

**SPEECH BY  
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Welcome to our distinguished guests, Mr Tsang, Secretary of Home Affairs, members of the Hong Kong Administration, other visitors, and conference delegates and organisers. Good morning. On behalf of the International Society of Music Education I would like to welcome to our World Creativity Summit, hosted by IDEA and in partnership with the World Alliance for Arts Education and the Hong Kong Institute of Contemporary Culture.

We are a very special group here today, and as such we know that education nowadays is not only a vital sector of modern knowledge-based societies, but also a commodity to be internationally traded as it is recognised by the General Agreement on Trade and Services under the World Trade Organisation. Education is an important part of the trading market among nations and thus an issue of great cultural and political sensitiveness. If on one hand there is a tendency of countries and regions to be part of the globalisation process that symbolises the openness to foreign perspectives, on the other hand there is an emerging movement, a tendency of increasing nationalism of cultural preservation. It is apparent that the struggle to maintain cultural identity in a world that has been invaded by the concept of hegemony.

As arts educators, as arts and cultural managers, we have been advocating for more time, more space, and funding for arts education. International arts societies have also been advocating for adequate arts provisions worldwide. However, as a response we hear that some important arts schools within universities around the world are being closed or merged with other disciplines. We are also hearing that we have less time on the curriculum structure of primary and secondary schools, or the governments and policy makers are merging the three arts domains into one school subject to be taught by one arts teacher or even by any other teacher that is available at the moment. With such a public profile and a struggle to survive among the increasing competition it seems that little alternatives are left other than to come together and find ways in which you can establish partnership between arts organisations, societies, governments, and the private sector.

We also have to invest on advocacy by constructing statements that are culturally situated that are generated by people around the world. This may be the way to become politically active and inform educational policies and practices around the world. The task is huge, multi-faceted, multi-dimensional, and perhaps too complex to be dealt without a wider cooperation. That is why alliances such as the one signed by IDEA, InSEA, and ISME have an important role to play towards rethinking arts education concepts for the 21st century.

This is an historical moment. We are here together at the Summit which represents the first open forum of discussion on creativity in arts education and the impact it can have on all dimensions of human development, being it personal, social,

cultural, political, and economic. The three international societies have taken the first step of forming an alliance – the IDEA and the Hong Kong partners to stage this summit. Now, it is up to us to come together, to share our knowledge and experiences coming from different parts of the world and construct some alternative means that will allow the arts to have an impact on the development of a sustainable world. I firmly believe that we will have time to reflect during this Summit and during the coming year to share ideas, to debate around the issues, dilemmas and challenges that our disciplines are facing globally in the 21st century.

To our Hong Kong partners I would like to say that we have among us one of the most important arts educators, people that are at the cutting edge of thinking and theorising within their disciplines. We also have very important guests that, although not members of our societies or even arts educators, they are art advocates whose role is paramount for the political outreach of our societies. Thanks for the Hong Kong Institution for this opportunity. My special thanks to the Home Secretary, Mr Tsang, to Ada Wong, and to Dan Baron Cohen, to have staged this Summit as a first part of our dialog. I would like to invite Mr Tsang. I brought on behalf of the ISME board, I brought a remembering for this special moment. I would like also to invite Ada for having a great part of this organisation. To our colleagues -- I mean they are gifts -- but personally that I brought from Brazil and will be delivered to them at another opportunity.

Thank you very much and let us have a very productive and enjoyable Summit. Thank you.