Arts  
and Cultural Facilities  
of the West Kowloon Cultural District**

**Focus Group Meeting  
with the Cantonese Opera Sector  
Held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

**Members Present**

Hon. Mrs. Selina CHOW Liang Suk-yea (Convenor)  
Dr. Stephen CHOW Chun-kay  
Ms. Celina CHIN Man-wah  
Prof. LO King-man  
Ms. Helen NG Han-bing  
Mr. Louis YU Kwok-lit  
Ms. YIP Wing-sie

Persons Attending

Mr. CHAN Kim Fung  
Mr. WEN Choy-bon  
Mr. MA Ho-fai  
Mr. IP Sai-hung  
Mr. LAU Shun  
Mr. Rex NG  
Mr. Charles CHOW Chan-lum  
Mr. YEUNG Wai Shing  
Mr. Mason HUNG  
Hon. LAU Chin-shek

Government Officials

Ms. LEUNG Yuet Yin, Esther  
Deputy Secretary (Home Affairs) 3, Home Affairs Bureau

Ms. SO Chui Ying, Winnie  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs)(Culture) 1, Home  
Affairs Bureau

Mr. FUNG Hao Yin, Vincent  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs) (West Kowloon  
Cultural District) 2, Home Affairs Bureau

Miss TANG In Kwan, Agnes  
Assistant Director (Performing Arts), Leisure and Cultural  
Services Department

Ms. LIU Chiu Fun, Cynthia  
Chief Manager (Special Projects), Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr. FUNG Ka Foon  
Senior Manager (Ko Shan Theatre), Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Secretary

Mrs. Frances YIM  
Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs) (West Kowloon Cultural  
District) 2, Home Affairs Bureau

**Notes of the Focus Group Meeting**  
**with the Tourism Sector**

Date : Monday, 22 May 2006  
Time : 3 pm-5: 30pm  
Venue : Conference Room, 41/F, Revenue Tower, Hong Kong

- Attendance : Please refer to the **Annex**.

The views of the attendees from Tourism sector regarding the development of West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) and related matters were summarized as follows:

- Most attendees expressed that Hong Kong lacked provision of “Boutique Hotel” in recent years. In addition, most hotels did not sufficient space and facilities to cater the needs of banquet function. Therefore, WKCD could fulfill the demand by building more hotels (including “Boutique Hotel” style) with beautiful outlook.
- A number of attendees expressed that different categories of hotels should be built in WKCD to cater for different types of tourists.
- An attendee opined that hotel facilities should not be the only essential element of WKCD because other facilities, such as shopping arcade, outdoor performance venues etc were equally important to draw people flow.
- To maintain the status of a metropolis, some attendees

remarked that entertaining programme with oriental style or local characteristics in WKCD would be welcomed by the tourists.

- Another attendee pointed out that Hong Kong nightlife for tourists was found wanting. WKCD could provide more sightseeing points and entertainment programmes at night for the tourists to enjoy. But he expressed that if the programmes were high art production it would be less appealing to the tourists. He further suggested that tailor-made short entertainment programmes would be welcomed by the tourists because they wanted enjoyment in their short stay in Hong Kong.
- An attendee added that the harbour view in WKCD was an spectacular attraction to the tourists, there should be creative ideas in staging programmes along the waterfront.
- An attendee remarked the importance of having a “Great Tsim Sha Tsui” if WKCD could be linked up with core shopping malls in Tsim Sha Tsui and Tsim Sha Tsui East. He emphasized that a ‘single-out’ WKCD could not create the same kind of synergy and people flow as a “Great Tsim Sha Tsui”.
- An attendee suggested that a sight-seeing tower in WKCD could be both an attraction and icon of the District.
- An attendee stressed the importance of supporting local arts development. He suggested that two major areas for local arts

and international arts could be located at WKCD separately. The government should consider subsidizing the local arts groups at the initial stage while international arts programmes could be self-financed. He believed that most tourists would like to visit places where the local people went. He also wondered whether there was a need to build more shopping malls in WKCD because tourists could go to other parts of Hong Kong for shopping. In addition, he remarked that the keen competition with Macau in arts and cultural development should be one of the main issues that Hong Kong needed to address.

- Generally, most attendees agreed that a more advanced ticketing system to cater for overseas booking, convenient loading sufficient area carparking spaces and characteristic restaurants and café, should all be needed to attract tourists to visit WKCD. Furthermore, the tourism sector would like to be feeded information timely about local arts and cultural activities so that they could recommend these programmes to the tourists.

Feedbacks from the convenor and members of Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group were summarized as follows:

- A member suggested that a Cantonese Opera Theatre to perform excerpts of Cantonese Opera should be built in WKCD to attract tourists.
- A member remarked that we should clearly classify the difference between culture and entertainment so that the

tourists could choose what they wanted to see.

- Another member pointed out that the Tourism Sector could wish to work hand-in-hand with the arts and culture sector to promote the arts of Hong Kong to overseas tourists.
- The Convenor drew the attendees' attention to the comments made by Mr. Douglas Gautier (tabled at the meeting) who has experience on both arts and tourism sectors. She said that Mr Gautier's suggestion of setting up a platform institutionally like the cultural tourism working group to facilitate ongoing communication between the arts and cultural and the tourism sector was very constructive and worth pursuing. She said that the Tourism Board could consider performing this role.
- Some members agreed that partnership between these two sectors was essential in promoting WKCD as international arts icon that would regularly attract visitors all over the world.
- Some members raised that setting up links to feed information of arts and cultural activities to the hotels and travel agents was important and they looked forward to the replacement of the current ticketing system with a new system in the Leisure and Cultural Department performing venues which could support overseas booking.

Secretariat, Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group  
June 2006

**Attendance of the Focus Group Meeting  
with Tourism Sector**

Members of Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group

Present:

Mrs. Selina CHOW (Convenor)

Mr. Timothy CALNIN

Mr. Darwin CHEN

Ms. Celina CHIN

Mr. CHOW Fan-fu

Dr. Stephen CHOW

Mr. KO Chi-sum

Prof. LO King-man

Mr. Philip SODEN

Mr. Joseph TUNG

Ms. YIP Wing-sie

Mr. Edward LAM

Attendees from the Tourism Sector

<b>Name</b>	<b>Company / Organization</b>
Members of the Hong Kong Tourism Board	
1. Mr. Paul Chiu	Director, PC Tours & Travel
2. Ms. Jenny Yeung	General Manager, Marketing and Stations Business, MTRC
Office of the Hong Kong Tourism Board	
3. Mr. Patrick Kwok	Senior Manager, Office of the Hong Kong Tourism Board
Members of the Tourism Strategy Group	
4. Mr. Clarence Chang	Director, Asia Sport & Leisure
5. Mr. Allan Zeman	Director, Lan Kwai Fong Holdings Ltd
6. Hon. Howard Young	Legislative Councillor
7. Mr. Ronnie Ho	Chairman, Hong Kong Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong

Hong Kong Hotels Association

8. Ms. Betty Lui Association Manager, Hong Kong  
Hotels Association

Quality Tourism Services Association

9. Mr. Brian Li Chairman, Quality Tourism Services  
Association
10. Mr. Tommy Li Vice-chairman, Quality Tourism  
Services Association

Representatives of Inbound Travel Agents

11. Mr. Ken Chang Associated Tours Ltd
12. Ms. Gianna Wong Towa Tours Ltd
13. Mr. Paul Leung Holiday World Tours Ltd
14. Mr. Charles Ng Sincere International Travel Service Co.  
Ltd
15. Mr. Albert Cheung Grand Holiday (International) Ltd

Government Officials :

Ms Esther LEUNG

Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3), HAB

Mr Vincent FUNG

Principal Assistant Secretary (WKCD), HAB

Ms Winifred CHUNG

Assistant Commissioner for Tourism 4,  
Tourism Commission

Ms Agnes TANG

Assistant Director (Performing Arts), LCSD

Ms Cynthia LIU

Chief Manager (Special Project), LCSD

Mr LO Tak-sing

Chief Manager(Cultural Presentations), LCSD

Secretary :

Mrs Frances YIM

**Notes of the Focus Group Meeting with the Presenters of  
Cultural and Entertainment Events**

Date : Friday, 26 May 2006  
Time : 10 a.m.-12: 30 p.m.  
Venue : Conference Room, 25/F, Wanchai Tower, Hong Kong

The views of the attendees from Presenters of Cultural & Entertainment Events were summarized as follows-

*An indoor performance venue with a seating capacity of at least 10, 000 seats as proposed in the original Invitation for Proposals (IFP) and related comments on the size of the performance venue needed*

- Many attendees shared that the Hong Kong Coliseum that was not purpose-built as a performing venue had a lot of shortcomings when they presented pop concerts and entertainment events. It became the most popular venue over the years because they had no other choice if they wanted to present at a venue with around 10, 000 seats.
- Most of the attendees opined that there was a need to have a performance venue with no less than 10, 000 seats for popular entertainment. This would help to reduce their overall production cost.
- Consideration should be given to factor in the need to flexibly configure the 10, 000 seats venue into two separate venues each with 5,000 seats when designing the venue. This was a practical consideration since the presenters could make use

the 5,000 seats venue to present concerts for second-tier popular artists for them to gain performance experience.

- An attendee expressed that we should be planning what would be needed in WKCD in 20 years' time. As such, we should project ahead and allow more flexibility for changes in the design of the performing venues. He supported a venue of 5,000 seats and remarked that multi-purpose venue might be multi-useless.
- Regarding the facilities needed for the performance venue of 10,000 seats, a lot of attendees remarked that there must be a spacious backstage provided with sufficient storage space for staging large-scale production. The venue should also be provided with basic acoustic design and lighting configuration and equipment but there was no need for very fine acoustics because considerable adaptation to lighting, sound and the stage design would usually be made when the staging the productions.
- An attendee whose company was experienced in staging overseas productions in Hong Kong remarked that a purpose-built performing venue with a seating capacity ranging from 7,000 to 10,000 in WKCD would be ideal for staging pop concert for international artists.
- An attendee remarked that there should be different sizes of purpose-built performing venues for different kinds of performances. He suggested a venue of 4,000 for classical music performance and a venue of 7,000 for entertainment performance.

- An attendee however expressed that Hong Kong might not need another performance venue of 10, 000 in addition to the existing Hong Kong Coliseum.
- An attendee suggested a performance venue of about 2,000 seats for opera production and another venue of about 3 times of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Studio Theatre (about 1,500 seats) which could cater for various configurations for different performing art forms like music and dance.

#### *Outdoor performance venues*

- A number of attendees remarked that there was an acute shortage of outdoor performance venues which made it impossible to stage renowned overseas outdoor shows in the past such as aviation show and circus show etc. They hope the need could be adequately addressed in WKCD.
- Some attendees raised the issue about noise problem for outdoor performance. As for the need to have a cover for outdoor performance, the attendees said that they would hoist tents that suited their performance and a permanent cover for outdoor performance was not a must.
- A few attendees agreed that there should be more open space and places for food and beverages outside the performing venues for visitors to 'hang out'. This was necessary to draw people together to create the mood for going to theatres and

performances.

*How to attract tourists to the WKCD?*

- An attendee remarked that there should be programmes with local characteristics.
- A few attendees remarked that popular concerts by top local singers had an appeal to visitors from the Mainland and South East Asia but the current booking system under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) could not support on-line ticket booking. Besides, a lot of time and efforts had to be spent if booking of tickets had to be made through the travel agents. There was room for improvement to facilitate visitors from the Mainland and South East Asia to come to Hong Kong for arts and cultural and entertainment performances.

*Mode of operation*

- Nearly all the attendees stressed that the mode of operation of the performance venue in WKCD was important in determining whether their performances would be commercially viable and sustainable. They were informed the venue would come under the management of WKCD Authority but they were very concern about the rental of the venue.
- The booking system for performances currently used for LCSD venues should not be adopted for WKCD performing venues.

### *Others issues*

- Nearly all attendees agreed that apart from the performance venue, other supporting facilities ranging from the transportation network to bring the audience to the WKCD, the need for rehearsal space for the performing groups to toilet facilities should be taken into consideration.
- Reference should be made to the Convent Garden, England for the presenters to share a certain portion of the income from the food and beverages generated from the restaurants and café near the performance venues. This might create initiatives for both the presenters and the owners of the restaurants.
- The design of the performance venues should have an iconic effect that signified Hong Kong.
- A few attendees remarked that it was important to create a conducive environment in WKCD in nurturing talents and educating the younger generation of arts and culture.
- An attendee said that consideration should be given for high arts to cross over with popular entertainment in WKCD instead of separating the two.

Feedbacks from the Convenor and Members of the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group were summarized as follows-

- The Convenor remarked that the objective was to develop WKCD into an integrated world-class arts, cultural and entertainment district. Tourism elements would be injected

into the District to attract people flow. She opined that commercial viability should be taken into account when considering the mode of operation of the performance venues in future.

- A few members raised the need for outdoor performance venues to provide free or low-cost arts and cultural or entertainment programme for the public. This was important to draw people to the district and for arts and cultural programmes to reach out to the public. Adequate open space should be provided for people to 'hang out'.
- A member raised that tourism sector could co-operate with the arts and cultural sector to draw more tourists to WKCD to enjoy performances in future. The creation of this critical mass would bring mutual benefits to both sectors.
- In response the drawback of the present ticket booking system, LCSD's representative said that a new system with on-line booking feature would be in place in September 2006.

Secretariat, Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group  
June 2006

**Attendance of the Focus Group Meeting  
with the Presenters of Cultural & Entertainment Events**

Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group,

Present:

Mrs. Selina CHOW (Convenor)

Mr. Timothy CALNIN

Mr. Darwin CHEN

Mr. CHOW Fan-fu

Dr. Stephen CHOW

Prof. LO King-man

Mr. Louis Yu

Ms. Helen NG

Mr. Douglas GAUTIER

Mr. Jim CHIM

Attendees from the Presenters

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b>Company / Organization</b>
1. Mr CHEUNG Yiu-wing	Managing Director, Yiu Wing Entertainment Co Ltd
2. Mr NG Yu	Chief Executive Officer, Emperor Entertainment Ltd
3. Mr Alex FUNG	General Manager, Emperor Entertainment Ltd

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b>Company / Organization</b>
4. Ms CHAN Sock-fun, Florence	President, Fun Entertainment Co Ltd
5. Ms Catherine YU	Assistant to President, Fun Entertainment Co Ltd
6. Mr Katie CHAN Ka-ying	Managing Director, Ks' Production Co Ltd
7. Mr Vigo YAU	Managing Director, Asia Vigour Productions Ltd
8. Mr. Arthur Ho	Project Director, Wolfman Jack Entertainment (HK) Ltd
9. Ms Hannah YIP	Production Assistant, Wolfman Jack Entertainment (HK) Ltd
10. Ms Grace LANG	Programme Director, Hong Kong Arts Festival
11. Ms Colleen IRONSIDE	Senior Vice President, Live Nation
12. Ms Irene CHEUNG	Executive Vice President / Chief Marketing & Growth Officer, Octagon Prism
13. Ms Brenda WONG	Senior Account Director, Octagon Prism

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b>Company / Organization</b>
14. Mr Ricky FUNG	Chief Executive Officer, International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (Hong Kong Group) Ltd (IFPI)
15. Miss Selina KONG	Director, PR & Promotion of East Asia Entertainment Ltd
16. Mr. Wallace KWOK	Executive, East Asia Music (Holdings) Ltd
17. Mr. David RULE	Serious Staging Limited, Hong Kong

Government Officials :

Ms Esther LEUNG

Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3), HAB

Mr Vincent FUNG

Principal Assistant Secretary (WKCD), HAB

Ms Cynthia LIU

Chief Manager (Special Project), LCSD

Ms Doreen KWAN

Senior Manager (Tourism)42

Tourism Commission

Ms Ophelia LAU

Senior Manager(Stadia)Marketing, LCSD

Ms Ada KWAN

Senior Manager(HKCC)Marketing, LCSD

Secretary:

Mrs. Frances YIM

[Translation]

**Consultative Committee on the  
Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the  
West Kowloon Cultural District**

**Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group**

**Lunch Meeting with Presenters of Cantonese Opera**

- Date : 2 June 2006 (Friday)
- Time : 12:30 pm
- Venue : Super Star Restaurant, Shui On Centre,  
Wanchai, Hong Kong
- Attendees : See **Annex**

**Views of the Presenters of Cantonese Opera are as follows:**

**(1) *Shortcomings of the Ko Shan Theatre as a Cantonese Opera Performance Venue***

- 1.1 The attendees remarked that in spite of several improvement works conducted by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Ko Shan Theatre still failed to meet the requirements of Cantonese opera performances in terms of seat design, backstage area and stage installation. Besides, the location of the Theatre was less than desirable and the aisle design of the venue did not suit the need of the senior audience. In the long run, a purpose-built venue for Cantonese opera performances should be built in the WKCD.
- 1.2 An attendee commented that while there was still room for improvement in the Ko Shan Theatre, the Cantonese opera sector was in imminent need of a performance venue. It

was hoped that the Government should listen to the views of the sector and enhance the facilities in the Theatre as far and as soon as possible.

**(2) A Purpose-built Venue and Other Auxiliary Facilities for Cantonese Opera Performances Should be provided in the WKCD**

- 2.1 It was generally supported that a purpose-built venue with a seating capacity of 1 000 to 1 200 for Cantonese opera performances should be provided in the WKCD. Other ancillary facilities such as rehearsal venues were also indispensable.
- 2.2 As the WKCD was to be developed into a world-class arts, culture, entertainment and tourism district, and Cantonese opera, as an integral part of the Southern Chinese culture with a long tradition, has a considerable appeal to local people and overseas tourists, some attendees suggested that a matshed theatre could be set up outside the purpose-built venue for Cantonese Opera. The theatre would provide opportunities for budding Cantonese opera artists to perform and free entertainment for the visitors to WKCD. It was also proposed that small galleries should be set up to present the history of the development of Cantonese opera and sell souvenirs relating to Cantonese opera. Such facilities would create an ambience for the appreciation of Cantonese opera, which would help to promote the performing art and act as a magnet for people flow.
- 2.3 The attendees stated that regarding the design of the frontstage and backstage areas in the purpose-built venue for Cantonese opera in WKCD, the Cantonese opera sector should be consulted for input from the user's perspective.

**(3) *The Proposed Mode of Operation of the Cantonese Opera Venue in the WKCD***

- 3.1 Most of the attendees held the view that LCSD's mode of operation, particularly the venue hiring policy, lacked flexibility and could not satisfy the needs of Cantonese opera performances. It was hoped that the future WKCD Authority should allow more flexibility on issues regarding venue charges and rental slots.
- 3.2 An attendee stated that the Cantonese opera sector should not rely on the government funding. It would be more pragmatic for the sector to seek financial support from the corporate sector by setting up a fund.
- 3.3 As regards whether the business mode of management could be adopted for the venue of Cantonese opera performances in the WKCD so that the venue hirer could consider establishing partnership with the venue operator in promoting performances in order to increase ticket revenue, most of the attendees were of the view that the feasibility of the proposal deserved further discussion.
- 3.4 It was noted that the sustainability of the Cantonese opera performances and maintenance of high usage rate of the proposed purpose-built venues in WKCD depended to a large extent on whether the venue charge was set at an affordable level and the flexibility allowed in venue management. The future WKCD Authority must take that essential factor into consideration.

**(4) *Training of Cantonese opera performers and building an audience base of the younger generation***

- 4.1 The attendees suggested that the Cantonese opera sector should nurture upcoming performers and promote

Cantonese operatic art to the younger generation. Building a new audience base could replenish the lost generation of audience.

- 4.2 It was pointed out that the number of participants in the Cantonese opera contests for new talents increased every year, proving that many young people were enthusiasts and supporters of Cantonese opera. However, the best way to foster youngsters' interest in Cantonese opera was school education. For example, more introductory lectures could be held on campus to arouse students' interest in Cantonese opera.

### **Response from the Advisory Group Members**

1. The WKCD certainly provided an opportunity for Cantonese opera sector to recognize the heritage and development of Cantonese operatic art. However, the WKCD project was only due for completion in 8 to 10 years' time. Some of the works could commence in the meantime.
2. Regarding the operation and management of the venues in the WKCD, as the proposed WKCD Authority (instead of LCSD) would be responsible for the comprehensive planning of the WKCD in future, it was expected that there would be various modes of collaboration. However, collaboration in the form of partnership between the venue hirers and operators was worth further discussion.
3. The Education and Manpower Bureau would include listening and appreciation of the Cantonese Opera in the music curriculum for secondary schools in 2009. It was considered to be very helpful to the preservation of Cantonese opera.
4. It was agreed that a high quality venue purpose-built for Cantonese Opera performance should be put up in the WKCD. An atmosphere of Cantonese operatic art

appreciation should be created in its vicinity to attract visitors, including tourists, to the WKCD.

**List of Attendees**

Members of Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group :

Convenor : Mrs. Selina CHOW  
Members : Dr. Stephen CHOW  
          : Mr CHOW Fan-fu  
          : Mr Louis YU  
          : Ms Helen NG

班政家代表

- (1) 劉金耀先生 - 鳴芝聲劇團
- (2) 杜韋秀明女士 - 龍飛制作有限公司
- (3) 黃肇生先生 -
- (4)&(5) 高金沛先生夫人
- (6) 伍永熙先生 - 永光明劇團
- (7) 尤聲普太太 - 尤聲普制作有限公司
- (8) 鄧拱璧女士 - 鳳笙輝劇團

Government Officials

Mr. FUNG Hao Yin, Vincent  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs) (West Kowloon  
Cultural District) 1, Home Affairs Bureau

Mrs. Frances YIM  
Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs) (West Kowloon Cultural  
District) 2, Home Affairs Bureau

## Translation

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 (Saturday)  
Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Venue: 25/F, Wai Chai Government Offices  
Persons attending: Members of the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group and members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong

## Notes of Meeting

- The Convenor of the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (the Advisory Group) welcome members to the meeting. She looked forward to working with the Cantonese Opera industry for the overall development of the West Kowloon Cultural District project in a co-operative, innovative and ingenious manner.
- The Convenor invited views from the meeting on the development of Cantonese Opera in relation to the core cultural facilities of the West Kowloon project.
- **Suggestions with regard to the core cultural facilities of the West Kowloon project**
  - 1 A representative from the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (the Association) opined that the Hong Kong Government had never given due respect to the Cantonese Opera. She felt deeply regretful that no representative from the Cantonese Opera industry had been appointed to the Advisory Group. In his opinion, Cantonese Opera was among the most representative performing arts of Hong Kong, for which a dedicated stage facility should be in place at West Kowloon on a permanent basis. Given that the closure of Sunbeam Theatre in 2009, timely consideration should be given to the future development of Cantonese Opera. In this regard, an Independent Group for the Establishment of a Permanent Stage Facility for the Cantonese Opera Industry Under the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (香港八和會館粵劇界爭取永久場地獨立小組) had been formed to urge for the establishment at West Kowloon a Chinese Opera theatre with a seating capacity of 1,200, a mini-theatre with a seating capacity of 400 for the purposes of providing training to and promoting the Cantonese Opera industry, as well as a library and resources centre on Chinese Opera.

- 2 Another representative from the Association opined that, being a special administrative region of China, Hong Kong should set a role model for the performing arts industries of the mainland. In this regard, reference should be drawn from the New York Lincoln Center of the United States to provide for specific stage facilities for different kinds of performing arts, including the Cantonese Opera. He opined that since Chinese Opera was an integral part of the Chinese culture, a Chinese Opera theatre at WKCD would attract more mainland opera troupes to perform in Hong Kong.
- 3 Another representative from the Association agreed that having representatives from outside the Cantonese Opera industry serving on the West Kowloon Advisory Group was beneficial to the development of Cantonese Opera. However, if practitioners of the Cantonese Opera industry could engage in direct discussion, the views of the industry could be more effectively reflected. On the other hand, he expected the Government could nurture new performers for the Cantonese Opera industry in a timely fashion prior to the completion of the WKCD project in order to cope with future demand for performing programmes in the WKCD.
- 4 Earlier on another representative from the Association had opined that in terms of location, accessibility, facilities and mode of operation, the Ko Shan Theatre was not a suitable venue for Cantonese Opera performances. Therefore, he looked forward to having a dedicated Chinese Opera theatre at WKCD to address the current problem of insufficient stage facilities for Cantonese Opera performances.
- 5 A member of the Advisory Group consulted the views of representatives from the Association as to whether a theatre should be built exclusively for Cantonese Opera performances, or whether a number of different theatres with different seating capacity should be built to accommodate different kinds of performing arts, such as drama, Chinese Opera, dances, or even musicals and western opera?
- 6 A representative from the Association responded by saying that a theatre with a seating capacity of 1,200 – 1,400 should be built dedicatedly for traditional Chinese Opera performances. However, should there be spare capacity, the theatre could be made available for other kinds of performances too.

- 7 A member of the Advisory Group opined that since there were specific requirements governing the position of the musical band as well as the position of the dressing rooms for performing artists in Chinese Opera performances, it was advisable to have a dedicated theatre for Cantonese Opera and other local Chinese Opera.
- 8 Another member of the Advisory Group endorsed the idea of having a dedicated and purpose-built Chinese Opera theatre at West Kowloon. He further opined that such a theatre could have functions well beyond stage performances, such as staging Chinese Opera related exhibitions (e.g. masks collection and costumes collection) in the main hall of the theatre for the promotion of the art of Chinese Opera.
- 9 The Convenor consulted the views of the meeting as to whether or not a stage facility similar to that of the Laoshe Tea House in Beijing should be established at West Kowloon, where, in addition to Cantonese Opera performed by budding artists, Cantonese Opera in English and Cantonese Opera for kids could be performed as a further attraction to tourists.
- 10 A representative from the Association agreed that a venue similar to that of the Laoshe Tea House, coupled with simple scheduled performances or of excerpts of Cantonese opera could help attract tourists. Cantonese Opera in English could be a gimmick for consideration too, but it should not be confused with mainstream Cantonese Opera. Another representative mentioned about Prince's Gong Mansion (恭王府) in Beijing where visitors could enjoy Beijing Opera and other traditional programmes and tour round the place full of historical relics.
- 11 Another representative from the Association agreed that Cantonese Opera for kids could help nurture successors for Cantonese Opera and help promote the tourist industry.
- 12 A member of the Advisory Group suggested if a Chinese Opera theatre should be in place at West Kowloon, consideration should be given to the installation of independent sub-title viewing system at each seat to provide sub-title viewing option to the audience.
- 13 A representative from the Association responded by saying that a larger theatre and a smaller theatre should be built

separately, so that the larger theatre could be used for staging high standard professional Cantonese Opera performances, whereas the smaller theatre could be used for providing training to budding artists as well as providing a venue for these new artists to practise their skills.

14 Another representative from the Association remarked that while Cantonese Opera was flexible in terms of musical band arrangement, other local Chinese Opera such as Peking Opera or Kunqu had specific requirements regarding such arrangements. Coupled with the fact that the costumes for Chinese Opera artists were very particular, Chinese Opera theatres required a special design which was distinctive from other categories of performing arts. He also agreed that Cantonese Opera for kids had to be promoted expediently. He suggested that the Education and Manpower Bureau should identify suitable resources from primary school text books for the compilation of scripts for Cantonese Opera for kids.

15 Another representative from the Association emphasised that a Chinese Opera theatre with a seating capacity of 1,200 should be built at West Kowloon. He also stressed that more efforts should be devoted on the part of the Government for the preservation of Chinese Opera.

- **Suggestions with regard to the establishment of a Chinese Opera theatre and related ancillary facilities at West Kowloon**

16 A member of the Advisory Group consulted the views of the meeting as to whether or not a post of Artistic Director should be established if a Chinese Opera theatre should be built at West Kowloon, with the responsibility for the overall planning and promotion of the development of Cantonese Opera. Suitable candidates of the post should be insightful who would be accountable to and subject to the supervision of members of the Board of Directors. Furthermore, should the post also be made responsible for the promotion of more multi-media and cross-sectoral initiatives so as to take Cantonese Opera into a new era?

17 Another member of the Advisory Group suggested that programmes to be performed at the proposed Chinese Opera theatre should be flexible and encompassing in order to allow greater flexibility in the scheduling of programmes.

- 18 Another member of the Advisory Group added that if the post of Artistic Director was to be established, should the candidate, being an official under the accountability system, employ a forward-looking and systematic mode of operation for the long term development of local Cantonese Opera as opposed to the separated, unrelated and individualistic mode of operation which had been prevalent in the Cantonese Opera industry.
- 19 Another member of the Advisory Group opined that if a Chinese Opera theatre was to be built, it should be run in response to market demand. Currently, full version Cantonese Operas were most popular, followed by excerpts of Cantonese opera.
- 20 A representative from the Association responded by saying that only reputable and learnt professionals from the Cantonese Opera industry were eligible for the post of Artistic Director of the Chinese Opera theatre.
- 21 Another representative from the Association agreed that if there was a Chinese Opera theatre at WKCD, the establishment of an Artistic Director would facilitate the operation of the theatre. Feeling that the future development of Cantonese Opera might experience succession problem, he believed both the Government and members of the industry should pave the way for the future development of Cantonese Opera with insight and vision.
- 22 Another representative from the Association suggested that a Hong Kong Cantonese Opera Troupe should be formed as soon as possible under government subvention to bring together local elites in Cantonese Opera as well as professional art administrators for the succession of tradition as well as promotion of the development of Cantonese Opera.
- 23 A member of the Advisory Group suggested that ingenious and innovative approaches should be used to promote and foster the development of Cantonese Opera. It could cross-over with other art form to enhance creativity and innovation.
- 24 Another member of the Advisory Group suggested that if a Hong Kong Cantonese Opera Troupe was to be formed, the troupe should focus on administration and promotion for planning and co-ordinating co-operations between major

Cantonese Opera troupes for the purposes of achieving joint efforts and coherence in promoting Cantonese Opera.

- **Responses from the Advisory Group and the Administration**

1. With regard to the aspiration of the Cantonese Opera industry for the establishment of a dedicated and purpose-built performing venue for Cantonese Opera performances, the Advisory Group had received many supporting opinions.
2. If the Cantonese Opera industry should encounter any difficulties in getting venues, the Convenor of the Advisory Group as well as other government officials would be pleased to offer assistance.
3. The Convenor of the Advisory Group agreed Cantonese Opera was a professional performing art. If there would be a Chinese Opera theatre at West Kowloon, Cantonese Opera as a genre of art would receive greater recognition and be accorded higher social status. Distinctive design for the building of the theatre should be adopted to highlight the characteristics of traditional Chinese Opera.
4. According to a member of the Advisory Group, who was also the Chairman of the Committee on Performing Art, the committee had advised the Government that venues and facilities run by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) should each build up their own distinctive features in order to promote the development of art in a more effective manner. He also believed that if a Chinese Opera theatre would be built at West Kowloon in the future, the programmes should be scheduled strategically with clear goals and direction in mind, as opposed to the current practices under which programmes were scheduled aiming to achieve equality in allocation of resources.

**Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group  
Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural  
Facilities  
of the West Kowloon Cultural District**

**Focus Group Meeting  
with the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong  
Held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

Members present

Hon. Mrs. Selina CHOW Liang Suk-yea (Convenor)  
Dr. Stephen CHOW Chun-kay  
Dr. Darwin Chen  
Prof. LO King-man  
Mr. Jim Chim Sui-man  
Mr. Edward Lam Yik-wah  
Mr. Philip Soden  
Mr. Ko Chi-sum

Persons Attending

Independent Group for the Establishment of a Permanent Stage  
Facility for the Cantonese Opera Industry Under the Chinese  
Artists Association of Hong Kong (八和會館轄下「粵劇界爭取永久場  
地獨立小組」)

Ms. Chan Kim Sing (Chairman of the Chinese Artists Association  
of Hong Kong)

Members : Mr LEE Kei Fung  
Mr SUN Kim Long  
Mr LUNG Goon Ting  
Ms Kit LUK  
Mr LEE Lung  
Mr LEUNG Hon Wai  
Mr LAW Ga Ying

Public Officers Attending

Ms. LEUNG Yuet Yin, Esther  
Deputy Secretary (Home Affairs) 3

Mr. FUNG Hao Yin, Vincent  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs)(West Kowloon) 1

Ms. SO Chui Ying, Winnie,  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs) (Culture) 1

Mr. LAU K C, Danny  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs) (West Kowloon) 2

Ms. LIU Chiu Fun, Cynthia  
Chief Manager (LCSD) (Special Projects)

Mr. FUNG Ka Foon  
Senior Manager (LCSD) (Ko Shan Theatre)

Miss LEE Ming Chun, Teresa  
Senior Manager (LCSD)(Cultural Presentations)Theatre and  
Chinese Opera

Ms. YIP Chi Tung, Carolina  
Manager (Economic Development and Labour Bureau) (Tourism  
Commission)(Tourism) 44

### Secretary

Mrs. Frances YIM  
Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs)(West Kowloon) 2

**Notes of the Meeting with the Managing Director of  
an International Presenters of Musicals**

[ Since no express consent has been given by the Managing Director to release the content of the discussion to the public, the notes of meeting are for internal reference only. ]

**[Translation]**

**Consultative Committee on the  
Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the  
West Kowloon Cultural District**

**Consultation Forum held by  
Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group**

**[ Combined summary of discussion of the two forums ]**

Date : 1 June 2006 (Thursday)

Time : 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Venue : Lecture Hall, 5/F Sheung Wan Civic Centre  
345 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong

Date : 2 June 2006 (Friday)

Time : 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Venue : Lecture Theatre, Hong Kong Heritage Discovery  
Centre, Kowloon Park, Haiphong Road,  
Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

**Overall Concept and suggestions**

- Given the wide encompassing scope of the arts and culture, it was suggested that the Advisory Group should clarify the position of WKCD before discussing the facilities to be provided.
- It was hoped that the project for WKCD could be finalized for implementation without delay.
- An attendee proposed that considerable space should be reserved in the WKCD upon its completion for further development of various art forms in future.
- It was suggested that the Advisory Group should take into full account the needs of overseas tourists in provision of performing venues.

- An attendee had the following opinions towards the development and facilities of the WKCD:
  - a) Effort should be made to attract the overseas cultural tourists;
  - b) Hong Kong should raise its cultural profile through provision of facilities in the WKCD in response to the rising cultural standard on the mainland;
  - c) The development of WKCD should facilitate the merge of foreign culture, Chinese culture and Hong Kong's culture;
  - d) High culture and popular culture should be actively promoted, and cultures of the elderly and the young should be merged;
  
- An attendee commented that the future WKCD project should take stock of the proportion of overseas audience to local audience, and estimate the maximum capacity for audience. Based on the estimate, it could consider the kind of facilities to be provided. The attendee also remarked that whether the facilities of WKCD were culture- or market-oriented would have a bearing on its overall positioning;
  
- One opinion had it that the government should consider legislation to deduct a certain percentage of money from the construction cost of the WKCD for support of the long-term development of culture and the arts.

### **Views on facilities for Cantonese Opera**

- Several attendees supported the provision of performing venues for Cantonese Opera in the WKCD. An attendee noted that as *Kunqu* Opera had been classified by the United Nations as World Cultural Heritage, the Cantonese Opera, being an indigenous art, should be attached with great importance and keenly promoted. Another attendee stated that the WKCD should provide out of its vast area a permanent performing venue for Cantonese Opera sector because many Cantonese Opera performance of high quality were able to attract overseas tourists to Hong Kong.
  
- An attendee expressed disappointment at the failure of the government to provide a positive response to the

appeal of Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong for provision of permanent performing venues for Cantonese Opera. The attendee pointed out that with Sunbeam Theatre's change to other business in 2009, the government had been eagerly promoting the use of Ko Shan Theatre. But the sector found Ko Shan unfit for presentation of new creations and large-scale productions. Besides, the usage rate of both Sunbeam and Ko Shan were approaching saturation. Therefore the sector was in the face of severe shortage of venues and hoped that the Government could provide a quick solution. The attendee added that the sector expected the Cantonese Opera theatre to be built in the WKCD could carry Chinese characteristics and have 1 200 to 1 400 seats. It should be equipped with modern stage facilities for large-scale performance. Priority should be awarded to Cantonese Opera performance with different Cantonese Opera troupes hiring the venue for 10 to 15 days consecutively (including Sunday matinees), while other dates were available for performance of various art forms.

- Some attendees proposed a purpose-built theatre for traditional *xiqu* performance with a capacity of 1 500 seats. Another attendee suggested the purpose-built theatre for Cantonese Opera should be modeled on a matshed. An attendee put forward the proposal of building a 1 500-seat theatre dedicated for performance of traditional *xiqu* and musicals. There was also a proposal for promotion of various Chinese traditional operas.
- A Cantonese Opera practitioner and tutor supported the proposal of construction of several large theatres in the WKCD, one of which being dedicated for Cantonese Opera. The theatre should have Oriental architectural design and comprehensive ancillary facilities to enhance its appeal to audience. The attendee also proposed the WKCD should build a Cantonese Opera complex accommodating facilities such as a theatre and an exhibition hall so as to attract more young audience of Cantonese Opera.
- A number of attendees suggested provision of training venues in the WKCD. Another attendee remarked that, apart from Cantonese Opera training venues, the sector

hoped that libraries and resource centres could also be provided in the WKCD in order to give a big push for the Cantonese Opera.

### **Views on other performing arts facilities**

- An attendee proposed a venue similar to Lincoln Center of the United States be provided in the WKCD, which would have a number of performing venues, each with their own identity and purpose.
- One view held that putting various arts into one complex would affect the uniqueness of individual art, and fail to highlight their characteristics. The architecture of the complex would also lack individuality. He remarked that specialised and dedicated theatres would have more appeal to audience and allow more room for artists to make artistic exploration and attempts.
- An attendee held the view that Hong Kong lacked large outdoors performing venues and therefore a performing venues of 25 000 to 30 000 seats should be built in the WKCD.
- Several attendees proposed construction of opera houses with 2 500 to 3 000, 3 000 and 6 000 to 7 000 seats respectively.
- Regarding the facilities in the theatre, it was suggested that different theatres should be built to cater for the need of programmes for different slots. One attendee proposed a small theatre; another considered the three theatres put forwarded in Invitation for Proposal (IFP) inadequate, and suggested a theatre cluster for promotion of theatre culture and sustainable development for local art groups. An attendee supported the idea of Theatreland as it would give more room for development of the troupes; there was a suggestion for a theatre of 800 to 1 000 seats. Another attendee opined that there should be a grand theatre in the WKCD to alleviate the exceedingly high usage of the one at Hong Kong Cultural Centre.
- One attendee found it puzzling that the IFP did not include the concert hall in its mandatory requirements.

He was of the view that the concert hall of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre was not perfect, and the WKCD should therefore consider providing a quality concert hall, the acoustic effects of which should be checked carefully before and after its completion. Another attendee proposed a 2 500-seat concert hall.

- As there were many limitations in the existing performing venues, one attendee stated that the WKCD should allow more flexibility in its facilities for art groups to conduct appropriate artistic exploration; another attendee opined that the requirements for backstage and technical facilities of the venues must also be taken into account.
- It was pointed out that many art forms were closely related to music, and all venues should have good acoustic effects.

#### **Other facilities and ancillaries**

- An attendee support the provision of piazzas and water amphitheatre in the WKCD as they would provide more free entertainment to the audience and promote public involvement in the arts and culture. Another attendee supported the construction of outdoors performing venues to encourage the young people to participate in the arts because, whether in arts school or piazzas, the youngsters would have an opportunity to learn and appreciate the arts, which would contribute to the successful development of the WKCD in future.
- One attendee proposed the establishment of Chinese Cultural City and Palace Museum (Hong Kong Branch); another attendee suggested the provision of Chinese Cultural Museum and Chinese Literary Art Museum so as to boost the literary standard in Hong Kong and enhance the cultural depth of performances; another attendee suggested building Chinese Book City to put under one roof all the Chinese publications from over the world.
- An attendee suggested establishing an art studio in the WKCD to promote calligraphy and painting, and the art of Chinese characters.

- One opinion found it worth consideration that 20 hectares of land should be allocated from the WKCD for a theme park on Hong Kong's local design so as to attract foreign capital.
- An attendee proposed a venue for exhibitions of artworks.
- An attendee made a suggestion about provision of a sightseeing tower and sightseeing boat tour along the coast so as to attract more tourists. Another attendee opined that the WKCD should make good use of the coastal areas and suggested building a Chinese garden on the seaside, so that people arriving by beautifully decorated sampans could see the sights and appreciate the programmes there.
- One attendee, who was a film director and radio presenter, held the view that if the WKCD was to become an integrated sightseeing, shopping, dining and cultural spot, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts might produce some offstage video programmes at the outdoor area of the WKCD so that visitors could witness the actual video shooting process at close range on site. The measure might help sustain the glorious success of Hong Kong films.
- A representative from the tourism sector considered the provision of a large number of venues, eateries and shops was conducive to drawing people flow to the WKCD. He stated that it was not necessary to construct a single large-scale venue. On the other hand, the provision of different types of venues might offer more alternatives for visitors and tourists.
- An attendee remarked that a considerable number of world-renowned restaurants had started their business in Hong Kong in recent years. Therefore, besides developing performance venues, the WKCD should promote dining culture. To develop Hong Kong into a world gourmet paradise, a dining complex should be established in the WKCD, including:
  - a) 2 to 3 Western restaurants where small-scale opera performances could be presented;
  - b) 1 Chinese folk restaurant; and

c) 1 Asian restaurant.

- One view held that the absence of a home base led to a waste of resources for the existing art groups. The WKCD should provide sufficient auxiliary facilities for these art groups for more effective use of resources. It was also considered that local art groups could showcase the unique features of the culture of Hong Kong. It was recommended that top-class and qualified local art groups should be allowed to take part in the management of cultural infrastructure and have the priority to use these facilities in the WKCD. Should they become resident companies of WKCD, it would not only enhance the cultural standard of the WKCD, but also relieve the pressure on the usage of the venues in other districts in Hong Kong.
- An attendee held the view that the focus of the WKCD on culture should be reflected in the appearances of its restaurants, shops and even car park. Another attendee commented that shops with arts and cultural characteristics should be provided in the WKCD to attract people flow.

### **Software Development and Programme Presentation**

- Many attendees stated that if the WKCD was to be developed into a world-class integrated arts, culture and entertainment district, software should also be emphasized alongside the provision of top-class hardware facilities. This included audience building and cultivation of artistic talents. Several attendees hoped that an arts school would be established in the WKCD to build audience and nurture artistic talents. Besides, it was held that the WKCD should be not only the culture core in Hong Kong but also the culture hub in the Pearl River Delta, Southern China, and even Asia. Various arts schools for performing arts, visual arts, art criticism, etc should be set up in the WKCD to nurture new generations in arts and culture. It was hoped that arts education could be implemented in senior primary and junior secondary schools as soon as possible to nurture a large number of artists and audience to prepare for the WKCD to be completed in 10 years' time. It was also considered that artistic elements could be incorporated in the formal curriculum.

- A Cantonese opera professional recommended that the Government should establish the “Hong Kong Cantonese Opera Troupe” to be composed of professional actors and musicians as soon as possible so that performances could be staged to promote the traditional art once the WKCD project was completed.
- An attendee opined that the nurturing of arts administrators should be emphasized in the development of WKCD, because they could help take up administrative tasks such as the widening of audience base, promotion of the appreciation of arts, as well as raising funds. The attendee noted that professional and full-time arts administrators would facilitate the overall development of the WKCD.
- An attendee mentioned that the world’s first-class artists should be invited to stage performances in WKCD so as to showcase Hong Kong as an international city assimilating Chinese and Western cultures. Besides, since a considerable number of artists from the Mainland had moved to Hong Kong and actively promoted arts activities in the community, it was suggested that the future WKCD should continue with their works and sustain the development of community and popular arts.
- It was suggested that an arts and culture expo could be held in the WKCD to tie in with the development of creative economy in Hong Kong.

### **Financial Arrangement**

- An attendee suggested that the Advisory Group should consult major business corporations on the feasibility of introducing foreign capital into the WKCD. He stated that the Advisory Group should examine and come up with the maximum number of audience to be attracted to the WKCD. The data would be used as a development parameter of venues so as to avoid oversupply of seats, which might lead to competition with venues elsewhere in Hong Kong.

## **Other Suggestions**

- One of the views held that the existing arts and culture resources had tilted towards flagship art groups. Therefore, resources should be redeployed to support Cantonese operatic art in future. It was also hoped that the Government should consider reserving a period of around 120 to 150 days each year in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre for Cantonese opera upon the expiry of tenancy in Sunbeam Theatre. It was further recommended that the Government should allocate a sum of \$0.2 to 0.5 billion to the Cantonese Opera Development Fund. Another attendee suggested that the Government should devote more resources to the promotion of Cantonese opera among children and youngsters.
- An attendee expressed concern over the procedures and methods of the Advisory Group in gauging public views after the consultation forums.

## **Responses from the Convenor and Group Members**

- The WKCD project could enhance not only the cultural standard of Hong Kong but also economic efficiency of the market.
- The WKCD should be an integrated development district where well equipped performance venues of unique characteristics were provided to create an artistic ambience to attract people flow from local and abroad. Therefore, combining performance venues, shops and eateries could draw more visitors. The Advisory Group had not made any final decision in the architectural form of each venue.
- There was no imminent need to decide whether the development of WKCD should be culture-oriented or market-oriented. The orientation could be adjusted with regard to the changes in the society in future. Besides, sufficient space should be reserved and flexible management should be allowed to meet different needs of future development in the society.

- The Advisory Group attached great importance to software development. In addition to the provision of hardware, development of auxiliary facilities and talents should be taken into account.
- Local art groups were integral to the development of local culture.
- If there were resident companies in the WKCD, the huge number of residing professional artists would better facilitate arts education, which was beneficial to the development of arts schools.
- At present, a large number of arts administrators were serving at large-scale art groups. However, it was agreed that more professional arts administrators should be nurtured for the WKCD in future.
- As the requirements of art forms varied, there should be different audio facilities and design for different venues. The venues should possess their own characteristics to satisfy the needs of various programmes.
- A Member pointed out that the mass media played a major role in culture development and called on the media not to stress utilitarianism as the sole principle for operation of the WKCD.
- A Member agreed that a performing arts school should be established in the WKCD and considered that arts education should be introduced to the younger generation as soon as possible. Reference could be drawn from the operation of arts schools on the Mainland where students studied general subjects for half a day and art subjects for the other half. A Member pointed out that though parents recognized the importance of the cultivation of appreciation of arts since childhood, they raised objection if their children were to pursue arts as a lifelong career. It was hoped that the Hong Kong society would attach more importance to arts and culture, otherwise it would be difficult to appeal to the community for support even if an arts school was established in the WKCD.

- The Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee (COAC) had discussed the establishment of “Hong Kong Experimental Cantonese Opera Troupe”. The COAC had also discussed with the Education and Manpower Bureau on the inclusion of elements of Cantonese Opera in the school music curriculum from 2009.
- A Member supported the development of a purpose-built venue for Cantonese opera in the WKCD and commented that apart from staging performances, the venue might hold exhibitions of costumes and theatrical masks of Cantonese opera in the main lobby to promote Cantonese operatic art to the audience in a more comprehensive approach.
- Recently many members of the public had expressed their views on the establishment of a purpose-built venue for Cantonese opera in various consultative occasions. The Advisory Group would take follow-up actions as appropriate.
- The Advisory Group would further discuss the views of the public to consolidate and submit a report to the Financial Matters Advisory Group. It had yet to make a final decision on any suggestion.

**Overseas Experience**

The Advisory Group, in re-examining the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities for the West Kowloon Cultural District, has drawn experience from overseas prominent performing arts facilities for reference. The overseas performing arts facilities involved are listed below.

- (a) Barbican Centre, London  
<http://www.barbican.org.uk/about-barbican>
- (b) Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts, New York  
<http://www.lincolncenter.org/>
- (c) Sydney Opera House, Sydney  
<http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/>
- (d) The Esplanade  
<http://www.esplanade.com/>
- (e) The Broadway, New York  
[http://www.livebroadway.com/mission\\_and\\_history.html](http://www.livebroadway.com/mission_and_history.html)
- (f) Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles  
<http://wdch.laphil.com/home.cfm>
- (g) Tokyo International Forum  
<http://www.t-i-forum.co.jp/english/>
- (h) Seoul Arts Centre  
<http://www.sac.or.kr/eng/>
- (i) Beijing National Grand Theatre  
<http://www.nationalgrandtheater.com/english/index.htm>
- (j) Shanghai Grand Theatre  
<http://www.shgtheatre.com/equipment/index1.asp>

(k) Royal Albert Hall, London

<http://www.royalalberthall.com/index2.aspx>

(l) Wembley Stadium and Wembley Arena, London

<http://www.wembleystadium.com>

<http://www.wembley.co.uk/venues/organisers/arena.htm>

(m) London West End Theatres

<http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/westend>