

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)262/11-12(05)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 15 November 2011

Education and career development support for elite athletes

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Government's support for elite athletes' educational and career planning needs and highlights the concerns of members of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel").

Background

2. To achieve greater excellence in sport by providing more support for elite athletes has been one of the Government's three strategic directions¹ for the long-term sports development in Hong Kong following the completion of the Sports Policy Review by the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") in May 2002. The Government has worked with stakeholders including the Hong Kong Sports Institute ("HKSI") and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China ("SF&OC") to provide, among others, education and career development support for elite athletes with the objective to help them prepare for further education or a second career after retirement from competitions.

3. Under the policy direction of the Secretary for Home Affairs ("SHA") and with an annual recurrent funding of about \$160 million

¹ The other two strategic directions are developing a strong sporting culture in the community and raising Hong Kong's profile as a centre for international sports events.

from the Government, HKSI is the key delivery agent for providing training and other support to elite athletes. As at mid-Oct 2011, HKSI supported 15 elite sports and about 1 100 elite athletes and athletes with potential (including disabled ones). Its major education and career development support to them is in **Appendix I**.

4. With an initial allocation of about \$11 million from the Government, SF&OC has launched since 2008 the Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme ("HKACEP") to provide education and employment training as well as counseling services to serving and retired elite athletes, as detailed in **Appendix II**. As at April 2011, more than 130 athletes had benefited from the programme.

5. The Panel and the Legislative Council ("LegCo") have attached importance to the education and career development support for elite athletes. At its meeting on 17 December 2010, when discussing the potential bid to host the 2023 Asian Games, the Panel passed a motion requesting the Government to, among others, set up a sports fund for, among others, enhancing the training and retirement arrangements for local elite athletes.

6. At its meeting on 5 January 2011, LegCo also passed a motion on "Promoting long-term sports development" urging the Government to implement measures for the development of elite athletes, including allocating funds for supporting their after-training academic learning, holding discussions with universities on allocating additional resources for providing places specifically for them, and providing tax concessions to encourage commercial organizations to employ them.

7. Following the passage of the motions by the Panel and LegCo, the Financial Secretary ("FS") proposed in his 2011-2012 Budget to make a one-off injection of \$7 billion to establish the Elite Athletes Development Fund ("EADF"). The injection would serve as seed capital for EADF to generate investment returns to support the operation of HKSI on a long-term basis, thereby replacing the Government's previous mode of providing funding to HKSI. The Government expected that EADF would enable HKSI to, among others, strengthen its support for athletes' education and career development. At its meeting on 13 May 2011, the Panel generally expressed support for the establishment of EADF. On 18 July 2011, the Finance Committee ("FC") approved the injection of \$7 billion into EADF.

Members' concerns

8. The Panel had discussed the subject of education and career

development support for elite athletes in the context of considering the sports development in Hong Kong, potential bid to host the 2023 Asian Games, measures to enhance the support to and prospect of elite athletes and establishment of EADF at its meetings in the past several years. Members' concerns are highlighted in the ensuing paragraphs.

Education support

9. There was a view that uncertain prospect for elite athletes after retirement had deterred parents from encouraging their children to pursue a sports career. Some members expressed concern about the absence of a flexible education system which was considered conducive to the development of elite athletes. It was suggested that flexible educational pathways and more university places should be provided for elite athletes. According to the Administration, the enrolment requirements for individual programmes offered by different tertiary institutions might vary. The eight institutions funded by the University Grants Committee of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region had accepted enrollment applications from elite athletes recommended by HKSI or SF&OC. A total of 43 retired elite athletes had been admitted to local universities through this arrangement from 2009 to 2011 and the number would continue to increase in future.

Career development support

10. Members generally urged the Administration to take the initiative to improve the career pathway for retired athletes, such as increasing the opportunities for them to be employed as Physical Education ("PE") teachers or trainers in schools. The Administration was also called on to devise concessionary measures to encourage the business sector, especially big enterprises, to employ retired athletes. According to the Administration, it had allocated funding to SF&OC to establish HKACEP in collaboration with the business sector, with a view to improving the education and career prospects of serving and retired elite athletes. The Administration would consider providing additional funding for HKACEP where necessary. HKSI had also implemented programmes to meet the educational and career development needs of elite athletes. In addition, some retired athletes who met professional qualifications had already been employed as PE teachers in schools.

11. There was a view that with the support of EADF, HKSI should attach importance to the provision of mental and psychological training to elite athletes, as it could enhance their performance and facilitate their pursuit of a second career after retirement from competitions. It was suggested that in recruiting coaches, HKSI should give due regard to their

capability of providing such training to elite athletes. In the Administration's view, HKSI had attached equal importance to both physical training and psychological counseling for elite athletes. HKSI advised that it had adopted a whole-person approach to athletes' development and various programmes were available to assist elite athletes' in pursuing further studies in preparation for the transition to a second career.

Support for disabled elite athletes and non-elite ones

12. Noting that disabled elite athletes and non-elite athletes would benefit from EADF, some members expressed concern about the substantial disparity in the amount of monthly subsidy provided by HKSI to able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes, and asked whether the cash bonus for disabled ones who won medals at major sports games could be increased. The Administration explained that the disparity was largely attributed to the different historical backgrounds under which the respective financial assistance schemes were drawn up. It had reviewed and adjusted the financial assistance to such athletes in 2009 and would do so again when appropriate. HKSI advised that both able-bodied and disabled elite athletes had equal access to all the facilities in HKSI, and there were designated facilities for disabled ones.

EADF

13. Some members were concerned whether the Administration would inject additional funding into EADF if part of its \$7 billion seed capital had been spent in times of economic downturn or the investment returns on its seed capital fell short of the amount required to support the operation of HKSI. According to the Administration, the assumption of 4 to 5% annual investment return was based on the past performance of the Hong Kong Exchange Fund managed by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. If the investment return failed to meet the target, SHA might use the seed capital of EADF to meet the funding needs of HKSI. As EADF aimed at providing a steady financial support for HKSI, the Administration would consider injecting additional funding into EADF where necessary and subject to FC's approval.

14. Members noted that the Administration would have the statements of account of EADF audited by the Director of Audit and included in the financial report of the Secretary for the Home Affairs Incorporated for tabling at LegCo annually. Nevertheless, some members considered the arrangement for LegCo's monitoring of EADF inadequate. They called on the Administration to submit the benchmarks for the identification of elite sports supported by HKSI and

HKSI's strategic development plan to LegCo for consideration and endorsement, and report to LegCo on the implementation of EADF and answer members' questions at regular intervals. The Administration assured members that the operation of EADF would be highly transparent and subject to LegCo's monitoring. The Administration was willing to report to the Panel on EADF if the Panel so wished. While the funding for HKSI was subject to the monitoring by LegCo and the Panel, HKSI's strategic development plan was considered and endorsed by the Board of Directors of HKSI.

Long-term sports policy

15. Some members considered that the Administration had all along only introduced sports measures but had not formulated a sports policy. They urged the Administration to devise a long-term and sustainable sports policy, which included enhancing the career prospects for serving and retired athletes, including disabled ones. In the Administration's view, it had devised a comprehensive policy on the long-term sports development at the community, school, sport association and elite levels.

Relevant papers

16. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks at LegCo's website is in **Appendix III**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 November 2011

**Education and career development support for elite athletes
provided by Hong Kong Sports Institute**

1. Hong Kong Athletes Fund

Athletes enrolled in approved certificate, diploma or degree courses offered by Hong Kong educational institutions may apply for tuition grants and subsistence allowance from this fund.

2. Elite Athletes Education Subsidy

Athletes studying in approved continuing education institutions and vocational training institutes (for degree, diploma or certificate courses) may receive reimbursement of the tuition fees.

3. Elite Athletes Tutorial Support

Flexible arrangements are provided for athletes requiring tuition in languages, mathematics, and other arts, science and business subjects. Subject tutors align classes with athletes' training schedules and provide one-to-one study guidance.

4. Athlete Development Programme

The programme provides athletes with extra learning opportunities. It offers workshops on themes such as communication and public speaking skills, goal-setting and time management, financial planning and image building. Athletes receive help in developing personal management skills through learning experiences, and the programme aims to enrich athletes' life as sportsmen and women and improve their professionalism.

5. Elite Athletes Apprenticeship Programme

The programme is for athletes who will retire from competition in two years. Under the programme, athletes gain actual work experience, thus preparing them for life after retirement.

6. Enhanced Athletes Educational and Vocational Development Programmes

The programmes provide diverse educational and career development support to athletes with a view to catering for the needs of retired elite athletes and helping them integrate into society.

7. Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme

The coach training programmes are to help elite athletes wishing to become coaches after retirement.

8. Elite Athletes Coach Education Subsidy Programme

Athletes who join the programme may receive subsidies for enrolling in the Sports General Theory course under the Coach Accreditation Programme and qualify as coaches.

Sources: Reply from the Secretary for Home Affairs to the written question raised by Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai at the Council meeting of 27 January 2010 and the Administration's paper on support to elite athletes in Hong Kong (LC Paper No: CB(2)801/10-11(03)).

**Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme ("HKACEP")
provided by the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee
of Hong Kong, China**

Objective

To provide athletes with support in pursuit of higher education and vocational development opportunities upon their retirement from sports competitions

Target groups

Serving athletes, retiring athletes and athletes having retired for no more than 4 years who are nominated by National Sports Associations and have achieved outstanding results in major competitions as members of Hong Kong Team

Programme coverage

- Integrated online General English courses
- Seminars/workshops on career development and athletes affairs
- Scholarship programme for post-secondary education and vocational skills training
- Language enrichment courses
- Scholarship programme for tertiary education
- Academic enhancement scheme for tertiary education
- Consultation services on athletes' education and career development
- Career programme (job opportunities)
- Ambassador Programme
- Life skills and mentorship programme

Source: Homepage of HKACEP (www.hkacep.com)

**Relevant papers on
Education and career development support for elite athletes**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	23.5.2002 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	9.12.2005 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)809/05-06(01)
Panel on Home Affairs	16.10.2006 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	13.4.2007 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	8.1.2010 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Council	27.1.2010	Written question raised by Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai on support to elite athletes
Panel on Home Affairs	20.10.2010 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	10.12.2010 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	17.12.2010 (Item I)	Agenda
Council	5.1.2011 (Item III)	Motion on "Promoting long-term sports development" moved by Hon KAM Lai-wai
Panel on Home Affairs	14.1.2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	13 May 2011 (Item III)	Agenda

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Finance Committee	18 July 2011 (Item III)	Agenda

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 November 2011