

**Extract of the Minutes of Special Meeting of
LegCo Panel on Home Affairs on 16 November 2000**

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Sports facilities

7. The Chairman pointed out that the Administration had repeatedly stated that no major sports venues would be built solely for the purpose of hosting the Asian Games. In the estimate of the potential financial implications of hosting the Asian Games submitted to the Finance Committee, HAB had not mentioned the need to build a new major sports venue. In its Policy Objective booklet, HAB had only mentioned that the study of the need for a major new stadium was expected to be completed by the end of 2000. However, the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS for Adm) had indicated at OCA General Assembly in Pusan that the Administration would consider building a major stadium with a capacity of 70 000 spectators in South East Kowloon or West Kowloon for the purpose of holding the opening ceremony of the Asian Games. However, in her statements made at the press conference in Hong Kong following the unsuccessful bid, CS for Admin seemed to have reservation about the plan to build a new stadium. He asked whether the Administration would change its long-term plan in development of sports facilities, as a result of the failure of Hong Kong's bid to host the Asian Games.

8. In response, SHA clarified that the Administration would decide whether to build a new stadium having regard to the long-term need for the overall development of sport in Hong Kong and this had all along been the Administration's standpoint. A successful bid would of course help to bring about a construction schedule for the new stadium and expedite its construction process. He pointed out that as mentioned in the Bid Document, a major new project with a stadium component was under study and planning and the project could be situated in South East Kowloon at the site of the former Kai Tak airport or on the West Kowloon Reclamation. The study was expected to be completed by the end of the year. He explained that in her presentation at OCA General Assembly in Pusan, CS for Adm had used the word "intend" to indicate the Administration's intention instead of undertaking to build a new stadium with a capacity of 70 000. Moreover, in her statement given after the election of the host city for the Asian Games, CS for Adm had only said that more time was now available to study the plan to build a new stadium and she had not denied that the plan would go ahead.

9. Miss Cyd HO asked whether the Administration had considered the possibility that the public might not accept the proposal of building a new stadium with a capacity of 70 000 in South East Kowloon or West Kowloon for the purpose of hosting the Asian Games. She pointed out that the proposal to provide a new stadium as put forward by CS for Adm at the meeting in Pusan had

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never been discussed in the Legislative Council (LegCo), and the uses and the cost-effectiveness of the stadium warranted concern.

10. SHA reiterated that CS for Admin had conveyed an intention rather than an undertaking. Had Hong Kong succeeded in the bid for Asian Games, the Administration would consult the public on the construction of a new stadium and finally seek the approval of LegCo before implementing the proposal. He pointed out that the Administration should have the discretion to disclose details of its intentions in respect of future developments when bidding for the right to develop or host major international events. In fact, it was in practice difficult for the Administration to conduct extensive consultation for its intended actions, lest competitors would know in advance the preparations and arrangements that Hong Kong would make in strengthening its competitiveness.

11. Miss Cyd HO maintained that it was inappropriate for the Administration to convey to the OCA its intention of building a new stadium without consulting the LegCo.

12. Mr Albert CHAN said that the Administration should draw experience from this unsuccessful bid and conduct a comprehensive review of its strategy in bidding for major sports events. The Administration should also conduct an in-depth study of the locations and the need for building a new stadium for the long-term development of Hong Kong, instead of making a hasty decision for the sake of bidding to host the Asian Games.

13. Acknowledging Mr Albert CHAN's views, SHA said that the Administration would need to conduct extensive consultation before deciding whether a new stadium should be built.

14. Mr Fred LI pointed out that among those members of the sports community with whom he had come into contact, the majority considered that Hong Kong had never made any preparations for the provision of venues and facilities necessary for hosting the Asian Games. The quick decision to adopt "Hong Kong for sure" as the slogan for the bid had brought about an impression of overconfidence. Mr LI expressed support for the Administration's plan to continue exploring the feasibility of providing a sports complex with a capacity of 70 000 for both track and field events as part of the South East Kowloon Development. He pointed out that the Hong Kong Stadium which was currently beset with noise and traffic problems was not suitable for major sports events. He emphasized that the Administration should have proper planning for sports facilities and map out the direction for the long-term development of sport. Mr LI added that although the Administration had organized a number of international sports competitions on individual events, no major multi-sports events had been held due to restraints on sports venues and facilities. He suggested that the Administration should consider upgrading the existing ten-odd sports venues and facilities in the territory so that more appealing international sports competitions could be held. In this connection, the Chairman sought the

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views of the Administration on ways to improve sports venues and facilities as well as promote the development of a sports culture in Hong Kong.

15. SHA responded that in the light of the precious experience gained from the unsuccessful bid, the Administration would continue to discuss with the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SFOC), NSAs and the Hong Kong Sports Development Board (HKSDB) in a joint effort to devise a long-term strategy for developing a sports culture and sports facilities. He pointed out that the Administration had been consulting the public on the proposed provision of a major stadium as part of the South East Kowloon Development. The aim of the proposal was to develop a sports culture rather than to improve the probability of successful bidding of the Asian Games under a hasty decision. He hoped that members of the public would ultimately support the proposal.

16. Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (DLCS) added that many international sports competitions including the Elite Tennis Championships and the International Marathon Tournaments were organized in each of the past few years and had attracted many world renowned athletes to participate. The International Rugby Sevens and the Lunar New Year Soccer Championships held each year in the Hong Kong Stadium also drew many spectators, resulting in a surplus of more than \$2 million in its management accounts. He added that sports venues and facilities under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) would be refurbished or upgraded every three years.

17. The Chairman said that as expressed at previous meetings, LegCo Members had all along indicated their support for the Administration's efforts in developing a sports culture and planning state-of-the-art sports facilities. At the FC meeting held on 12 May 2000, a vast majority of Members had indicated their support for the Government's proposal to bid for hosting the Asian Games. He urged the Administration not to change or shelve those planned projects relating to sports development because of its unsuccessful bid. In this regard, the Chairman enquired about the arrangements for facilities planned to be built for the purpose of hosting the Asian Games. He further asked whether the Government would bid for the 2010 Asian Games.

18. SHA responded that the Administration would replan the sites reserved for the Asian Games as proposed in the Bid Document having regard to the overall development needs of the society. He considered that Hong Kong was capable of hosting the Asian Games, but it was too early at this stage to discuss whether the Government would bid for the 2010 Asian Games.

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Sports development

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26. Mr Albert CHAN opined that as far as the present development of sports in Hong Kong was concerned, there was over-reliance on the participation and leadership of the business and industrial sector, resulting in a “laymen-led” sports community. He cited the successful experience of Germany and France in bidding for the World Cup Soccer Championships, elucidating that a bid led by professionals in the sports arena would have a better chance of success. He considered that a “laymen-led” sports community was the main reason for the few elite athletes trained up despite the plenty of resources and manpower invested in sports and a full range of sports facilities in place. While supporting the continuous sponsor and participation of the business and industrial sector in sports, he suggested that a select committee should be set up to coordinate efforts to develop a sports culture and the training of elite athletes.

27. In response, SHA pointed out that as an AGBC member, he had come into contact with many NSA members and members of the sports community over the last four months. According to his understanding, NSA members were currently drawn from the respective sector of the sports community and many of these members were veteran and outstanding athletes.

28. Mr Henry WU disagreed with the remarks about a “laymen-led” sports community. He added that the majority of persons from the business and industrial sectors sponsoring and participating in sports activities were enthusiastic about sports. Their sponsors and participation had substantially contributed to the overall development of sports and a sports culture. Mr WU hoped that the Government should set a policy objective in respect of the development of a sports culture and sports facilities for departments to implement.

29. Mr Albert CHAN asked whether the Administration would consider strengthening its cooperation with other cities in holding more international sports activities with a view to promoting a sports culture and developing sports talents in Hong Kong.

30. SHA advised that the Administration would organize more international sports competitions to promote sports. As a matter of fact, the Administration had made continuous efforts to train up elite athletes to participate in major international sports events. For example, Hong Kong athletes had obtained a total of five gold, six silver and six bronze medals in the 1998 Asian Games. As a city with a population of only 6.8 million, such results were considered remarkable.

31. Miss Cyd HO remarked that Members belonging to the Frontier were also supportive of the Government’s policy to promote the development of a sports culture and sports facilities. She pointed out that in view of the inadequate information provided by the Administration, the four Members belonging to the Frontier had voted against the financial proposal in respect of the bid for hosting the Asian Games at the meeting of the Finance Committee on 12 May 2000.

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Miss HO asked whether the Administration would formulate a long-term sports policy and a related timetable. She further asked whether the training of elite athletes or the promotion of healthy exercise for all would be the focus of sports development in Hong Kong.

32. SHA assured members that the Administration would discuss with all parties concerned including LegCo to formulate a long-term sports policy, but so far it had not devised a timetable. He pointed out that the Elite Training Programme and the Healthy Exercise for All Campaign would be launched concurrently. In fact, from the perspective of long-term sports development, elite training and healthy exercise for all should be complementary. Greater community-wide participation in different kinds of sports would help identify more potential elite athletes.

33. DLCS added that HKSDB was mainly responsible for the training of elite athletes including providing coaching and staffing support and coordinating the organization of international sports tournaments held locally and overseas. LCSD was responsible for promoting sports activities at the district level. Such activities included the territory-wide school programme entitled “Telecom GO! SPORT Programme” which provided students with opportunities to experience sports in their early ages. LCSD hoped to extend the programme to 70% of schools in the current school year. At the district level, LCSD had set up football teams and basketball teams for young people in the 18 districts and planned to set up similar sports groups so that each district would have its representative sports group for different sports competitions. These programmes were intended to enhance the overall skills in sports and cultivate a sense of belonging among the community. Moreover, LCSD would continue to set up more “community sports clubs” and it was expected that such clubs would be increased by not less than six each year. At present, over 70 “community sports clubs” were set up in partnership with a total of 15 NSAs. Furthermore, LCSD would organize 22 000 activities in the coming year with a view to attracting over one million people to participate. He assured members that LCSD would continue to collaborate with relevant organizations and associations to promote and develop a local sports culture.

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