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LC Paper No. CB(2)2001/10-11(01)

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Secretary General  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road, Central  
Hong Kong  
(Attn: Mr Thomas Wong)

3 June 2011

Dear Mr Wong,

**Supplementary Information to Panel of Home Affairs  
Support Provided to Disabled and Non-disabled Elite Athletes**

At the Legislative Council Panel of Home Affairs meeting held on 8 January 2010, Members raised questions about the disparity between the amount of monthly subsidy provided to non-disabled and disabled elite athletes when examining the paper "Promotion of Sports Development". Home Affairs Bureau undertook to provide supplementary information on this issue in due course. Subsequently, at the Legislative Council meeting on 6 January 2011, Hon Tanya Chan asked the Government to provide further information about training and coaching supports to athletes with disabilities.

In this connection, I enclose a supplementary information paper at *Annex*, which reports the support being provided to disabled elite athletes, for issuance to Members of the Panel for reference.

Yours sincerely,

(Benjamin MOK)  
for Secretary for Home Affairs

## **For Information**

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

#### **Supplementary Information on Narrowing the Disparity between the Subsidy Provided to Disabled and Non-disabled Elite Athletes**

##### **Purpose**

At the Panel on Home Affairs meeting held on 8 January 2010, Members examined the paper on Promotion of Sports Development (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)652/09-10(03) & (04)). Members expressed concern about the different levels of subsidy provided to disabled and non-disabled elite athletes, and requested the Administration to provide supplementary information in this respect. In addition, Hon Tanya CHAN enquired about the provision of training subsidy and coaches for athletes with disabilities at the Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting held on 6 January 2011. The relevant information is set out below for Members' information.

##### **Support to Athletes with disabilities**

2. The Government recognises the efforts made by athletes with disabilities, and encourages and assists them in the pursuit of excellence through the provision of financial and other supports. Specific measures include:

- (a) Providing direct financial support to athletes with disabilities through the Sports Aid Grant for Athletes with Disabilities (SAGD) administered by the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI). In 2010-11, about 60 part-time athletes with disabilities received a total annual grant of about \$3 million. The level of grant for individual athletes could reach \$5,417 per month.

Since 2007-08, the HKSI has increased the training grants by some 30% on average. Additional grant may be provided to individual athletes at the discretion of the HKSI upon the recommendation of the relevant “national sports associations” (NSAs), and the production of proof and justifications for such a need put forward by athletes.

Details on the financial support provided to elite athletes and elite disabled athletes by the HKSI in 2005-06 were provided to Members on 13 April 2007 vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1493/06-07(01). Updated information on financial support provided in 2010-11 is shown at **Annexes A and B**. In summary, in the past five years, the financial support provided to athletes with disabilities through the HKSI has substantially increased in terms of both the number of beneficiaries and the amount of grant given. The number of athletes with disabilities being supported by the HKSI (including both elite and potential athletes) has increased from 100 to 200, which accounts for about one-fifth of the total number of athletes supported by the HKSI, and the total amount of grant provided to them has also increased from \$1.29 million to \$3 million. Athletes with disabilities are also entitled to other areas of support such as sports science and sports medicine in the HKSI.

- (b) Every year, the Leisure and Cultural Department provides subventions to the two associations for athletes with disabilities (namely the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (HKPC&SAPD) and the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped) under the Sports Subvention Scheme which facilitate the associations to train their athletes through the hiring of coaches, organising local and overseas training programmes and competitions, etc. In 2010-11, the Department provided a total subvention of about \$9 million to the two associations. We have also allocated additional resources to support the two associations in developing feeder programmes for

identifying athletes with potential and the funding incurred in 2010-11 amounted to \$1.7 million.

- (c) In addition, the two associations also receive direct funding support from the HKSI under the Disability Sports Elite Training Programme for hiring coaches, organising local and overseas training programmes, purchasing equipment and providing catering and accommodation for athletes. The amount of funding in 2010-11 was about \$1.5 million, representing an increase of 11% over the previous year. Currently, the HKPC&SAPD has made use of about \$0.85 million in grant from the HKSI to engage two full-time coaches (for fencing and table tennis) and two part-time coaches (for boccia and badminton).
- (d) On top of rehabilitation and social welfare services provided to athletes with disabilities, the Social Welfare Department has set up the Paralympians Fund to provide subsistence allowance to athletes with disabilities and allocate funding to relevant NSAs for hiring coaches and providing technical support, so as to help them develop sports for athletes with disabilities. The average annual funding in the past three years is \$4 million.
- (e) We have made use of funding available under the sports portion of the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF) to support elite disabled athletes to prepare for and participate in international sports competitions and to subsidise relevant NSAs in organising major international sports events in Hong Kong. In 2010, about \$2.9 million was allocated under the ASDF to help local athletes prepare for and participate in the 2010 Asian Para Games.
- (f) In 2009, the Sports Commission (SC) endorsed the proposal to significantly increase the levels of incentive awards for medalists at major

international events to encourage Hong Kong athletes, including those with disabilities, to continue to strive for excellence. The incentive awards for gold medalists at the Paralympic Games have been increased from \$60,000 to \$300,000 for individual events and from \$84,000 to \$420,000 for team events. For the Asian Para Games, the awards for gold medalists have also been adjusted from \$15,000 to \$40,000 for individual events and from \$21,000 to \$80,000 for team events. A total of \$590,000 was disbursed to medalists of the 2010 Asian Para Games.

- (g) The redevelopment of the HKSI is in progress. Major facilities including a new nine-storey building, a multi-purpose sports hall, a 52-metre swimming pool and a rowing boathouse will be completed in 2012. Upon redevelopment, the integrated sports facilities of the HKSI will be enhanced to allow more athletes with disabilities to train alongside their able-bodied counterparts.

### **A Comparison of Funding Support for Athletes with disabilities and Non-disabled Athletes**

3. The difference in funding support received by athletes with disabilities and non-disabled athletes is due to various considerations. For example, it is not uncommon for non-disabled elite athletes to quit school or their jobs in order to undergo intensive training for reaching the highest level in competitions. As for athletes with disabilities, other means of financial support (such as the Paralympians Fund) and related rehabilitation and social welfare services suiting their needs are available. The different levels of incentive awards for athletes with disabilities and non-disabled athletes are not due to the differences in their physical conditions but are to reflect the different levels of participation and competitiveness of different events. These considerations are accepted by the sports sector in general and are based on the assessments of actual circumstances. As such, the incentive award for a gold medalist at the Asian Games (\$400,000) or a gold medalist at the East Asian

Games (\$50,000) would be lower than that received by a gold medalist at the Olympic Games (\$3,000,000), but the award for the gold medalist at the Paralympic Games (\$300,000) is higher than that received by a gold medalist at the East Asian Games. The existing funding programs have the support of the two associations for athletes with disabilities. The SC will review the incentive awards after the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

4. It is noted that the levels of support provided to athletes with disabilities and non-disabled athletes also vary in many countries/regions. For example, we notice that the authorities in Australian and the United States of America (USA) offer different direct financial support packages to athletes with disabilities and non-disabled athletes. In 2008, the USA offered greater incentive awards for medalists of the Olympic Games than it did for medalist of the Paralympic Games, whereas Australia has no incentive awards for medalists of the Paralympic Games.

5. As mentioned above, we recognise the efforts made by athletes with disabilities and will do our best to help them with their development in sport through different measures, which include enhancing the support and financial subsidy for athletes with disabilities. In the past few years, we have allocated additional resources for athletes with disabilities and their respective sports associations to support training programmes, implement feeder systems as well as increase incentive awards and financial support. We will continue to maintain close contact with the two sports associations and athletes with disabilities to understand their needs, and to provide assistance as appropriate.

Home Affairs Bureau

June 2011

**Financial Support provided to Elite Athletes by HKSI in 2010-11**

Elite Athletes					
Category of Athletes (Note)	HKSI Scholarship Athletes		Non-HKSI Scholarship Athletes		Total (\$)
	Number of Athletes	Annual Total (\$)	Number of Athletes	Annual Total (\$)	
Elite A	43	12,080,000	-	-	38,400,000
Elite B	90	12,530,000	44	1,510,000	
Elite C	82	7,240,000	10	580,000	
Elite Teams	75	4,460,000	-	-	
Junior Elite A	56	2,690,000	32	510,000	4,860,000
Junior Elite B	49	920,000	2	40,000	
Junior Teams	116	700,000	-	-	
Athletes with Potential	351	-	-	-	-
<b>Total:</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>40,620,000</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2,640,000</b>	<b>43,260,000</b>

(Note : based on the categorisation as defined by the eligibility criteria under the Elite Training Programme)

Source: Hong Kong Sports Institute

**Financial Support provided to Disabled Elite Athletes by HKSI in 2010-11**

<b>Disabled Elite Athletes</b>		
<b>Category of Athletes (Note)</b>	<b>Number of Athletes</b>	<b>Annual Total (\$)</b>
Elite A	35	<b>2,280,000</b>
Elite B	11	<b>430,000</b>
Elite C	15	<b>290,000</b>
Athletes with Potential	139	-
<b>Tota</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>

(Note: Based on the categorisation as defined by the eligibility criteria under Sports Aid for the Disabled Fund)

Remarks: Subsistence grant provided to athletes with disabilities via the Hong Kong Paralympians Fund is not included in the amount given in this table.

Source: Hong Kong Sports Institute