

Mr PHAM Cao Phong

Consul-General, Consulate General of Vietnam in Hong Kong

His Excellency Mr. CAI Wu, Minister of Culture, the People's Republic of China,
Honourable Mr. TSANG Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs, Hong Kong SAR of
the People's Republic of China, Honourable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, I would like to thank the Government of Hong Kong SAR of the People's Republic of China for inviting Vietnam to attend a very interesting Asian Cultural Co-operation Forum today.

Culture is an integrated part of our lives. It is also an integrated item of a country's development strategy for a better life. In the world of globalisation today, we not only witness the movement of trade, investment and labour, but also the movement of various kinds of arts and other forms of culture. The world is getting more and more diversified with a flow of arts from one country to another while the national identity is respected and maintained.

Cultural cooperation will not only enhance mutual understanding between peoples, but at the same time enrich their spiritual life, making people's living more meaningful. Culture, manifested in various forms, from the street and office culture, i.e. the way people treat each other in daily life and at work, to fine art and different performances as seen at museums or theatres offers us many things to experience, to learn and to enjoy. Besides, culture also creates a platform for business as seen by increasing number of art companies worldwide. More importantly, business circles, through cultural exchange, could get to know lifestyle of people in a new business environment which is very essential for their success in a new environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Vietnam, we have for long developed our culture in an open world under the strategy of cultural development, which says to promote the traditional culture of the nation and at the same time selectively intake the value of the world culture in conformity with our law and regulation. Vietnam has experienced more than 4,000 years of state construction and defence, so we are full of more than 4,000 years of history and culture. The country's culture is very rich with 54 ethnic groups and the

country is also known for several arts that have been recognised by UNESCO as Masterpieces of the Oral and/or Intangible Heritage of Humanity such as the Space of Gong Culture in the Central Highlands of Vietnam or Nha Nhac of Hue Court, to name a few.

This year is also the year of Vietnam's cultural diplomacy. We would like to strengthen cultural cooperation with other countries worldwide and at the same time to promote Vietnam's culture in other countries. We want to bring Vietnam to the world and bring the world to Vietnam. In Hong Kong SAR of the People's Republic of China, Vietnamese cuisine is very popular and Vietnamese paintings are attracting more and more attention from the local people. The first-ever Vietnamese Contemporary Art Exhibition held last April on the sideline of the official visit by H.E. Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of Vietnam is a vivid manifestation of cultural cooperation between Vietnam and Hong Kong SAR.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asia has for long shared a lot of cultural similarities. Many similar festivals can be found in different countries in the region. Meanwhile Asia is also the continent of so many ethnics and each of them has its own culture. We are for the idea of joint cooperation while maintaining the diversity and respecting every nation's identity. In that sense, we highly appreciate the Hong Kong SAR's efforts to host the Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum, which I wish will end with great success, laying a new ground for further cultural cooperation in Asia in the future.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.