

LCQ16: UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Following is a question by the Hon Yim Kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

It is learnt that the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) seeks to promote co-operation with cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development, with a view to placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of the regional development plans. UCCN represents seven fields, including Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music. As at October last year, a total of 350 cities had joined UCCN. There are views that Hong Kong's accession to UCCN will help promote the development of the city's cultural and creativity industries, facilitate exchanges between the enterprises and practitioners concerned and their international counterparts, as well as align with the goal of developing Hong Kong into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange as set out in the National 14th Five-Year Plan. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it has proactively considered seeking Hong Kong's accession to UCCN; if not, of the reasons for that; if so, (i) the specific details and progress of the related work, (ii) whether the authorities have considered the fields through which Hong Kong's creativity and characteristics to be showcased, and (iii) in addition to the fields mentioned in (ii), whether the authorities have considered the fields to be levelled up to international standards in a bid to develop Hong Kong into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange?

Reply:

President,

As we understand, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was founded in 2004 in order to strengthen international co-operation among cities on the promotion and implementation of sustainable development through culture and creativity. The UCCN covers seven creative fields, namely design, literature, music, crafts and folk art, film, media arts, and gastronomy. Member cities of the UCCN initiate creative activities in related fields so as to promote the development of the economic, social, cultural, environmental and other aspects in their cities.

The National 14th Five-Year Plan has expressed clear support for Hong Kong to develop into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) has been proactively promoting the development of arts, culture and creative industries, including continuing to vigorously promote cultural exchanges and collaboration between Hong Kong and the Mainland and overseas. To support Hong Kong arts groups and artists to perform, showcase and collaborate with counterparts outside Hong

Kong, including in the Mainland, Southeast Asia and Europe, etc, we provide funding support and liaise through the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in the Mainland and overseas cities. We also support cultural exchanges by a number of Hong Kong's outstanding arts projects recognised by the China National Arts Fund. Many funded projects have been successfully implemented in the Mainland, Macao, North America and Central and Eastern Europe to promote Chinese culture.

The CSTB actively establishes various platforms and brand projects, such as hosting the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo for the first time this year and co-ordinating the Fourth Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival as the host city, to explore a larger market for Hong Kong and Mainland arts groups, and plays an active role of "bringing in" different cultures while enabling our culture to "go global", establishing Hong Kong as an important hub for cultural exchange. As one of the most important cultural infrastructure projects of the Government, the West Kowloon Cultural District has also been actively collaborating with cultural organisations worldwide to strengthen mutual learning amongst different civilisations.

The Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (CCIDA) under the CSTB has been subsidising initiatives and activities advocated and organised by the industries as well as exhibitions and exchange activities held around the world, including fashion weeks, film festivals, art expos, etc, for the development of Hong Kong's creative industries through the CreateSmart Initiative and the Film Development Fund (FDF). The CCIDA also collaborates with the industries to strengthen co-operation with counterparts from the rest of the world, with a view to reinforcing Hong Kong's status as Asia's creative capital. For example, the Business of Design Week partners with overseas countries/cities to promote design co-operation and exchanges. Now it has become the largest design gala in Asia, and among the largest similar events in the world. Fashion Summit (Hong Kong) has become a fashion design event focusing on sustainable fashion, and its activities including international conference, design exhibitions and fashion shows have successfully brought together key players from the fashion industry, relevant industry leaders and decision-makers from all over the world to gather in Hong Kong to exchange insights on the latest sustainable fashion trends, innovative technologies, solutions and opportunities; the FDF sponsors different film industry events and activities, including film festivals held in overseas places (such as Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Udine), as well as film festivals to be held in Tokyo, Toronto, etc, to further promote the development of Hong Kong films in the international markets.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has also been committed to promoting the development of arts and culture in Hong Kong and cultural exchanges and interactions with the Mainland and overseas. The LCSD organises various types of cultural activities, including arts festivals with different themes (such as the Chinese Culture Festival, the Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival and the Asia+ Festival), exhibitions, film screenings, and performances by local and visiting artists and arts groups, and festivals with traditional Chinese characteristics (such as the Lunar New Year Lantern

Carnivals and the Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnivals). These activities present different styles and promote cultural exchange between the East and the West. The East Kowloon Cultural Centre, which has been opened in phases, will be developed into a major arts technology venue and incubator, and will provide a new platform to nurture and showcase arts technology and creativity.

In addition, Hong Kong is known as a food paradise. We not only have many Michelin-starred restaurants, but also a variety of tasty local street food. We have been promoting Hong Kong's diverse food offerings that bring together Chinese and Western cultures through different strategies and making use of Hong Kong's strength as food paradise, so as to maximise the city's international exposure and attract visitors from around the world for an unforgettable cuisine journey. The Hong Kong Tourism Board works with Mainland and famous overseas media partners to develop culinary-themed programmes for deepening visitors' impression and interest in Hong Kong's cuisine; invites members of the media, key opinion leaders and celebrity chefs for "Tasting is Believing" visits so that they can promote Hong Kong's gastronomy to the world; organises and promotes flagship and major gastronomic events such as the annual Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, the recently concluded Vinexpo Asia 2024, and would organise for the second year in a row the Asia's 50 Best Bars award presentation ceremony.

The CSTB will continue leveraging our unique East-meets-West cultural background, enhance and expand the extensive cultural and creative connections established with other places, and continue supporting the development of cultural and creative industries to implement Hong Kong's positioning as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange under the National 14th Five-Year Plan.