

SHA's transcript on West Kowloon Cultural District Development

Following is the transcript of remarks (English portion) by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, at a media session on the West Kowloon Cultural District Development this (February 22) morning:

Reporter: Now the Government is re-thinking the project of West Kowloon. What about cultural policy? There is criticism that there's no comprehensive and detailed cultural policy...

Secretary for Home Affairs: The Government does have a cultural policy and this cultural policy has remained a steadfast underlying principle in our administration in managing art facilities and art funds. So what most people are requesting the Government to do is to engage them into a dialogue in discussing art funding policy or art venue policy. These are very practical issues and we will continue to discuss with the community at large of the need and how the Government can realise them. The underlying principle of a cultural policy, which is an umbrella policy, is one that we respect creative freedom and freedom of expression. We will try the Government's best to provide an opportunity for every citizen to come into contact with art and cultural presentations and participate in cultural and artistic activities and at the same time encourage a diversified development of art and cultural initiatives and at the same time the Government would adopt the role of a catalyst, or an advocate but not necessarily as a manager for art and cultural affairs. In so doing, we provide support in terms of venues, in terms of art education policy, art funding and art administration, a system of administrator initiative to promote and sustain our art and cultural activities. These are our cultural policies.

Reporter: In considering of what facilities should be included in the project, would it be demand driven?

Secretary for Home Affairs: It is a balance between demand and supply. Some consultants have informed the Government that in planning for cultural venues and artistic venues, frequently it is supply driven rather than demand driven. But then again we believe it is prudent to listen to the voice of the community in their artistic aspirations.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Ends/Wednesday, February 22, 2006

NNNN