

Speech by SCST at ceremony of Asia+ Festival 2024 cum Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances 2024 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, at the ceremony of Asia+ Festival 2024 cum Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances 2024 today (November 10):

Dear Consuls-General, representatives of overseas cultural organisations, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

Welcome to the Asia+ Festival 2024. It gives me great pleasure to address you at the second edition of Asia+ Festival, and welcome you to today's carnival that showcases the charm of different cultures in Asia and beyond.

Inaugurated last year, Asia+ Festival is a new platform for cultural and artistic exchange that celebrates the cultural diversity of Asia, the Middle East and Belt and Road regions. We are honoured to see the recognition of the Festival as one of the items in the list of "People's Livelihood and People-to-people Connectivity Projects" in the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

The Belt and Road Initiative, proposed by President Xi in 2013, has opened up a new path for international exchanges and co-operation. Thanks to the unique "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong enjoys unparalleled connectivity with both the Mainland and the rest of the world, and is actively developing into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange under the National 14th Five-Year Plan.

The Asia+ Festival aims to establish itself as an international cultural brand that contributes to cultural bonding and integration between countries and regions. To achieve this goal, the Asia+ Festival goes one step further this year, featuring distinguished artists from nearly 30 countries across Asia, the Belt and Road regions and beyond, and offering more than 100 performances and activities. The number of participating countries and programmes has significantly increased compared with last year, with a projected attendance of over 100 000. The second edition also extends its reach to new venues and introduces more outreach activities to engage local communities more extensively.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you, Consuls-General and representatives of overseas cultural organisations in Hong Kong, for your

support for this Festival and the fascinating programmes you have contributed. I wish the Festival a great success and all of you a delightful afternoon. Thank you.