

SHA's speech at Opening Ceremony of 6th World Congress for International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, at the Opening Ceremony of the 6th World Congress for International Drama/Theatre and Education Association today (July 16)(English only):

Mr Baron Cohen, Mr Tsin, Dr Cheung, Mr Mok, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here with you today at this Opening Ceremony of the 6th World Congress for International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA). To those of you visiting us from different parts of the world, welcome to Hong Kong.

The International Drama/Theatre and Education Association, as a UNESCO NGO, has always endeavoured to use drama/theatre education as a means to help youngsters develop their potential, improve their confidence, stimulate their creativity and cultivate their communication skills and critical thinking, so that they can learn to deal with the problems in work and life more effectively. I think this is indeed a really meaningful task. I am much inspired by the acronym of the Association — IDEA. Albert Einstein had agreed with the definition that “Education is that which remains, if one has forgotten everything he learned in school.” In theatre, curtains rise and fall; scenes and sets may be forgotten, but what will always remain is the creativity in life.

Arts education is fundamental to the long-term and healthy development of our culture. We are committed to improving the cultural literacy of our people. The HKSAR Government has strived to create an environment favorable to the freedom of artistic expression and creation, as well as to make available opportunities for a wider social participation in cultural activities. Our cultural policy is to promote a diversified and open cultural environment.

Our Committee on Performing Arts, established in 2004 by the Home Affairs Bureau, will join hands with the Education Bureau to promote arts education through its Working Group on Arts Education to be convened soon. Apart from the Home Affairs Bureau and the Education Bureau, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts have all been making continued efforts to promote arts education through various channels.

This week-long IDEA Congress will be followed immediately by the Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum 2007, a regional cultural event organised by our Bureau. The Forum will have public sessions, starting off with the World Creativity Summit, which will likewise expound on the theme of creative arts education like the IDEA Congress today. What all this bears out is the fact that Hong Kong is committed to a vigorous policy of cultural exchange. It is our policy objective to promote multi-level interaction, discussion and exchanges with different places in the arena of culture in order to establish a network of closer communication and cooperation that will bring home different perspectives conducive to the long-term cultural development here in Hong Kong, in Asia and in the world.

I understand that there will be a host of interesting activities after this ceremony for practitioners to compare notes, exchange views and explore what next for drama and theatre

education. I sincerely hope that you will find this week a rewarding experience.

I wish the Congress every success!

Thank you very much!

Ends/Monday, July 16, 2007

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