

Twelfth Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Co-operation Meeting held today (with photos)

Cultural officials from Guangdong Province, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR) signed tripartite memoranda of intention on a number of collaboration projects at the 12th Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Co-operation Meeting in Guangzhou today (June 23).

Among the participating officials were the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing; the Director General of the Department of Culture of Guangdong Province, Mr Fang Jianhong; and the Acting President of the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR, Ms Wong Sai-hong.

Mr Tsang said in his concluding remarks that the Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Co-operation Meeting was being held for the 12th time and coincided with the first year of implementation of the National 12th Five-Year Plan. Riding on the invaluable opportunities brought about by the Plan, the HKSAR Government was committed to promoting the development of arts and culture, he said.

Mr Tsang said that, in addition to its work on the West Kowloon Cultural District, the HKSAR Government would continue to devote resources and implement measures toward preserving and promoting traditional culture while encouraging creativity and diversity. In taking Hong Kong's metropolitan culture to new heights, the Government would also press forward with programme development, arts education, manpower training, audience building and cultural exchanges.

Mr Tsang said the three places should team up to generate more cultural projects by focusing on what they have in common.

"The arts and culture of the three places come from the same roots, yet each has its own uniqueness. When coming together, we form a region with the strongest economy and with the most openness on the Mainland. We should and will be able to expand our cultural influence, adopt a new mode of reaching out, and make our contributions to enhance the global competitiveness of Chinese culture," Mr Tsang said.

He added that the imminent task for the cultural sector and its management

personnel was to jointly build a strong culture in the Greater Pearl River Delta and to enhance the overall strength of the region. To make it work, the three places have to gradually reduce barriers and obstacles of all kinds, and foster a mature cultural market.

To further strengthen co-operation, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau signed tripartite memoranda of intention on a number of collaboration projects at the plenary meeting this afternoon. The three sides agreed to work jointly on a major exhibition entitled "Ceramics of the Maritime Silk Road - Relics from the Pearl River Delta Region", a co-choreographed dance performance and the training of Cantonese opera artists.

"Ceramics of the Maritime Silk Road" is a large-scale roving exhibition jointly organised by the Guangdong Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of Art and the Museum of Macao. Focusing on the china exported to Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe, the exhibition will describe the long history of ceramics and how the trade has affected those regions.

The three places take turns to host the Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Co-operation Meetings. Six working group sessions were held yesterday afternoon to discuss specific topics, namely exchanges for performing artists and co-organisation of cultural programmes, mutual exchange of cultural information, co-operation in museum services, co-operation and exchange in public libraries, intangible cultural heritage, and research into the development of cultural and creative industries.

Since November 2002, the Department of Culture of Guangdong Province, the Home Affairs Bureau of the HKSAR and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR have established a framework for strengthening cultural co-operation within the Greater River Pearl Delta region. An agreement on cultural co-operation between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau was signed in August 2003. Meetings have been held in the three places from time to time, and six working groups were set up to implement and follow up on the recommendations for co-operation in different areas. The 13th Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Co-operation Meeting will be held in Hong Kong next year.

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