

SHA attends ASEAN meetings in Singapore (with photo)

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, attended the Fifth ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Plus Three (China, Japan, Korea) Meeting for Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts, and the First ASEAN-China Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts Meeting in Singapore today (May 24) to discuss with his counterparts ways to enhance cultural exchanges within the region.

Mr Tsang departed for Singapore this morning. On arrival he attended the ASEAN meetings as a member of the Chinese delegation and joined the welcome reception hosted by the ASEAN for cultural ministers and senior officials this evening. The Chinese delegation is led by the Minister of Culture, Dr Cai Wu.

During the ASEAN-China meeting, Mr Tsang said, "Hong Kong will actively do its part to contribute to the building up of cultural identity of the Asian region. We will work together immediately for an early harvest.

"The meeting has established a mechanism on cultural co-operation between the ASEAN and China, a significant step in jointly promoting cultural development in the region. We are glad to have the opportunity to play a role in establishing this mechanism, which will further enhance cultural development in Hong Kong," Mr Tsang said after the meeting.

"Southeast Asia has a rich and diverse cultural history. Enhanced co-operation and exchange between various places will not only promote cultural development but also strengthen the friendship of people within the region," he said.

The SAR Government has all along strived to promote cultural exchange with overseas countries. Over the years, cultural exchange and co-operation between Hong Kong and ASEAN members has been strengthened in various ways, such as through the co-organisation of cultural events. Of ASEAN's ten member countries, Hong Kong has signed memoranda of understanding on cultural co-operation with the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

Mr Tsang said that the SAR Government attaches great importance to cultural exchange and co-operation with Asian countries, including the ASEAN. The Home Affairs Bureau has organised the Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum (ACCF) since 2003 to enable cultural ministers in the region to share insights and experiences on

cultural policy. Cultural ministers and senior officials of 11 Asian countries, including eight ASEAN member countries, came to Hong Kong to attend the seventh ACCF last year under the theme of "Intangible Cultural Heritage - Continuation and Enhancement".

Looking ahead, Mr Tsang noted that the Government would continue to strengthen cultural exchange and co-operation with ASEAN members to further promote cultural development in the region.

Together with Dr Cai Wu and representatives of the ASEAN member countries, Mr Tsang will meet the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, tomorrow. He will also attend the opening ceremony of the ASEAN Arts Festival.

Mr Tsang will return to Hong Kong on May 26.

Ends/Thursday, May 24, 2012

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