

# WVVEST

## Chairman's Statement



The Honourable Henry TANG Ying-yen, GBM, GBS, JP (Right)  
Chairman of the Board of  
the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

I am pleased to present the 2nd Annual Report of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority.

Developing Hong Kong into a world-class international metropolis is the goal we all aspire to. While our financial and commercial sectors rank among the best in the world, the arts and cultural landscape lacks the vibrant and colourful touch that make other world cities sparkle. The much anticipated West Kowloon Cultural District (“WKCD”) could be just that sparkle.

Our vision is to make WKCD the grand stage that will showcase the inclusive nature of Hong Kong—a fusion of the West and the East; contemporary and classic. The hub will provide the soil and nutrients that nurture interaction among leading international and local artists, and it will be a catalyst for the development of local creative industries. WKCD will be people oriented. It will be anchored upon sustainable development where culture and arts integrate organically with commercial activities. It will emphasise on landscaping, waterfront, public space and community integration.

I am delighted to share with you the achievements that the Authority, together with the people of Hong Kong, has made in realising these goals during the past year.

## **Planning Vision**

In May 2009, the Authority adopted seven planning design principles to guide the formulation of WKCD’s Development Plan—creativity, accessibility, connectivity, integration, vibrancy, uniqueness and sustainability—under the overarching notion that the development of WKCD must be people oriented and embraced by the public.

We engaged three world-renowned master planning teams—Foster + Partners, Rocco Design Architects Limited and Office for Metropolitan Architecture, as the Authority’s Conceptual Plan Consultants in July 2009.

## **Promising Prospects**

To understand public aspirations for WKCD as well as arts and cultural stakeholders’ requirements of its facilities, the Authority conducted Stage 1 of the Public Engagement (“PE”) exercise between October last year and January this year. The Authority held 66 public engagement events including five forums and 51 focus group meetings during the exercise to listen to their views.

We were delighted by the enthusiastic public response. The Authority received over 7,000 questionnaires and written submissions during the three-month consultation period.

After taking into account the recommendations by the Authority and public views collected during the Stage 1 PE exercise, the three master planning teams unveiled their respective Conceptual Plan Option to the public in August this year, followed by a three-month Stage 2 PE exercise to solicit public views on the three options and the implementation timetable of its arts and cultural facilities.

Keen public participation is crucial to the planning of WKCD. We hope to listen to the views of the public and stakeholders on the overall design and individual features of the three options. As the Authority selects one conceptual plan option as a master blueprint, we may incorporate outstanding features of the other two options into a detailed Development Plan without compromising the cohesiveness and integrity of the chosen option. The final plan would be professional and with broad public support.

### **Building a Professional Management Team**

Another major task achieved during the year was the establishment of a professional management team to steer the planning and development, and to affirm the artistic vision of WKCD. After announcing the appointment of Mr Graham Sheffield, former Artistic Director of the renowned Barbican Centre in London, as its Chief Executive Officer in March this year, the Authority named other members of the management team, who are all experts in their respective fields. I believe the management team's competence and insight will assist the Board in realising the vision of WKCD.

Meanwhile, the team of government staff temporarily seconded to the Authority has handed their work smoothly over to the staff members recruited by the Authority.

### **Cultural Software**

The success of WKCD hinges on synced development of software and hardware. In strengthening our arts and cultural software, the Authority is stepping up efforts to bring culture and the arts to the people, enabling WKCD to eventually become a part of their life.

A series of activities were organised last year to enhance public understanding of WKCD and to foster interests in the arts and culture in the community. These included guided tours to the "2009 Hong Kong and Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture" in February this year and a seminar on "City vs. Architecture: Challenges and Opportunities" in April at the University of Hong Kong. The Authority is planning to organise more cultural and art activities such that WKCD will become part of the community and people's life.

The positioning and operation of the arts and cultural facilities form an integral part of WKCD's software. During the year, the Authority

has initiated studies on the positioning, audienceship, market potential, timetable of the completion and modes of governance of performing arts venues, M+ and the exhibition centre. These studies will provide bases for organic growth of WKCD. We want to ensure that its development is in line with the aspiration of the public and that public resources are used effectively.

Furthermore, the Authority will launch a six-month curatorial internship programme later this year for qualified Masters and Ph.D. degree holders from arts and culture-related disciplines in local universities in order to train and nurture curatorial professionals in Hong Kong.

### Overseas Publicity

A world-class cultural district should have its own international branding. The Authority is participating in the Shanghai World Expo to provide millions of visitors to the Hong Kong Pavilion from all over the world with the opportunity to learn more about the vision and planning of this exciting project. The three Conceptual Plan Options for WKCD also made its first foray into the international arena at the Hong Kong Exhibition of the Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition this year. The event has attracted international attention and opinions from world-renowned masters in the architecture and art fields.

During the past year, we have made significant progress in many areas for WKCD project. I wish to thank all members of the Board, the six Committees and the Consultation Panel, as well as staff members who have newly come on board, for their invaluable contributions. Furthermore, I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to my colleagues in the Government who have been giving us their support to WKCD project.

More importantly, our arts and cultural stakeholders and the general public have been offering substantial support to the Authority and are giving us plenty of constructive comments and suggestions. We shall continue to listen to their views and build an art hub that we can all be proud of.



**The Honourable Henry TANG Ying-yen, GBM, GBS, JP**

Chairman of the Board of  
the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

Hong Kong, 3 September 2010