Statement on cultural co-operation released at Asia Cultural co-operation Forum (with photos)

The "Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum 2009", hosted by the Home Affairs Bureau, was officially opened at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre in Kowloon Park today (October 8).

The participating cultural minister and senior officials of Asian countries discussed a number of issues pertinent to the development of culture and the arts and the enhancement of cultural co-operation in the region, and agreed on a statement on cultural co-operation.

Joining this year's Asia Culture Co-operation Forum (ACCF) are the Mainland, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The ACCF was launched in 2003 by the Home Affairs Bureau to foster regional cultural co-operation, including enhancing cultural partnership among governments in the Asian region, promoting private sector initiatives in cultural and creative industries, and enhancing the profile of Hong Kong as Asia's cultural and creative hub.

Carrying the theme "The Cultural Asian", this year's ACCF is the 6th forum that Hong Kong has hosted. The panel discussion of the forum was opened up for the first time for the local cultural sector and stakeholders to take part and exchange views with the participating cultural minister and senior officials. Speeches on "Arts in Living, Living in Arts" were delivered, followed by a question-and-answer session.

Speaking at the panel discussion, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, said the inductive mode of thinking of the Oriental cultural system had made Asian civilisations more tolerant and ready to learn from others. Take Hong Kong as an example. The rise of Hong Kong is the result of merging the best of both worlds of the East and the West.

"Leveraging our vibrant and diverse culture and unique location in Asia, we have a vision of positioning Hong Kong as an international cultural hub through the development of a massive cultural district on a prime harbourfront site. The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) will be an integrated arts facility spanning 40 hectares. The Government has already committed an upfront endowment of almost HK$21.6 billion to the WKCD project," he said.
A statement on cultural co-operation was released following a joint meeting by the cultural minister and senior officials. They have pledged to dedicate their efforts in five areas of work -

a) provide opportunities for everyone to experience art and develop individuals' potential in culture;

b) further emphasise culture a driver of economic growth and provide an environment that is conducive to the development of cultural and creative enterprises and industries;

c) continue to support local and global cultural dialogue and promote free flow of cultural exchanges in the region;

d) accord priority to the preservation of cultural heritage; and

e) encourage creative endeavours of people, particularly of the younger generation.

To hasten the implementation of the joint statement, participating Asian countries pledged to contribute continuous efforts to the promotion and co-ordination of cultural programmes and initiatives in line with the above principles among members of ACCF.

The Minister of Culture, Dr Cai Wu, and leaders of cultural departments of various provinces, cities and special administrative region of the Mainland also held a meeting on "Cultural Heritage and Innovation" this afternoon.

The Home Affairs Bureau and various cultural organisations will co-host three thematic sessions of the Open Forum at the Drama Theatre of Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts tomorrow and Saturday (October 9 and 10). The themes are "International Exchange and Promotion - A Performing Arts Perspective"; "Blending In with Arts" and "The Animated Asia: Future Development of the International Positioning of Asian Animation" respectively.

Ends/Thursday, October 8, 2009
Issued at HKT 18:42

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