

**The Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited (“HKSIL”) Supports the Proposal that
Hong Kong Should Bid to Host the 2023 Asian Games**

PREAMBLE

Considering:

....That international research documents the importance of sport in contributing to quality of life through the prevention and amelioration of chronic disease; the enhancement of young people’s academic, personal and social development; the reduction of high risk youth behaviors; the promotion of social inclusion, tolerance and community spirit, and national identity.

Acknowledging:

....That while hosting Major Games events constitutes a significant investment, yet, other countries have reported significant economic and social benefits from investment in major sports events.

....That the repeated fierce competition among countries/cities to host a Major Games, despite the investment required, reflects the international consensus that such events are key facilitators to promote national branding and national identity.

Recognising:

....That it is the Government’s strategy in sports development to promote sports in the community, to develop elite sports, and to make Hong Kong a major location for international sports events.

....That after the successful hosting of the 2009 East Asian Games (“EAG”), the next logical step in Hong Kong’s development as a “Sports Capital”, is to bid to host the Asian Games.

HKSIL POSITION STATEMENT

The HKSIL fully supports the proposal that Hong Kong bid for the 2023 Asian Games. As the Government’s delivery agent of elite training systems, the HKSIL believes that hosting one of the key benchmark events for Hong Kong’s elite athletes will provide the impetus to significantly raise sport performance standards in Hong Kong.

It is well recognised, among our competitors, that one of the benefits of hosting a Major Games event is the increase in medal returns for the host city or nation. Hong Kong itself experienced this phenomenon in 2009 when hosting the EAG. The medal count which had never exceeded 13, in all previous editions, jumped to 110, a massive 8-fold increase, which placed Hong Kong 4th on the medal table. Following the 2009 EAG, a HKSIL survey of the athletes and coaches revealed that over 90% of athletes and coaches reported that the home advantage factor significantly influenced their performance. As one gold medal athlete reported,

“ It was so meaningful and exciting to be able to share the success and joy with my family and friends at the competition. This was a fantastic experience and honour!”

The 2009 EAG, ignited community awareness of, and engagement with elite sport development; it provided exciting opportunities for the Hong Kong public to personally witness the athletes' successes; it mobilised strong community spirit; and a sense of ownership and pride in Hong Kong's sporting achievements. It was a milestone in Hong Kong's progress to becoming a “Sports Capital” within the region, one of the Government's policy objectives. To facilitate sustained community focus on, and support of, sport development in Hong Kong, the next logical step is to bid to host the Asian Games.

Research from around the world shows that one of the requirements to inculcate a healthy sports culture in the community is to develop a successful and visible elite sports sector. The right to host a Major Games is a highly sought after prize among our competitors as it is seen as method to fast track elite sports development at all levels throughout the community. It is also recognised as an important step in contributing to public health goals of broadening and deepening the community's engagement with active and healthy lifestyles.

The HKSIL believes the bidding for the 2023 edition of the Asian Games would be a particularly timely initiative, given that a number of relevant infrastructure projects will have been completed by then. These include, the redevelopment of the Hong Kong Sports Institute; the Kai Tak multi-purpose stadium linked with a mass transit rail system; and the express rail link from Hong Kong to Guangzhou which will facilitate sports tourism for the Games from that region.

Hosting the 2023 Asian Games would present a unique opportunity to promote Hong Kong's brand personality, as a vibrant, diverse society where multiple forms of excellence are valued and lauded; and where initiatives which add value to community quality of life experiences, and create a healthy lifestyle legacy for future generations, are supported over short-term financial considerations.

For all these reasons, the HKSIL supports the proposal that Hong Kong bid to host the 2023 Asian Games.

**HKSIL Board of Directors
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