

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)794/06-07
(This minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 8 December 2006, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, JP
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Heung-man

Members absent : Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

Public Officers attending : Item IV

Ms Esther LEUNG
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3)

Ms Winnie SO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Culture)1

Ms Janet WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Recreation and Sport)

Mr FONG Ngai
Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Culture)¹

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Mr MA Fung-kwok
Chairman of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Ms Josephine WAI
Director, Arts Support, Hong Kong Arts Development
Council Office

Item V

Mr Thomas CHOW
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Mr Alan SIU
Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
(Leisure Services)

Miss Olivia CHAN
Assistant Director (Leisure Services)²
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mrs Karen YUEN
Chief Executive Officer (Planning)¹
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Wilson LEE
Project Director 3
Architectural Services Department

Mrs Celina KWOK Wong Si-ling
Chief Project Manager 302
Architectural Services Department

Mr CHAN Wai-yan
Senior Project Manager 325
Architectural Services Department

Mr Vincent NG
Vice-President
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
(Professional Adviser, Hong Kong 2009 East Asian
Games Thematic Design Competition)

Clerk in attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

Staff in Attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Senior Council Secretary (2)2

Ms Anna CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2)2

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)531 and 533/06-07]

The minutes of the meetings on 16 October and 10 November 2006 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted that no information papers had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I & II to LC Paper No. CB(2)525/06-07]

3. The Chairman informed members that Ms Emily LAU had suggested that the Panel should receive views from the public on the outline of topics for preparing the second report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) at the next regular meeting scheduled for 12 January 2007 at 10:45am, in order to tie in with the deadline of the related public consultation exercise. The Administration had therefore proposed to defer discussion of the subject "Protection of privacy" originally proposed to be discussed at the next regular meeting to the regular meeting in February 2007. As members had expressed agreement with the proposed meeting arrangements, the Chairman concluded that the Panel would discuss the following items at the next regular meeting -

Action

- (a) recommendation Report of the Committee on Libraries;
- (b) replacement of Library Automation System for Hong Kong public libraries; and
- (c) outline of topics for preparing the second report of HKSAR under ICERD.

Clerk

4. At the suggestion of Ms Emily LAU, members also agreed that a notice for invitation of public views should be put on the website of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in relation to the subject referred to in paragraph 3(c).

5. The Chairman informed members that she had held an informal meeting with the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) and the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs on 13 November 2006 to discuss the work plan of the Panel in this legislative session. As a result of the discussion, the proposed timing of discussion in respect of some of the items on the list of outstanding items for discussion (the list) had been updated.

Clerk

6. The Chairman drew members' attention to the Administration's suggestion that the subject "Establishment of a Commission on Children" (item 20 on the list) should be discussed in the context of the proposed establishment of the Family Commission, which was under the purview of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau. The Chairman suggested that, as the proposed establishment of the Family Commission would be followed up by the Panel on Welfare Services (WS Panel), a request could be made to the WS Panel that members of this Panel should be invited to join the discussion of the issue to be held by the WS Panel. In that case, the subject "Establishment of a Commission on Children" could be deleted from the list. Members agreed.

IV. Arts and Sport Development Fund and Arts Development Fund
[LC Paper No. CB(2)525/06-07(01)]

The Administration's proposals

7. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3) (DSHA(3)) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper proposing to inject \$80 million (\$40 million for the arts and \$40 million for sport) into the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF) and \$20 million into the Arts Development Fund (ADF) respectively. Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sport) (PASHA(R&S)) briefed members on the operation of the sports portion of ASDF and the proposed injection of \$40 million into that portion as detailed in paragraphs 16 to 22 of the Administration's paper.

Action

Proposed injection of \$40 million into the arts portion and \$40 million into the sports portion of ASDF

8. Referring to paragraph 14 of the Administration's paper, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming asked whether resources would be deployed from the proposed new injection of \$40 million to support district arts groups, including various district culture and arts co-ordination associations which had established good contact with the community in promoting arts programmes.

9. DSHA(3) responded that the new schemes or initiatives set out in paragraph 14 of the Administration's paper sought to support budding artists, and new arts groups, including recent graduates of the relevant disciplines. Any such arts groups including district arts groups would be eligible to make applications for the funding subsidies under these new schemes. She added that arts groups and projects which fell under the four categories as set out in paragraph 14 would be eligible for funding applications.

10. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked how artists/arts groups and athletes would directly benefit from the proposed \$80 million injection. He said that the breakdowns set out in paragraphs 11 and 20 of the Administration's paper could not reflect the situation. He further said that he had heard many complaints from the arts sector and athletes about inadequate support, e.g. lack of facilities and equipment for them. He was concerned that the bulk of the new injection would be used to meet administrative or official entertainment costs.

11. On the support to artists and arts groups, DSHA(3) responded that artists/arts groups had benefited from those projects supported by ASDF as set out in paragraph 11 of the Administration's paper, e.g., projects relating to research and arts promotion helped widening audience base of arts programmes. Funding from the arts portion of ASDF was an additional funding source to support projects for the further development of the arts in the community. It did not reflect the full picture of the government subsidies rendered to local artists/arts groups. She pointed out that the bulk of the annual recurrent subvention provided to Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ADC) was used to support the development of artists and arts groups through its various grant schemes. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) also offered rental concession to artists and arts groups in hiring cultural and performance venues. LCSD also provided some of them with assistance in publicity as well as appropriate subsidies to cover part of the production costs.

12. DSHA(3) invited members to note that, as set out in paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper, of the \$97.4 million recurrent subvention received by ADC in 2006-2007, only \$17.5 million was earmarked for administrative expenses in the ADC budget of 2006-2007. The Deputy Chairman asked the Chairman of ADC whether the administrative expenses (\$17.5 million), taking up about 20% of the budget, should be regarded as on the high side. The

Action

Chairman of ADC pointed out that ADC had to devote a large share of its resources to perform its grant allocation functions as the workload involved was very heavy. ADC had also implemented various initiatives to ensure a high degree of transparency and impartiality in the grant allocation system. In order to cope with the heavy workload, staff of ADC had to work overtime frequently and their salary levels, as compared with similar statutory bodies, were on the low side. However, ADC would continue to explore more cost-effective use of resources by streamlining various administrative procedures as far as possible.

13. On support for athletes, PASHA(R&S) explained that there were separate government and non-government sources of funding provided to elite athletes. The Administration provided an annual recurrent subvention of some \$90 million to the Hong Kong Sports Institute, which covered expenses on its training programmes and purchases of necessary facilities and equipment. In addition, there were funding schemes to provide financial assistance to athletes with demonstrated performance and potential. The Administration would also provide additional funding of \$40 million annually, from 2007-2008, to enhance the support to elite athletes in key areas, including education opportunities, career development, financial assistance, and athlete training and coaching support.

14. PASHA(R&S) also pointed out that funding from the sports portion of ASDF was used mainly to support athletes' preparation for and participation in major sports games and the hosting of major international sports events in Hong Kong. For example, prior to the Doha Asian Games, funding from the sports portion of ASDF had been used to support Hong Kong wind-surfing athletes' travelling to the competition venue to observe the wind direction/water current there and to engage in some preparatory training on site.

Admin

15. At Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's request, PASHA(R&S) agreed to provide supplementary information on the total number of elite athletes who were receiving financial subsidies with a breakdown by amount.

Boosting private sponsorship for arts/sports programmes/activities

16. The Chairman and Professor Patrick LAU considered that the proposed amounts of the new funding injections (\$80 million) were far from adequate. Professor LAU suggested that the Administration should explore other possible sources of funding, such as boosting the sponsorship from the private sector to support more arts programmes and sports activities. He further suggested that consideration should be given to introducing a matching grant scheme or tax deductions for such sponsorship.

17. DSHA(3) said that the Administration also intended to encourage more sponsorship from the private sector to support arts programmes and sports activities. ADC and LCSD would explore the availability of more non-

Action

government venues (shopping malls, schools, and other district venues) for presentation of the artistic talents, in particular, budding artists. However, the promotion of arts development could not merely rely on government support.

18. Professor LAU said that he and Mr Timothy FOK both considered that the government should devise a policy of encouraging sponsorship from the private sector, especially the large corporations, to support more arts programmes and sports activities. DSHA(3) said that the Administration would consider the suggestion.

Nurturing budding artists

19. Mr WONG Ting-kwong said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) was supportive of the funding proposals. He asked about the mechanisms for identifying budding artists or athletes with potential so that the former could be referred to apply for funding under the four new schemes and the latter to receive formal training from relevant sports institutions.

20. DSHA(3) said that budding artists included those who were recent graduates of the relevant disciplines or who had been engaging in artistic creation or performances but were not attached with the more established arts groups. Budding artists to be covered by the new support schemes would also be identified through open selections conducted by ADC. The Chairman of ADC supplemented that, with a view to improving the overall environment for nurturing budding artists, ADC was taking steps to make its Project Grant assessment procedures more user-friendly for the budding artists or arts groups. In order to enhance performance opportunities or exhibition opportunities for new artists or arts groups, ADC had explored new and different types of performance/ exhibition venues, such as shopping malls, for them. He also informed members that ADC had been striving to transform itself from a "funding agency" to a "developmental agency".

21. Mr WONG Ting-kwong further asked whether ADC or LCSD would deploy staff to watch the musical performances (e.g., singing and playing musical instruments) given by amateur artists at LCSD parks/in the street and provide performance opportunities to them in district venues. The Chairman of ADC said that the capacity of ADC in enhancing its outreach service would depend on the availability of resources.

Encouraging diversified development of the arts and wide participation in arts programme

22. The Chairman asked whether a minimum portion of the proposed \$40 million injection would be earmarked for supporting the development of minority arts forms, e.g., Chinese opera and performances by Chinese ethnic minorities, in order to encourage the diversified development of the arts. The

Action

Chairman considered that it was also important to widen the audience base and promote wider community participation in arts programmes. She asked whether measures would be taken in that regard.

23. DSHA(3) responded that it was the Administration's policy direction to encourage diversified and balanced development of the arts. In this connection, LCSD had been providing various arts and cultural programmes for free to promote interest in diversified arts and cultural activities. In addition, LCSD and ADC had been supporting arts groups and artists from different arts sectors. She said that ADC with the new funding injection would deploy resources to step up efforts in partnering with district organisations to promote culture and the arts to the community and all walks of life. She also assured members that the proposed \$40 million injection would be a dedicated fund which would not be used to support the more established arts groups, and the Chairman's concerns would be taken into consideration in working out details of the proposed new schemes.

Arts funding system of ADC

24. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern whether there would be conflicts of role in the arts funding system under which ADC played the dual roles of grant allocation and arts promotion and whether there was adequate level of community participation in the process. He further asked about the respective component of artists versus arts administrative personnel or government officials in the committees of ADC responsible for approving grant applications.

25. The Chairman of ADC said that there was a high degree of community participation in the grant allocation system of ADC. He informed members that ADC had recruited some 400 artists, through open recruitment procedures and recommended by ADC members, as independent examiners who assumed the duty of assessing grant applications. He further said that with this large pool of examiners, ADC could arrange the replacement of any examiner who might have any conflict of interest with his assessment work in respect of a grant application with another examiner. He added that ADC also relied on the input of 100 Arts Advisors to ensure the impartiality of the grant allocation system.

26. The Deputy Chairman considered that the independent examiners should play a dominant role in the grant allocation system whereas the staff of ADC should be responsible for the auditing work after funding was approved. The Chairman of ADC said that this was the present mode of operation of the grant allocation system.

27. Referring to the supplementary information on the grants adjudication procedures of ADC tabled at the meeting by the Administration, Ms Emily LAU asked how the procedures would ensure that the grant allocation system

Action

was impartial, as she noted that there were complaints, e.g., failures to obtain the grants even though the relevant eligibility criteria had been met. She also asked why the amount of grant allocated by ADC for each project before April 2000 had been much smaller than that generally allocated from April 2000 onwards.

28. DSHA(3) responded that the majority of the projects undertaken from 1997 to 2000 had been small in scale as the target of ADC at that time was focused on promoting wider participation in arts activities. After review, a modified scheme with tightened eligibility criteria had been put in place by ADC in April 2000, and the projects approved based on the new criteria were larger in scale and aimed at achieving greater impact in the community.

29. The Chairman of ADC explained that, after the adoption of tightened eligibility criteria, the projects approved, which were generally large in scale, had demonstrated better outcome in achieving their desired effect. However, at the same time the financial support for young and budding artists might become inadequate. He pointed out that the \$40 million injection had been proposed against this background for supporting budding artists through the four new schemes.

30. The Chairman of ADC further said that, due to limited funding, ADC was unable to approve all the grant applications, including those which had met the eligibility criteria. He provided the following information on the situation in 2005-2006 for members' reference -

- (a) a total of 227 grant applications were considered worthy for support based on assessments made by the examiners; and
- (b) only 123 applications had been approved to receive grants.

31. The Chairman of ADC informed members that, subsequent to the transfer of funding responsibility for the six major performing companies from ADC to the Funding Committee for Performing Arts newly set up in November 2006, the Administration was planning to allocate an additional \$10 million as recurrent subvention for ADC. He said that, since the \$10 million funding probably would not be adequate to meet the funding needs, the proposed \$40 million injection was important to ADC.

32. Ms Emily LAU considered that, if a grant application met the eligibility criteria, it should receive funding support as far as possible, especially for those applications from new artists or arts groups. She requested the Administration to review the adequacy of the funding provided to ADC.

(Post-meeting note: the supplementary information and a leaflet entitled "Our Cultural Policy" were issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2)613/06-07 on 11 December 2006.)

Action

Outbound cultural exchange activities supported by ADF

33. Referring to the supplementary information on the above tabled at the meeting by the Administration, Ms Emily LAU asked why the information on "ADF (cultural exchange programmes)" included both the "Applied Amount" and "Approved Amount", and why the former was larger than the latter for each project.

34. DSHA(3) said that applications to ADF for funding to support outbound cultural exchange activities had to be made on the basis of official invitations from either overseas government/quasi-government organisations, or any fairly reputable overseas organisations. She said that applicants might receive a maximum of two grants in a 12-month period and, normally, the grants would not exceed one third of the total budget of a project. Hence, the approved amounts were generally smaller than the applied amounts.

35. After discussion, members supported the Administration submitting the financial proposals to the Finance Committee (FC) for approval in January 2007.

V. Upgrading works for venues of the 2009 East Asian Games

[LC Paper No. CB(2)525/06-07(02) & (03)]

Briefing by the Administration

36. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (DLCS) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper.

37. The Vice-President of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects gave a PowerPoint presentation on the venue thematic design for the 2009 East Asian Games (EAG), followed by another PowerPoint presentation given by Project Director 3 (PD3) of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) on the proposed venue upgrading works.

Impact of closure of venues on athletic training and the public

38. Noting that the upgrading works for each EAG venue would take about one year or up to 18 months for completion and the works would commence within 2007, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern about the disruption that might be caused to the training of athletes, who were already affected by the reprovisioning of HKSI at YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village (WKS). He said that athletes were in need of training venues for their exclusive use without disruption in preparation for the 2009 EAG. Mr CHEUNG further said that there had long been complaints from athletes about the inadequate provision of sports training venues and facilities for them. He asked what would be done to ensure that the athletes who would participate in the 2009 EAG would not be affected by the upgrading works. He also expressed

Action

concern about the disruption of services caused to the public by the upgrading works.

39. Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services) (DDLCS(LS)) said that none of the venues covered by the current plan were the training venues for athletes. Hence, the upgrading works should have no impact on their training.

40. DDLCS(LS) further said that the Administration had consulted the District Councils (DCs) concerned and all of them were in support of the proposed upgrading works. It had also informed the respective DCs of the need for closure of some of the venues during the upgrading period to facilitate implementation of the works. He said that the Administration would make up for the closure of venues during the upgrading period by making use of nearby community facilities. For example, as relatively more venues in Sha Tin would be closed during the upgrading period, LCSD would make arrangements to use the facilities of the schools in Sha Tin for holding sports and recreational activities for local residents.

41. DLCS said that, in order to minimise the disruption of services to the public, the Administration would make every effort to restrict the number of venues requiring closure and, for some of them, the closure would be confined to the main arena only. The implementation programme of the upgrading works was also scheduled to ensure that no more than one facility in one district would be closed at any one time, and similar facilities providing same territory-wide service would not be closed at the same time. He hoped that residents who had been caused any inconvenience by the upgrading works would appreciate the practical needs for the works and the long-term benefits they would bring about.

42. Ms Emily LAU asked about the current situation of the training environment for athletes at WKS as she recalled that there had been complaints from athletes about the standard of the training facilities provided there. She also asked whether the upgrading works would cause delay to the implementation of other community leisure and sports facilities.

43. DDLCS(LS) said that complaints from athletes about the standard of the training facilities in WKS had been almost resolved. He informed members that, in the past year, the Administration had already carried out the necessary improvements to provide up-to-international standard training facilities in WKS. As regards the provision of community leisure and sports facilities, DDLCS(LS) said that the Administration had planned to strengthen the provision of recreation and sports facilities in the next five years at a total capital cost of \$9 billion and it would allow no delay in the implementation work.

Action

Project estimate and proposed venue upgrading works

44. Miss TAM Heung-man said that LegCo had already approved to increase the government funding support from \$84 million to \$123 million in January 2006, and the Administration now further requested \$726 million for upgrading 12 government sports venues for holding the event. She expressed dissatisfaction with the repeated funding requests put forward by the Administration for hosting the 2009 EAG. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked whether the estimated cost of \$726 million would need to be increased in future, like the case of the Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground (TKOSG). Dr Joseph LEE reminded the Administration not to repeat the experience of the development of TKOSG which had required LegCo to approve increasing the Approved Project Estimate at the implementation stage.

45. DLCS responded that the current proposal had been worked out after ArchSD had carried out detailed assessments and with the professional input made by the related Nationals Sports Associations. He said that the Administration would not need to submit further funding proposal for any more improvement works for the event. DDLCS(LS) said that when the Administration reported to the Panel on the preparation progress for hosting the 2009 EAG on 9 December 2005, it had informed members that the preliminary capital cost estimated for the proposed improvement works was around \$770 million, which did not differ much from the present estimated cost. He further said that the present estimated cost had been made based on prudent estimations and, since the current proposal only involved renovation of existing venues, the chance for upward adjustment of the estimated cost in future would be slim.

46. Ms Emily LAU asked whether the need for additional funding would arise if the Administration found it necessary to speed up the construction works in order that the works could be completed in time for holding the EAG in December 2009. DLCS responded that subject to the funding approval of FC in early 2007, the upgrading works for the various EAG venues would commence within 2007. He said that some of them were scheduled for completion in 2008 and some in early 2009. The latest one would be the upgrading works for the Victoria Park Tennis Centre, which was scheduled for completion in July 2009. He added that the Administration would closely monitor the progress of implementation of the works to avoid any slippage.

47. Referring to paragraph 20 of the Administration's paper, Miss TAM Heung-man asked how the venue thematic design could reflect "the unique characteristics of Hong Kong". DLCS responded that the venue thematic design would incorporate the main feature of the selected 2009 EAG emblem, i.e., the "five rings", as well as its colour as the thematic colour for the event. He said that as what he had observed in attending the Doha Asian Games, the adoption of a venue thematic design for the competition venues had contributed to projecting the city as a world-class sports events capital.

Action

48. Miss TAM further asked whether any of the proposed upgrading works, e.g., provision of media rooms, doping control rooms, etc. would have no long-term use after holding of the 2009 EAG and would have to be reinstated or converted for other regular use and, if so, how much the estimated cost would be. DLCS responded that a large majority of the proposed improvement works would be retained after holding of the event, as the upgraded facilities would enable the relevant venues to be used for more international sports events in future.

49. Dr Joseph LEE asked whether the face-lifting works of the venues were essential without which the venues could not be used for holding the competition events. He also requested information on changes in the seating capacity of the relevant venues after the upgrading works had been carried out.

50. DLCS responded that the bulk of the estimated cost would be spent on upgrading works for meeting functional or competition requirements, such as those set out in paragraph 7(b) of the Administration's paper, which were essential for the holding of the 2009 EAG. He said that without the general refurbishment and face-lifting of the venues, it would not make the venues unable to hold the specific competition events. However, the festive atmosphere of the event would be affected.

51. PD3 said that the seating capacity of some venues would increase, e.g., the Western Park Sports Centre, which would include 900 additional seats after the upgrading works. He added that the proposed improvement works were not only required to bring the venues up to the standards required for holding the competition events but would also provide better facilities to the community.

52. Mr Andrew CHENG said that as there had been news that the Hong Kong Stadium might be demolished in the near future, he had great reservations about the current proposal of spending \$53.65 million on the upgrading works for the venue because it would be a great waste of public money if the venue was going to be demolished a few years later. He also expressed serious concern as to the need for spending as much as \$218.6 million on the upgrading works for the Hong Kong Stadium and the Hong Kong Coliseum. He considered that there should be room for cost reductions for works items, such as improvements of lighting fixtures/systems, refurbishment of the Hospitality Suites, decoration of the venues with sculptures, wall banners, buntings, lightings and graphics, etc. He pointed out that these two venues had previously been used for holding many international sports competition events, including international basketball matches at the Hong Kong Coliseum as well as major football matches and international Rugby Sevens at the Hong Kong Stadium, which had been successful.

53. Mr CHENG further said that the Administration should make its best endeavours to economise on its expenditure in holding the 2009 EAG and should not make comparison with the scale of the Doha Asian Games as the

Action

situations of Hong Kong and Doha were different.

54. DLCS said that it was also the Administration's plan to adopt a modest approach for holding the 2009 EAG. Therefore, except for the TKOSG project, the Administration did not propose to build new sports facilities only for hosting the 2009 EAG. He pointed out that the proposed improvement works would be beneficial to the local residents for their future use and could serve to support the promotion of long-term sports development in Hong Kong.

55. DLCS further said that there had all along been complaints about the inadequate supply of LCSD sports venues. He expected that the demand for sports facilities would continue to be large as the Government was committed to creating a strong sporting culture in the community. He said that even with the Multi-purpose Stadium Complex built in Kai Tak, there would be no reason to demolish the Hong Kong Stadium when the demand for major sports facilities would still be large.

56. The Chairman said that Mr Daniel LAM, who had left the meeting due to other urgent commitments, had requested her to convey his support for the current proposal. She said that Mr LAM had expressed to her the view that the Administration had to ensure that there would be no delay in the upgrading works, and to economise on its expenditures to ensure that there would not be any over-spending.

57. The Chairman said that when she had first learnt that the preliminary budget for the renovation works for the Hong Kong Coliseum was around \$100 million, she already considered it too expensive and had raised queries to the Administration. She said that she had then been told by the Administration that the unit cost of replacing each seat was \$2,000 to \$3,000, the cost of face-lifting of VIP reception facilities was some \$30 million, and the costs of some other items. She considered that they were all too expensive and it was not clear why the total cost had added up to be \$164.94 million, which was even greater than the original amount she had heard. She said that she would follow up on these when the current proposal was submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC). She requested the Administration to provide detailed information including the cost breakdown in its paper to PWSC .

58. Mr Andrew CHENG shared the Chairman's concern and suggested that, before the current proposal was considered by PWSC on 24 January 2007, the Administration should first provide the Panel with further information on the cost breakdown in respect of each venue and the life span of the Hong Kong Stadium envisaged by the Administration. He said that such information would be important to facilitate members' consideration of the current funding proposal. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that the Administration should explore room for cost reduction for some non-essential items, such as replacement of seats and face-lifting of VIP reception facilities. He said that he did not see that there were demonstrated needs for seat replacement. He

Action

considered it more important to allocate sufficient resources and to enhance the training of athletes who were going to compete in the 2009 EAG.

59. DLCS said that the Administration would make the best efforts to economise on the expenditures. The Administration was of the view that the upgrading works were necessary in order to ensure that facilities were brought up to the required standard and this, in turn, would save the need for closure of the venues again in future for another major renovation exercise.

60. Mr Andrew CHENG suggested that, given the large amount of estimated cost involved for the current proposal and the numerous queries raised by members, the Panel should hold a special meeting to further discuss the subject after the Administration had provided supplementary information on the cost breakdown. The Chairman, however, considered that the Panel should discuss the policy issues and not information about the cost breakdown which was more appropriate to be considered by PWSC. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, DLCS said that the Administration should be able to provide the requisite information to the Panel in two weeks' time. As members present in general expressed support for scheduling a special meeting for further discussion of the subject, the Chairman undertook to work out the meeting arrangement with the Clerk.

Admin

(Post-meeting note: a special meeting was scheduled to be held on 10 January 2007 at 9:30 am for further discussion on the upgrading works.)

61. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong further suggested that the Administration should also include information on the enhancement of support and training provided to athletes, especially to those athletes who were going to compete in the 2009 EAG, in its supplementary information paper. DLCS, however, pointed out that training of athletes was a separate issue which should be discussed in the context of the Government's overall long-term policy in this regard. The Chairman reminded members that the subject " Policy on long-term sports development " was already on the list of outstanding items for discussion of the Panel.

Ticket Sale for the 2009 EAG

62. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked whether the Administration had estimated the income generated from the ticket sale, especially for those less popular competition events. He had learnt that more than half of the admission tickets of the 2005 EAG in Macau sold out had actually been purchased by the Macau Government. Given that the 2009 EAG would be held in December when students had to prepare for examinations, and the ticket price, which would be set at \$100 each, would be much more expensive than that (\$40) of the 2005 EAG, Mr CHEUNG expressed concern that it would turn out to have very few audience for most of the competition events.

Action

63. DLCS said that the Administration would carry out comprehensive promotion work in the community to enhance students' and the public's interest in the 2009 EAG. The Administration would also collaborate with the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the travel industry in promoting the Games to Mainland and Asian tourists.

Improvements to district environment

64. Professor Patrick LAU considered that the Administration should take the opportunity of holding the 2009 EAG to improve the overall community environment, including planting more trees, improving street lighting and road access, etc. in the districts concerned. He, however, noted from the Administration's paper that there was no funding allocated for such purposes. He considered that the Administration should take the opportunity to boost Hong Kong's image. He suggested that the Administration should learn from the experience of the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles, which had proven to be very successful in image-building.

65. DLCS said that the Administration also intended to enhance the festive atmosphere of the event through collaborated efforts made by departments concerned and the community. In addition, LCSD was planning to enhance its greening work as part of the preparation for the event.

Sports events for the 2009 EAG

66. The Chairman considered that dragon boat racing, which was a kind of sports filled with local characteristics, should be included as one of the competition events. DLCS pointed out that Hong Kong had to respect the final decision on the choice of the competition events made by the EAG Association Council, which had taken into consideration various factors in making its decision. He added that there would be 21 competition events and two exhibition sports included in the 2009 EAG, which was the largest number of events ever included for an EAG.

67. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:05 pm.