

**For discussion on
11 December 2023**

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs, Culture and Sports

**Setting up Two Museums about Our Country
and the War of Resistance**

Purpose

In response to Members' request, this paper provides available information on the setting up of two museums to showcase the development and achievements of our country and to introduce the history of the War of Resistance respectively.

Background

2. The Chief Executive announced in the 2023 Policy Address that the Government would set up a museum to showcase the development and achievements of our country, covering such areas as its history, politics, economic development and culture. Before the commissioning of the new museum, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will set up exhibition galleries in existing museums to display the relevant contents and deepen public understanding of our country and national affairs. Moreover, the Government will convert the existing Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (HKMCD) into the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence. It will focus on the history of the War of Resistance to cultivate a stronger sense of national esteem and patriotism among the general public.

A Museum on the Development and Achievements of Our Country

Positioning and planning

3. With a view to enhancing national identity and appreciation of the richness and beauty of the traditional Chinese culture amongst the people of Hong Kong, and faithfully and comprehensively present to the public the history of and related materials on the development of our country, the Government will set up a museum to showcase the development and significant achievements of China over the years.

4. Targeting the general public in Hong Kong, the new museum will also focus on introducing the development and achievements of our country in a way young people find easily comprehensible and acceptable so as to enhance their national identity. The new museum will serve as a diversified educational platform which fosters an awareness of and exposure to various aspects of our country amongst the youth of Hong Kong from a young age. This will enhance their national identity and sense of belonging to our country and facilitate their personal development of values. The contents and curation of the museum will also target international visitors by telling them the good stories of China and explaining to them the advantages and features of the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, playing the city’s important role as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

5. To cater for the nature and needs of the aforesaid audiences, the LCSD will adopt an easily comprehensible and acceptable approach for organising different types of exhibitions as well as educational and publicity programmes. Efforts will also be made to create for audiences a platform for appreciating the remarkable development and achievements of our country in an edutainment and inspiring way.

Directions and contents of exhibitions

6. The exhibitions in the new museum will cover our country’s history (including the foreign invasion into China and the War of Resistance, the development of the Communist Party of China, the founding of the New China, reform and opening up of our country), politics, science, economic development, national security, sports accomplishments, technological advancements, aerospace technology and culture development (including ancient Chinese culture, and intangible cultural heritage) etc. to illustrate our country’s development and achievements in various domains, and its road to strength and prosperity. Local circumstances will also be incorporated into

different areas, making it easier for citizens to understand the close relationship between Hong Kong and our country's development. The museum will also organise a diverse range of public and educational programmes, national studies training and exchange activities for young people, etc. so as to enhance public's understanding of our country and Chinese culture.

7. We will solicit support from museums in the Mainland and identify opportunities for collaboration, such as organising joint thematic exhibitions and loan of exhibits. Artefacts with high historical significance and actual objects from ancient and contemporary times will be exhibited to tell the good stories of China, and present to the public a faithful and comprehensive history of and related information on the development of our country. By viewing at close range the actual objects and through innovative multimedia presentation technology, audiences will become more involved and have a more concrete understanding of the course of development of our country and its achievements. While we are still conducting studies and planning the relevant contents, it is preliminary believed that the exhibition contents of the China National Archives of Publications and Culture, Museum of the Communist Party of China and the "Road of Rejuvenation" of the National Museum of China will serve as a valuable reference for the new museum.

8. Before the commissioning of the new museum, the LCS D will set up exhibition galleries in phases, starting from 2024, in the Hong Kong Museum of History to offer a progressive preview of the relevant contents, such as China's latest technological advancements, its intangible cultural heritage, and other topics.

Site identification

9. It is hoped that the museum could be located at a conveniently accessible site in the town centre to facilitate easy visits by the public, tourists and groups of school students. It will also require a relatively vast space for inclusion of various exhibition contents and promotion of the magnificent development and achievements of our country. In view of that, we propose that the museum utilises the current site of the Hong Kong Science Museum and the adjacent area of the on-going project of the Expansion of Hong Kong Science Museum and Hong Kong Museum of History (Expansion), which will shorten the lead time of the overall construction project. If the proposal is supported, the LCS D will submit specific proposals for revising the details and estimated cost of the pre-construction activities for the Expansion to the

Legislative Council for consideration.¹

Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence

10. Hong Kong is surrounded by the sea. Soldiers were stationed in Tuen Mun as early as the Tang Dynasty to defend the port. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, coastal defence facilities were also constructed in the Hong Kong area to defend against foreign enemies from the sea, such as Japanese and other pirates, and protect maritime trade. As Hong Kong is the gateway to Southern China, its defence was then integrated with that of Shenzhen and Guangdong to form a unified network of coastal defence fortifications. All through the Chinese history, Hong Kong, as the guardian of the gateway to Southern China, has always taken part in joint resistance against foreign enemies. In view of Hong Kong's unique geographical location, the British continued to develop Hong Kong's coastal defence facilities during their forcible occupation of the territory.

11. The HKMCD is located at Lyemun (areas around Lei Yue Mun). The Chinese name of this place was recorded in the *Guangdong Yanhaitu* (Coastal Map of Guangdong) in *Yuedaji* (A Record of Guangdong) in the Ming Dynasty, and it has been an important maritime thoroughfare and strategic location since ancient times. As there were records of battles between navies and pirates in Lyemun during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, it follows that Lyemun had already been strategically important hundreds of years ago in relation to the coastal defence of China. Thus, the HKMCD is itself an important location that symbolises the long intertwining connection between Hong Kong and our country in history. Moreover, the historical relics at the museum's site are all related to coastal defence. The museum is therefore a suitable choice for setting up the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence, which could offer the audience an authentic experience in the duties and work environment of coastal defenders.

12. The Government attaches great importance to the commemoration of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. To raise public awareness of the history of the War of Resistance and the deeds of Mainland and Hong Kong people in resisting the enemies during the war, exhibitions and contents related to the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression have been added during the renovation of the HKMCD, which re-opened in

¹ We propose to reconstruct the Hong Kong Science Museum at the current site of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. This will allow an increase in available floor area and space for developing more facilities. Meanwhile, the existing collections of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum will be rearranged and amalgamated into other museums.

November 2022. We have decided to convert the HKMCD into the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence upon a review of the directions for future development of museums. It will help to convey the museum's nature more clearly, and highlight the coverage of the history of the War of Resistance in its exhibitions, and enhance the awareness of the public, especially young people, of the history of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, as well as pay tribute to the war martyrs.

Planning and activities

13. The four existing exhibition galleries about the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression in the HKMCD cover different parts of war history such as the Japanese invasion of China, the fall of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Independent Battalion of the East River Column behind enemy lines and the fighters' contributions, and the surrender of Japan. In addition, the gallery of "Military Presence under Successive Dynasties" highlights the history of defence in Hong Kong from the Tang Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. The exhibition of "Unequal Treaties and the Cession of Hong Kong" provides a detailed account of the background of the three unequal treaties and the history of British forcible occupation of Hong Kong.

14. To tie in with the setting up of the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence, an array of diversified public education programmes will be launched next year. The converted museum will hold thematic exhibitions about the War of Resistance in its thematic gallery on a regular basis, and will co-organise such exhibitions with museums on the War of Resistance or cultural relics authorities in the Mainland. The converted museum will take the lead to collaborate with the Shenzhen Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau to organise exhibitions on the joint efforts made by Hong Kong and Shenzhen during the War of Resistance. The promotion of the relevant exhibitions and programmes will reach out to all walks of life in the community to raise awareness of and interest in the War of Resistance amongst the general public. We will also introduce the new museum to visitors from the Mainland and overseas.

15. In addition, to put a stronger emphasis on the relevance of the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence to the history of China's coastal defence, the museum will revamp some exhibitions or the galleries in the future by phases to enrich the content on China's coastal defence fortifications around Hong Kong and Guangdong, and the history on the War of Resistance.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to put forward their views on the setting up of two museums to showcase the development and achievements of our country and to introduce the history of the War of Resistance respectively.

**Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau
December 2023**