

Bauhinia's Policy Submission Paper on Hong Kong's Creativity

(3 October 2007) In the era of globalization, competition amongst cities is not just about the pursuit of economic growth or efficiency; it is also about innovation, creativity and convergence of talents.

The Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre ("the Centre") formed a dedicated Study Group from July to September 2007 to look at ways of making Hong Kong a creative metropolis. Entitled "*Hong Kong: A Creative Metropolis*", a paper setting out 43 recommendations under five policy objectives has been submitted to the Government and released today.

Convenor of the Study Group and Director of the Centre, Ms Winnie J Ng, said, "As a cosmopolitan city, economic development is of great importance to Hong Kong, but we should also pay attention to some other important attributes of city development, including human capital, creative thinking, quality of life and quality of services."

"Numerous studies have indicated that creativity is the source of economic value across different ranges of economic activities. Creativity also has a lot to do with a city's socio-cultural developments as well as its sustained development."

To transform itself into a creative metropolis, she said Hong Kong needed to invigorate its "creative ecology" through appropriate Government policies and public-private engagement.

Amongst other things, the paper proposes a strategic framework to build a vibrant creative ecology that requires substantial improvement and social investment. Actions required for the ecological components include

- Nourishing creative talents
- Remaking the urban spaces
- Strengthening the city's institutional pillars
- Sustaining a vibrant creative economy
- Forming the creative leadership and cross-sector partnership

As for nurturance of *creative talents*, the paper suggests that families should be enabled to become cultural incubators, and that creativity should be embodied as an important element in the life-long process of education as well as continuing professional developments. It is also important to cultivate a "culture-friendly environment" in the long run in sustaining the milieu for learning, generating and disseminating creativity across different sectors of the community. More opportunities and diversified paths should be made available to individuals for

cultural creation, artistic expression, learning and exchange would stimulate creative vitality in the city.

Remaking urban spaces is the essential strategy proposed in the paper. As a parallel model of urban planning, the paper proposes a “cultural-led approach” to promote multi-tiered spatial development and cultural diversity in the urban space of Hong Kong. The paper recommends preserving spaces endowed with cultural and historical value and develop them into cultural districts under a “city/district-based concept”; identifying and converting potential locations of obsolete industrial buildings and factory estates into loft units and workspaces for promoting the development of creative clusters; enlivening public spaces such as parks, waterfront areas and private spaces walled by buildings to facilitate social and cultural interactions, making them a spatial platform to accommodate a variety of creative activities.

Engaging non-government organizations (NGOs) in the creative city agenda helps build the social and *institutional pillars* for a creative city. Recommendations made in the paper include strengthening their financial base by creating new funding resources and by reallocating larger portions of the existing funds for their capacity building. Enlisting and mobilizing the support and resources of district organizations and public agencies would also facilitate cross-sector collaboration amongst NGOs and the public sector.

Creativity spans across different disciplines. To sustain a vibrant *creative economy*, the paper suggests that economic policies for promoting a creative economy should be geared towards encouraging a wider application of creativity and innovation in the mainstream service sectors instead of just restricting to the creative industries per se. The paper calls for a review of the supporting services provided by public agencies such as Innovation and Technology Commission, Productivity Council and University Grant Council to expand their scopes of support to innovative business models, process design, creative management, knowledge management as well as a variety of creative delivery of services.

Dedicated *leadership and cross-sector partnership* would rally concerted efforts to promote the creative city agenda. Suggestions made include further delineation of the roles and responsibilities of relevant Government bodies and public agencies. A mindset change in the government sector is needed to instil a sense of cultural sensitivity; new initiatives to promote Hong Kong’s brand and to foster closer collaboration among public agencies and the NGOs sector would enlarge the scope of engagement for promoting Hong Kong as a creative city.

The 43 recommendations proposed in the paper are annexed.