



**A Submission to All Hong Kong Citizens**

**Building a Culture of Health  
Developing Future Pillars for the Society**

**Support Hong Kong's Bid for the 2023 Asian Games**

The Hong Kong Elite Athletes Association  
21 November 2010

## **Should Hong Kong bid for the 2023 Asian Games?**

With regards to the Home Affairs Bureau's public consultation launched in September 2010, on the subject "Should Hong Kong bid to host the 2023 Asian Games", the Hong Kong Elite Athletes Association hereby voice our support.

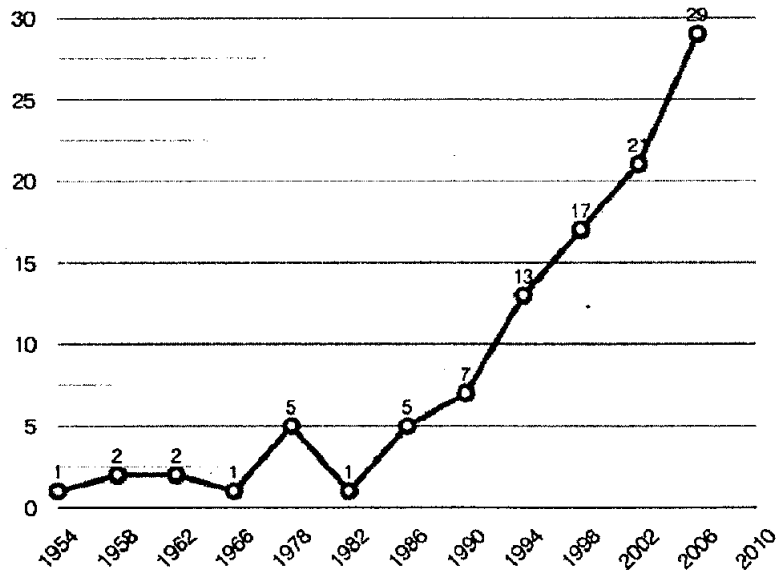
### **For the athletes: Go for it!**

The Asian Games, held once every four years, is one of the ultimate goals for many athletes. It is the reason and motivation for the years of tedious training, dedicating the youth, blood and sweat. It is the dream of many athletes. In the last 50 years, Hong Kong's performance at the Asian Games has improved and the territory is gradually taking on a more important role.

Hong Kong sent its first team to the Asian Games in 1954. From a bronze medal in sprint event won by Stephen Xavier, a student in La Salle College then, it had taken us 32 years before we won our first gold medal. Over the following 20 years between 1986 and 2006, we won 15 gold medals. For half a century, Hong Kong athletes have worked very hard and, together with the public support and recognition, the number of events in which we have won medals has increased to 20. This number is almost half the total number of events in the Asian Games (Refer to Appendix 1). The overall sporting prowess of Hong Kong ranks within the top 15 in Asia. We are not a sporting superpower, but our athletes have attained the competitive levels that enable us to host the event.

**If the Asian Games can be held in Hong Kong, we can provide a goal for athletes who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend the Asian Games. We can develop excellence in more events and enhance Hong Kong's position in the international sporting arena in Asia.**

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**The number of medals won by Hong Kong athletes in the past Asian Games**

In the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, Hong Kong athletes are demonstrating the strengths required to win medals, even gold medals. The emergence of a high proportion of young talented athletes in the Hong Kong team is probably due to the actual high level competition experience gained during the East Asian Games staged in Hong Kong last year.

Of course, the hosting of the Asian Games is not only for elite athletes; it is a major event that belongs to the people of Hong Kong. Detailed considerations must be made. Why do we think that Hong Kong should host the Asian Games?

**For Hong Kong society: Go for it!**

Why Hong Kong should host the Asian Games?

As athletes who had represented Hong Kong in international sports events at various times in history, we witnessed first-hand how host nations had reaped the social benefits from these events. The Asian Games is more than a sporting event.

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Like many economically developed cities, Hong Kong is facing the dual threat of an ageing population and unhealthy lifestyles amongst the youngsters. Younger people are diagnosed with cardiopulmonary-related diseases. The fact that medical costs are going to be a heavy burden for our society has become an indubitable fact. To tackle this public health problem, the best way is to promote sports participation and an active lifestyle. Naturally, we do not believe that by hosting the Asian Games just once, the level of participation in sports will dramatically increase in Hong Kong. However, organising a major event of superlative quality is definitely one good way of stimulating interest.

Since our inception, members of the Hong Kong Elite Athletes Association have continuously organised activities and promoted sports in schools and the community. We have even visited prisons and given fitness demonstrations to members of the Legislative Council. Our aim is to promote physical exercise among all levels of society. We understand very well that it is not easy at all to change a society's way of life. However, this is precisely the reason why we need to grasp every opportunity to do something good for the health of Hong Kong people. If Hong Kong hosts the Asian Games, it will be a great boost to promoting public health.

Over the past 18 months, the increasing number of drug abuse and addiction cases has made youth development work in Hong Kong even more difficult. From 2006 to 2008, reported cases of drug abuse in Hong Kong had increased alarmingly by one-third. Drug-taking is undoubtedly a more complex issue, involving education as well as law enforcement. But probably few would doubt the value of increased sports participation in strengthening the minds of our younger generation and their resilience against outside temptations.

Anyone who has taken part in a major sports event will agree that volunteers are the soul of the event. With the participation and support of thousands of volunteers, the concept of volunteerism will become more popular in our society. Young people who take part in different aspects of the sports event will have the chance to learn and encounter different Asian cultures. Their horizons will be broadened and they may even become interested in learning a foreign language. Through providing support for the Special Asian Games, the volunteers as well as the general public will gain better understanding of the needs of the disabled. All these will have a positive effect on elevating the character of Hong Kong people.

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Sports training hones one's technique at the same time as it builds one's character. Many Hong Kong athletes who have made a name for themselves have not only made their mark in the sports arena, they have become role models for Hong Kong's young people outside the field. Amy Chan Lim Chee, Hung Chung Yam, Lee Lai Shan, Wong Kam Po, Marco Fu Ka Chun, So Wa Wai, Yip Pui Yin and so on are only a few of the examples. We have not disappointed the community who has nurtured us. We hope that more young people will develop a positive and motivated character through sports training.

There are those who believe that the money used for staging the Asian Games would be better spent direct on developing elite athletes. Of course we will be glad to see more resources being invested in elite training. However, it must be pointed out that it is far more important to provide athletes with a dream and a goal to strive for. By hosting the Asian Games, Hong Kong can allow athletes from more sports events the opportunity to compete. Besides, competing in the Asian Games on one's home ground is a rare and valuable opportunity for any sportsperson. This is because the inspiration and pride derived from one's status as host city, and the accompanying motivation, are something that cannot be quantified in monetary terms.

Building an active culture in the society requires long-term, sustainable cultivating efforts, starting with having the right soil and seeds. Time and patience will also be required. By hosting the Asian Games just once, we can already provide the desirable soil and ambience to drive sports promotion and talent identification at the grassroots level a more active and effective exercise. With a long-term target spanning over 10 years, there will be sufficient time to enable two generations of young athletes to prepare themselves through long-term training and help build the solid foundation of a sports culture.

Hosting the Asian Games will also have a leveraging effect. To host a good Asian Games, the various sports associations will certainly put more effort into nurturing fledgling sportspersons, businesses will have greater cause for investing in the promotion of sports, and the government will inevitably do more for sports development. The related government agencies and the administrative staff of more than 30 sport associations will get the chance to raise their professional standards. The sports facilities that are constructed or retrofitted for the Asian Games will also benefit local athletes and the Hong Kong public in the future.

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Sports facilities are the foundation of a culture of health. With the development of new towns in Hong Kong, community venues for various sports have always been inadequate. Many sports associations have to "compete" with members of the public for facilities. This situation has affected training programmes for both professional athletes as well as the general public. By hosting the Asian Games, Hong Kong can hasten the development of sports facilities and improve the quality of some of the existing venues so that there will be a better balance between professional and community facilities.

<b>Sports facilities</b>	<b>Utilization rates in peak hours</b>
Standard natural turf soccer pitch	100%
Pitch for rugby	100%
Sports stadium	98%
Standard artificial turf soccer pitch	96%
Indoor sports stadium	89%
Tennis court	71%

**Average Utilization Rates of Public Sports Facilities in 2006-09**

<b>Sports Facilities</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Requirement<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Provision</b>	<b>Shortfall</b>
Indoor sports stadium	1 : 65,000	108	89	19
Tennis court	2 : 30,000	470	261	209
Standard natural turf soccer pitch	1 : 100,000	70	59	11
Sports stadium	1 : 200,000 - 250,000	28	25	3
Swimming pool	1 : 287,000	25	37	-12

**Hong Kong Planning Standards for the Provision of Recreation Facilities, Planning Department**

<sup>1</sup> For level of population estimated at 7.056 million in 2008.

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In recent years, host nations and cities of major sporting events like the Olympic Games or the Asian Games avoid extravagant facilities for short-term glamour. This is because the sporting world knows that what is more important is the legacy value which raises the overall quality of the city. In terms of cost and benefits, the long term significance and positive impact of hosting the Asian Games and Special Asian Games extends far beyond the duration of three-and-a-half weeks of the Games.

**Views from the Athletes**

The Association conducted a questionnaire survey amongst 284 elite and student athletes in mid-October, 75% and 77% of the respondents believed that hosting the Asian Games “can raise the standards of Hong Kong’s athletes” and “can promote sports development in Hong Kong” respectively.

However, 23% of the respondents doubted if “hosting the Asian Games will increase public participation in sports”. What do the results tell us?

Most members of the Hong Kong Elite Athletes Association were born and brought up in Hong Kong. We know that the overall conditions for sports are not mature, and we understand the difficulty of pursuing a career as an elite athlete. Sometimes we feel very lonely because Hong Kong has yet to create a sports culture that percolates to all levels of society. We believe that this is because we have never put our hearts into creating this culture. It is never too late to start. We cannot make it in time for 2019, but 2023 is not too late. If we fail in 2023, we have to try again.

The sports arena is a place where luck plays no part at all. Although you may not win even if you do your best, you will definitely lose if you hesitate. We are fully aware that Hong Kong has many deficiencies in sports, but we should not refrain from competing because of these deficiencies. In fact, competing and training are the best ways of improving on one’s weaknesses. Bidding for the Asian Games is one such opportunity for Hong Kong sport and the people of Hong Kong.

Even if we decide to host the 2023 Asian Games, it does not mean that we will win. However, taking part in competition is significant in itself. Without competing, one would never know one’s abilities. Hosting the Asian Games is a team effort that requires the cooperation of everyone in Hong Kong. Winning or losing is only part of it. What is more important is the process itself. As long as the best effort is made, we will not let anyone down.

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After much thought and consideration, we choose to support Hong Kong's bid to host the 2023 Asian Games.

**Conclusions**

We are athletes who were born and brought up in Hong Kong. We hope that Hong Kong will get to host the Asian Games, and we believe that Hong Kong will host an excellent Asian Games. Our hope is not only driven by the needs of local sports and the interest of athletes. We believe that hosting the Asian Games will build a culture of health, and allow young people in Hong Kong to experience sports competition and build the can-do spirit. Our society's prosperity depends on our healthy young generation. Youth who are strong physically and mentally will become the biggest force and pillars behind the sustainable development of society.

We hope Hong Kong will host the Asian Games in 2023, but as part of the wider society we will also respect the collective decision of the Hong Kong people. We only hope that all the key people involved in making the decision will give the subject comprehensive and detailed consideration, and arrive at a conclusion that is in the best interest of the future of Hong Kong. A "No" vote will not make Hong Kong a better place, and it may deprive many young people in Hong Kong, who are willing to sacrifice their youth, blood and sweat, a chance to fulfil their dreams. It may also deny the society a chance for overall advancement. We urge the public to give it another thought.

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**Appendix I**

Number of events Hong Kong have won medals in the past Asian Games :

- |              |                    |                  |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1) Badminton | 2) Table Tennis    | 3) Squash        |
| 4) Bowling   | 5) Billiard Sports | 6) Tennis        |
| 7) Judo      | 8) Wushu           | 9) Body Building |
| 10) Karate   | 11) Fencing        | 12) Yachting     |
| 13) Sailing  | 14) Rowing         | 15) Triathlon    |
| 16) Aquatics | 17) Weight-lifting | 18) Athletics    |
| 19) Shooting | 20) Cycling        |                  |

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**Appendix 2**

Hong Kong Elite Athletes Association (HKEAA), established in 1996, is an independent athlete group and also registered as a non-profit organization. Objectives of HKEAA are:

1. To promote sportsmanship and contribute to sports development in Hong Kong.
2. To enhance the public image of elite athletes.
3. To encourage and organize members to participate in community activities.
4. To follow with interest matters relating to sports development.
5. To unite members and further their friendship and bonding.

<b>【Patron】:</b>	Mr LI Ning
<b>【Honorary President】:</b>	Mr HUI Chun Fui, Victor MBE SBS JP
<b>【Honorary Vice President】:</b>	Mr Martin SO
<b>【President】:</b>	Mr WU King Cheong, Henry BBS JP
<b>【Honorary Legal Advisor】:</b>	Ms Barbara HUNG
<b>【Honorary Auditor】:</b>	Ms Gloria Yau
<b>【Honorary Advisors】:</b>	Ms Chan A King
	Mr CHAN Sheung Loi, Owen
	Mr KWOK Ka Ming, MBE JP
	Mr LAM Chun Ying, Martin
	Mr LI Tak Nang
	Mr HUNG Chung Yam
	Ms CHAN Ophelia
	Mr NG Sai Kei, Wilfred, MH JP
<b>【Executive Committee】:</b>	Ms NGAI Man Lin, Malina (Chairman)
	Ms CHAN Lim Chee, Amy (Vice-Chairman)
	Ms CHAU Wai Sheung, Mario (Hon Secretary)
	Ms CHE Kuk Hung, Cathrine (Hon Treasurer)
	Ms LEE Lai San
	Ms HO Ka Lai
	Ms TSAI Hui Wai
	Mr LEE Chung Man, Ron
	Mr CHIANG Yun Kuen
	Mr TANG Hon Sing
	Mr WONG Kam Kau