

Speech by SHA at LegCo Special Finance Committee Meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, at the Special Meeting of Legislative Council Finance Committee today (March 26):

Chairperson,

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) is responsible for quite a diversified policy portfolio covering a total of eight Heads of Expenditure. Total expenditure on policy and programme areas under the purview of HAB amounts to \$9,621 million in 2010-11. Our priority areas with additional resources provided in the new financial year are as follows :

Arts and Culture

On the arts and culture front, we hope to reserve a provision of \$486 million in recurrent expenditure over the next five years for arts programme development, audience building and enhancement of arts education and manpower training, with a view to strengthening Hong Kong's cultural software in light of the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). In this regard, we will :

(a) sustain the provision of additional resources to nine major performing arts groups, and support small and medium sized arts groups and individual artists in developing quality programmes, promoting outreach activities and advancing cultural exchanges;

(b) provide additional resources to the Hong Kong Arts Festival for programme enrichment and further brand-building;

(c) line up trainee programmes to provide more internship positions and training opportunities for arts administrators;

(d) support student participation in cultural activities, and encourage their attendance at and appreciation of arts programmes by way of guided tours, seminars and other activities outside the classroom setting; and

(e) step up the promotion of public art and organise more popular arts and cultural

activities with a view to integrating the arts into our community.

Development of Cantonese Opera

Cantonese opera was officially inscribed onto the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on September 30, 2009, making it the first item of world intangible cultural heritage in Hong Kong. We propose to inject \$69 million from the above additional funding into the Cantonese Opera Development Fund to further support various Cantonese opera preservation, promotion and development projects, including \$9 million for the "Hong Kong Cantonese Opera Troupe for New Talent" Three Year Grant Scheme to nurture new talents.

On the provision of performance venues, we will seek approval for the provision of approximately \$730 million funding for the construction of an annex building at the Ko Shan Theatre. This multi purpose and modernised venue will provide a full range of facilities to support the development of Cantonese opera, including a medium sized theatre for staging innovative and experimental performances, professional training facilities, as well as an exhibition hall and a resource centre.

World Expo in Shanghai

Shanghai will host the World Expo from May to October this year. This is another premier event that will put our country in the international spotlight since the Beijing Olympics. To showcase the creativity of Hong Kong to both the Chinese and international audiences, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will organise a series of arts exhibitions and co ordinate various performances by local arts groups in Shanghai during the Expo period. The Hong Kong Arts Development Council will also encourage arts groups to stage performances in Shanghai during the same period.

The Budget 2010 11 delivered in late February demonstrates the Government's sustainable and long term commitment to the development of the arts, culture and sports in Hong Kong. We will inject \$3 billion into the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF) as seed money and use the annual investment returns to subsidise the long term development of the arts, culture and sports. It is our plan that the injected fund will be divided equally between the arts and sports portions of the ASDF. Based on an annual rate of return of 5%, it is estimated that the annual investment returns for each portion will be approximately \$75 million, which, we believe, will facilitate the

further development of the arts, culture and sports in Hong Kong.

Therefore, we will provide additional resources of over \$800 million (excluding the cost of capital works) over the next five years for the promotion of the arts and culture. We are committed to enriching the spiritual life of our citizens, nurturing a society that savours the arts and culture through appreciation and participation, inspiring creativity and promoting diversified cultural developments, and capitalising on the opportunities offered by the WKCD project to boost the city's standing in the world cultural map.

Sports Development

In 2010 11, we will continue to promote the development of sport in Hong Kong in accordance with the following three strategic directions : to help our elite athletes achieve excellence; to develop a strong sporting culture in the community; and to raise our profile as a centre for international sports events.

Support for Football

We have announced the findings of the consultancy study on football development and are planning to implement a series of measures to promote the development of the sport in Hong Kong. We have consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs, the members of which are generally supportive of the proposed measures. In the next few years, we plan to provide additional resources to support the development of local football, with a view to raising the professionalism of football teams and strengthening the development of young players. The Football Taskforce will shortly start work.

To enhance the promotion of football and other team sports that have greater potential to appeal to the general public, we plan to facilitate the hiring of high performance coaches, the organisation of more training programmes and the fielding of more athletes in international competitions at various levels by the national sports associations (NSAs).

Feeder Programmes

We also wish to extend the feeder programmes to more sports, and to provide subvention to NSAs so that they can organise more school sports programmes,

development schemes and district based competitions. We hope these programmes will encourage young people to pursue healthy lifestyles, develop team spirit and a sense of responsibility, and resist the temptations of drugs and other bad habits, as well as helping to identify and develop more outstanding athletes for Hong Kong.

We will continue to implement other existing measures, including providing support for athletes' preparation for and participation in international events, and helping NSAs organise more major sports events.

Earlier this month (March), the Hong Kong Sports Institute returned from its temporary base at Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village to its refurbished venue at Fo Tan. The redevelopment of the HKSI is progressing well. In the coming year, we will continue to co-operate with the HKSI closely to monitor the implementation of the redevelopment project, with a view to providing the optimum training environment and facilities for our athletes as early as possible.

This concludes my opening remarks. My colleagues and I will be glad to answer questions from Members.

Thank you.

Ends/Friday, March 26, 2010

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