

Speech by CS at 47th Hong Kong Arts Festival Finale Ceremony (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a toasting ceremony for the 47th Hong Kong Arts Festival Finale Ceremony at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre this evening (March 23):

Mr Cha (Chairman of the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society Limited, Mr Victor Cha), Mr Cheung (Executive Director, Charities and Community of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Cheung Leong), Ms Gao (Chairman and Executive Director of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Asia) Limited, Ms Gao Ming), Tisa (Executive Director of the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society Limited, Ms Tisa Ho), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It gives me great pleasure to join you all tonight at the Festival Finale of the 47th Hong Kong Arts Festival. First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Festival on another year of great success.

The Hong Kong Arts Festival, the first of its kind in the territory, has delighted audiences with a wide array of splendid performances and programmes since 1973, and contributed greatly to the development of Hong Kong into an arts and cultural metropolis. In the past month, the Festival has presented a total of 166 performances, including 15 world premieres and 16 Asian premieres, as well as about 420 PLUS and educational activities, attracting an attendance of over 300 000 people with more than 90 per cent of tickets sold. Many international and local artists in the performing arts gathered here for the Festival and brought a blend of traditional and creative programmes to all art lovers in the region.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region attaches great importance to the development of arts and culture in Hong Kong, and makes every endeavour to allocate more resources to the local arts and cultural sector. The latest Budget proposes the allocation an additional funding of \$176 million for hosting large-scale world-class performing arts programmes and arranging telecasts of selected mega shows in different places across the territory in the next five years. The Budget also proposes that subvention for arts groups including the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society Limited in the year of 2019-20 will increase by \$54 million, with the aim of presenting more arts productions to enrich the cultural life of our city.

Furthermore, the West Kowloon Cultural District, one of the largest cultural icons in the region, is set to create a vibrant cultural quarter for Hong Kong and foster interaction, collaboration and development of the local arts scene. Following the grand opening of the Xiqu Centre this January, other major facilities in the West Kowloon Cultural District will be coming on stream in the next 24 months.

In the next few years, some strategic cultural projects such as the New Territories East Cultural Centre and the Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre will also commence operation. I believe that, with the successive completion of major cultural projects in town and the Government's continuous funding support for local arts groups, the development of arts and culture in Hong Kong will reach a new milestone.

However, to enable the arts and cultural sector to thrive, your staunch support, in addition to Government's efforts, is surely a determining factor. I really appreciate the sterling contribution from and support of all participating parties, without which the Festival cannot be a success. I would also like to pay tribute to sponsors and patrons for their generosity, particularly the sustained support of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust over the years and the full support of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Asia) Limited for the Festival Finale for seven years in a row.

Now, please join me in a toast to the success of the 47th Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Cheers!

