

For Discussion  
On 11 April 2008

## **Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs**

### **Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay in Hong Kong**

#### **Purpose**

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay in Hong Kong will take place on 2 May 2008. This paper provides background information on the overall arrangements for the event.

#### **Beijing Olympic Torch Relay**

2. The 29th Olympic Games will be held in Beijing in August this year. Torch Relay is a prelude to and one of the most important ceremonies of the Olympic Games to spread the Olympic spirit. The Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay started its international journey on 2 April. After passing through 19 overseas cities, Hong Kong, Macau and 113 Mainland cities, the Olympic flame will eventually be brought to the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing on 8 August. The theme of the Beijing Olympic Torch Relay is “Journey of Harmony” and the slogan is “Light the Passion Share the Dream”. The Torch Relay will traverse the longest distance (137 000km) and include the largest number of torchbearers (21 880 torchbearers) in Olympic history.

#### **The Torch Relay in Hong Kong**

3. Hong Kong has been invited by the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) to organise the Olympic Torch Relay in Hong Kong. On 30 April, the Olympic flame will arrive in Hong Kong by air from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The Torch Relay in Hong Kong will take place on 2 May, and the Olympic flame will leave for Macau on the same day. The last visit of the Olympic flame to Hong Kong was in 1964. It is not only a great honour for Hong Kong to be one of the hosting cities of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay and the first stop of the Olympic flame’s journey on Chinese soil after its international leg, it is also a glorious chapter in the history of Hong Kong’s sports development. The Government, the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and the relevant

organisations are all working closely to make the necessary preparations with the objective of staging a successful event.

### The Torch Relay Route

4. The Torch Relay in Hong Kong will last for about eight hours, covering a distance of about 33 km and involving 120 torchbearers. The Relay will start at 10:30 am in the Piazza of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC) in Tsim Sha Tsui and end at 5:00 pm in the Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai. The torch will be carried by 120 torchbearers to different parts of Hong Kong, including scenic and iconic spots like Tsing Ma Bridge, Shing Mun River, the Hong Kong Olympic Equestrian Venue (Sha Tin), Sha Tin Racecourse, Nathan Road, Avenue of Stars, Victoria Harbour, Legislative Council Building, Hong Kong Park and Hennessy Road. The Relay route will showcase Hong Kong's unique city glamour and characteristics to the world. Different modes of transportation, i.e. running, dragon boat, horse and marine vessel will be used to make the event even more attractive and interesting. The Torch Relay route is at **Annex**. The route will continue to be refined in the light of the results of various trials.

### Promotion and Community Involvement

5. To prepare and involve the public in this important event, we have been launching a series of promotion for the Torch Relay since last year. We have included Olympic Torch Relay as a topic of the school sports education programme for primary and secondary students. We have launched a dedicated website for the Torch Relay in January 2008. A roving exhibition is being staged at shopping malls and sports facilities in 18 districts. We are also arranging for TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (API), as well as the display of buntings and banners at prominent locations and along the Relay route to dress up the city to create a strong atmosphere in preparation for the arrival of the Olympic flame and Torch Relay.

6. Upon the Olympic flame's arrival and on the Torch Relay day, we will be organizing a number of celebration programmes. There will be an Olympic Flame Receiving Ceremony at the Piazza of HKCC at 4 pm on 30 April. On 2 May, we will be holding a Launching Ceremony at the Piazza of HKCC at 10 am before the official start of the Torch Relay. When the torch arrives in Sha Tin, a Community Celebration involving 16,000 spectators will be held at the Sha Tin Racecourse from 2 pm to 3 pm. Finally, a Closing Ceremony to mark the end of the Torch Relay in Hong Kong will be held at the Golden Bauhinia Square from 5 pm to 6 pm. We will invite members of the Legislative Council, community leaders and the public to participate in these ceremonies and celebrations. We will also organise cheering teams to cheer the

torchbearers along the route. There will be live broadcast of the whole Relay and the ceremonies on different TV channels on the day, and hence the public can also watch the event at home. To further promote Olympism in the community and to prepare the public for the real event, we plan to organise a Community Torch Relay on 18 April involving largely college/university students as torchbearers. The Transport Department (TD) is assessing traffic impact of the required temporary road closures especially along the major roads. The results will be taken into account when we plan the details of the community torch relay.

### Possible Impact on Traffic and the Community

7. As the Community Torch Relay and the Olympic Torch Relay will pass through major roads with heavy traffic in a number of districts, it is inevitable that there will be some impact on the local traffic and public transport services, and hence the daily routines of the community. TD and the Police are formulating measures on temporary road closures, traffic control and diversions, adjustments of public transport services as well as crowd management so that the Torch Relay can be completed smoothly and safely within the specified time frame. Due consideration will also be given to minimize the inconvenience to the public. The current plan is that temporary road closures and traffic diversions will be implemented along major roads and at designated areas during the process of the Torch Relay. On the public transport side, the services of a number of bus and green mini bus routes operating on the Hong Kong Island, in the South Kowloon areas, Lantau and Sha Tin will need to be temporarily reduced, diverted or even suspended/truncated to facilitate the Torch Relay and minimize traffic inconvenience. Depending on the traffic conditions, road closures as well as traffic control and diversion will be lifted and the public transport services will resume normal as soon as practicable after the convoy has passed. The TD and the Police may also adopt ad hoc traffic control measures if the circumstances and traffic conditions at the time warrant.

8. To enable the public and other stakeholders to know well in advance the traffic and transport arrangements for the Community Torch Relay and Olympic Torch Relay event days, we will make announcements on the related traffic and transport measures beforehand via different channels. We will hold press briefings/conferences, issue press releases and relevant notices as well as radio announcements on the special traffic and transport arrangements. The public will also be able to obtain the relevant information through TD's website and hotlines. In addition, the TD will step up dissemination of traffic information on the event days to keep the public informed of the latest information about the road closures, traffic diversions and changes in public transport services. With all these measures, the public are expected to be well informed of the traffic condition so that they could plan their journey in advance

on the event days carefully to minimize any inconvenience that may be brought by the Torch Relay. Where considered necessary, we may alter the operational and other detailed arrangements in the light of the experience gathered during the Community Torch Relay on 18 April; and circumstances prevailing on the ground on 2 May. We are mindful of the need to preserve public safety and good order.

### **Appeal for Support**

9. The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games is a mega event of our motherland and a premier sports gala of the world. It has been our nation's dream for a century to host the Olympic Games. Hong Kong takes pride in co-hosting the Olympic Equestrian Events and at the same time being a host city of the Beijing Olympic Torch Relay. The Olympic flame is sacred and solemn, representing the highest ideal of the Olympic spirit. It is our responsibility to protect the Olympic flame and to ensure the smooth and safe staging of the Torch Relay in Hong Kong. In this connection, special arrangements will have to be put in place. We would like to appeal to Members for understanding and support for this important event in the history of our country and our city.

**Home Affairs Bureau**  
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