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Panel on Home Affairs

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 14 December 2012**

Sports Development in Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper provides a summary of major views and concerns expressed by members of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") of the Fourth Legislative Council ("LegCo") on sports development in Hong Kong.

Background

2. In April 2001, the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") established a Sports Policy Review Team ("the Review Team") to conduct a comprehensive review of the Government's sports policy. In May 2002, the Review Team published a report entitled "Towards a More Sporting Future" ("the 2002 Report") outlining the direction of future sports policy. A summary of the recommendations made by the Review Team is in **Appendix I**. Following the review, the Administration has set three strategic directions for the long term sports development in Hong Kong -

- (a) to develop a strong sporting culture in the community;
- (b) to achieve greater excellence in sport by providing more support for elite athletes; and
- (c) to raise Hong Kong's profile as a centre for international sports events.

3. To follow up on the recommendations as set out in the 2002 Report, the Government announced its decision in July 2003 to establish a new administrative structure to promote a sustainable and community-wide sporting

culture in Hong Kong. Under the new structure, the then Hong Kong Sports Development Board ("SDB"), which was established in 1990 under the Hong Kong Sports Development Ordinance (Cap. 1149) for the promotion and development of sports and physical recreation, was dissolved in June 2004; the Hong Kong Sports Institute ("HKSI") was re-constituted to become an incorporated body in October 2004 to undertake matters pertaining to high performance sports training formerly under the auspices of SDB; and a new Sports Commission ("SC") under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Home Affairs was established in January 2005 to advise the Government on the policies, strategies and implementation framework for sports development and the provision of funding and resources in support of sports development. SC was underpinned by three committees, namely the Community Sports Committee, the Elite Sports Committee and the Major Sport Events Committee with the objectives to help develop and promote sport in the community, elite sport and major sports events in Hong Kong.

4. According to the Administration, in the promotion of sports development, HAB has the overall responsibilities for the formulation and implementation of sports policies, coordination of planning of sports projects, and decisions on the related funding allocation, whereas the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") will take up executive responsibilities of promoting community sports, managing sports facilities and administering funding support schemes to the relevant bodies. The Administration also collaborates closely with the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China ("SF&OC") and National Sports Associations ("NSAs"), which are wholly autonomous bodies operating under the Olympic Charter and the constitution of the individual sport federations respectively, in taking forward sports development in Hong Kong.

Major concerns raised by members during past discussions

5. Issues relating to sports development in Hong Kong had been discussed at various Panel meetings held in the Fourth LegCo. The major concerns raised by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Long-term sports policy and promotion of sports development

6. Concern had been expressed that the Administration had all along only introduced sports measures but had not formulated a sports policy. At the Panel meeting on 17 December 2010 when discussing the potential bid to host the 2023 Asian Games, members passed a motion urging the Government to, among others, draw up immediately a 10-year blue-print for sports development. According to the Administration, it had devised a comprehensive policy on the

long-term sports development at the community, school, sport association and elite levels.

7. Members urged the Administration to capitalize on the outstanding results of Hong Kong athletes in the 2009 East Asian Games to reinforce its efforts in promoting sports development. There was a suggestion that the Administration should establish a dedicated sports bureau supported by experienced professionals in sports management to oversee all matters pertaining to sports development in a more focused manner. In the Administration's view, the existing administrative structure for HAB (as the policy bureau) and LCSD (as the executive agent) to take forward sports development in collaboration with SF&OC and the respective NSAs was effective in promoting a sustainable and community-wide sporting culture.

Education and career development support for elite athletes

8. Members had stressed time and again that it was incumbent on the Administration to provide effective and coordinated support to elite athletes. They urged the Administration to put in place a flexible education system, which was considered conducive to the development of elite athletes, with reference to overseas experience. In addition to tertiary institutions, primary and secondary schools should allow flexibility for elite student athletes to pursue their studies while taking part in training or competitions. The Administration was also called on to provide additional financial support to schools to nurture elite student athletes on a per capita basis.

9. According to the Administration, the existing education system had allowed flexibility for students to extend their years of study. Schools were encouraged to make arrangements for high-level student athletes to attend make-up classes, defer studies or apply for leave to take part in training and competitions. There were also tailor-made training programmes offered by schools themselves or in collaboration with other institutions for student athletes to help them strike a balance between study and sports career. The Education Bureau ("EDB") would provide all necessary support to assist them in completing their secondary school education.

10. Members generally took the view that uncertain prospect for elite athletes after retirement had deterred parents from encouraging their children to pursue a sports career. The Administration was suggested to provide more opportunities for retired athletes to pursue further education in local tertiary institutions or consider providing subsidy for them to study abroad. The Administration was also called on to nominate eligible student athletes to study at overseas universities if no suitable programmes were available at local universities.

11. The Administration advised members that HKSI was studying the feasibility of developing in-house education programmes for student athletes to better cater for their education and training needs. While local tertiary institutions had the autonomy to admit students and the enrolment requirements for individual programmes offered by different institutions might vary, the eight institutions funded by the University Grants Committee had accepted enrollment applications from elite athletes recommended by HKSI or SF&OC. The Administration would explore the feasibility of subsidizing student athletes to study abroad. The Hong Kong Athletes Fund also provided grants to individual elite athletes to pursue their studies at approved overseas colleges or universities if no comparable courses were offered in Hong Kong.

12. In response to members' concern about the provision of career development support for elite athletes, the Administration advised that it had allocated funding to SF& OC to establish the Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme in collaboration with the business sector, with a view to improving the education and career prospects for serving and retired athletes. HKSI had also implemented programmes to meet the educational and career development needs of elite athletes. On the view that HKSI should attach importance to the provision of mental and psychological training to elite athletes to enhance their performance and facilitate their pursuit of a second career after retirement from competitions, members were advised that HKSI had attached equal importance to both physical training and psychological counseling for elite athletes. HKSI 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 non-elite athletes and disabled elite athletes

13. Members noted that HKSI was supporting 14 elite sports and a top-level full-time elite athlete could receive monthly financial assistance of around \$30,000. They considered that the education need and career prospects of non-elite athletes should not be neglected having regard to their contribution to the sports development in Hong Kong, and assistance should also be made available to both elite and non-elite athletes in need. Members had also raised concern about the disparity in the amount of monthly subsidy provided by HKSI to able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes.

14. According to the Administration, individual athletes in non-elite sports who had potential or achieved good results could receive support from HKSI and their NSAs. The monthly financial assistance to elite athletes was performance-based. The Administration stressed that the Government's sports policy had not targeted at elite sports but also covered the development of

non-elite sports such as football. Assistance on education and career support would be made available to both elite and non-elite athletes in need. The disparity in the amount of subsidy received by able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes was largely attributed to the different historical backgrounds under which the respective financial assistance schemes were drawn up. The Administration had reviewed and adjusted the financial assistance to disabled athletes in 2009 and would do so again when appropriate.

Funding for and monitoring of NSAs

15. Noting that LCSD would take into account, among others, the development potential of the sport promoted by individual NSAs in determining the amount of subvention to them, some members had pointed out that the identification and development of talents for a sport would take time and involve a lot of efforts. They were concerned that NSAs might have difficulties to seek funding to promote sports with development potentials if the assessment criteria were too stringent. Concern was also raised as to whether the Government would provide more subvention to NSAs which were promoting more popular sports.

16. As explained by the Administration, the development potential of a sport was primarily concerned with the potential of nurturing elite athletes for, and popularizing, the sport. The development potential of the sport promoted by a NSA was only one of the key factors that LCSD would take into account in determining the amount of subvention to it. The amount of annual subvention to a NSA would usually remain stable, unless its participation in sports competitions or the number of programmes run by it had reduced significantly. At present, sports that received more funding were those in which local athletes performed better, such as badminton, table tennis and swimming. Resources had also been increased to promote football, given its considerable development potential.

17. Members had expressed grave concern about the governance and monitoring of NSAs. They noted that LCSD had introduced a series of improvement measures on the administration and monitoring of the use of funding provided to NSAs since 1 April 2011 as a result of a comprehensive review on the Sports Subvention Scheme ("SSS") conducted by LCSD in 2010. The Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC") had drawn up Best Practice Reference for Governance of National Sports Associations ("BPR") in consultation with HAB, LCSD and some NSAs, with a view to assisting the NSAs to enhance transparency in their operation and governance. Some members were concerned about the implementation of BPR by NSAs and suggested that the Administration should establish a mechanism for the ongoing monitoring of NSAs. To further improve the transparency of the operation of

NSAs, the Administration should require NSAs to upload their financial statements, information on eligibility for membership and membership fees onto their website. Corruption prevention campaigns should be conducted on a long-term basis to foster a corruption-free culture in the sports sector.

18. According to the Administration, NSAs were required to sign a subvention agreement with LCSD and report the expenditure position and activity progress to LCSD at regular intervals. LCSD also conducted on-the-spot quality assurance checks on NSAs. LCSD and ICAC would join hands to approach all NSAs proactively in 2012 to provide tailor-made advice and services to help individual NSAs to implement the measures recommended in BPR according to their individual needs and mode of operation. NSAs were encouraged to implement as soon as possible within one or two years the best practices in BPR, in particular those relating to enhancement of transparency, selection of athletes, procurement, declaration of interests and uploading of audited financial statements onto their websites.

19. The issue of the lack of transparency and fairness in the selection of athletes for participation in international sports competition was another concern of members. Members considered that the implementation of BPR was important for ensuring a fair and transparent mechanism for the selection of athletes. They also considered that there should not be any overlapping between the membership of a selection panel and an appeal board.

20. The Administration advised that NSAs were requested to adopt consistent criteria in the selection of athletes and inform the athletes of the criteria timely. Following the introduction of BPR, NSAs were encouraged to establish a transparent mechanism for the selection of athletes and disclose the criteria, establish an appeal mechanism, as well as upload the relevant information onto their websites. NSAs had also been informed of the requirement that overlapping of membership between the selection board and the appeal board should be avoided as far as possible.

Provision of public sports facilities

21. Members were generally dissatisfied with the slow implementation progress of sports facilities in various districts. They were concerned about how sports for all and athletes' performance could be enhanced in view of the long-standing shortage of sports facilities in Hong Kong. The Administration was called on to formulate a comprehensive, long-term and sustainable sports development policy to address, among others, the shortage of sports facilities at the district level and schools.

22. According to the Administration, since 2005, it had completed new sports facilities or upgraded existing facilities at a cost of more than \$4.5 billion. In planning new facilities, the Administration would make reference to the planning standards set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines issued by the Planning Department, the policy objectives for sports development, the utilization rates of existing facilities, the preferences of members of the public, and the extent to which such facilities were provided by the Government and other non-governmental organizations. While the availability of resources was a key factor when planning new facilities in districts, 15 sports facilities with a total investment of over \$9.2 billion were under construction. Members were assured that the Administration would continue to invest considerable resources in the construction and upgrading of sports facilities in the next decade.

Motions relating to sports development passed by the Fourth LegCo

23. Two motions relating to the promotion of sports development in Hong Kong were passed at the Council meetings of 6 January 2010 and 5 January 2011 respectively. The wordings of the two motions are in **Appendix II**.

Relevant papers

24. A list of the relevant papers on LegCo's website is in **Appendix III**.

**Extracts from the Report of the Sports Policy Review Team
issued in May 2002**

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CHAPTER XI

Summary of Recommendations

11.1 As noted in the introduction to this review, the main focus of the Sports Policy Review Team's work has been to identify the key issues that need to be addressed in drawing up a strategic policy for Hong Kong's future sporting development. This review report is not a strategic plan, nor does it set out in detail the steps that need to be taken to resolve the problems currently faced by the sports community. Rather, the aim of the Review Team has been to lay the foundation for a discussion of the major initiatives that should form the basis of a strategic policy for sport.

11.2 The suggestions for change which are set out in Chapters III to IX of this report are intended as guidelines for the direction of the future sports policy. We have made every attempt to propose changes that represent a practical response to the concerns expressed by people in the sports community. The extent to which these proposals will be implemented will depend to a large extent on the public response to this report.

11.3 We consider that in developing a strategic sports development policy, the responsible organisations should take an integrated approach, rather than address specific areas of concern in isolation. For example, policy on the planning of new venues should take careful account of the nature of measures to promote sport in the wider community as well as initiatives aimed at better supporting high performance athletes. In taking forward proposals to encourage student sport, policy-makers will need to have regard to the role that enhanced LCSD programmes and a more widespread community sports club network might be able to play.

11.4 Although the Review Team favours an integrated approach, for the sake of clarity, and in order not to prejudice the future strategic planning process, we have organised this review under distinct headings related to different aspects of the sports scene. Accordingly, the suggested areas for change are also under separate headings, and may be summarised as follows-

Promoting an Active Sporting Culture

- (1) To take a more pro-active approach to promoting public sports programmes
- (2) To design and manage venues in a more user-friendly manner
- (3) To intensify the programme for establishing community sports clubs together with the NSAs
- (4) To have greater emphasis on local-level participation in sport
- (5) To organise more major international sporting events in Hong Kong so as to develop a strong local sporting culture
- (6) To establish a Sports Promotion Task Force in the LCSD to co-ordinate sports development initiatives in a strategic manner.

(Chapter III: paragraph 3.23)

More Sport for Every Student

- (1) To establish a Student Sport Co-ordinating Committee to set out a framework for student participation in sport
- (2) To further expand the scope of the School Sports Programme
- (3) To adopt a more focussed approach to the promotion of school sport

- (4) To improve the planning and management of sports facilities in schools and public venues for use by students
- (5) To provide greater recognition to student athletes who have excelled in sport

(Chapter IV: paragraph 4.22)

Maintaining Support for Disabled Athletes

- (1) To allow for better accessibility for disabled athletes' training when designing public sports venues
- (2) To provide more diverse public venues to support athlete training
- (3) To explore the need for full-time coaching for disabled sportsmen and women
- (4) To give continued recognition to disabled athletes' achievements
- (5) To make greater efforts to integrate disabled young athletes into mainstream school sports programmes and high level training of relevant NSAs

(Chapter V: paragraph 5.12)

Building for a Sporting Future - the Planning, Design and Management of Public Sports Venues

- (1) To adopt a more strategic approach to the planning and delivery of new public sports venues
- (2) To consider more flexible forms of design for new facilities

- (3) To consider building temporary venues on unused sites designated for future development of sports facilities
- (4) To seek greater involvement of the private sector in venue planning and management
- (5) To adopt more responsive and client-oriented policies in the management of our public sports venues

(Chapter VI: paragraph 6.13)

- (6) To carry out feasibility studies in 2002, for the development of a major new sports complex in South East Kowloon and an indoor arena in West Kowloon, with a view to completing such studies in 2003
- (7) To study how best to deliver other major venues for "X-Games", ice sports, motorsports and water-based sports

(Chapter VI: paragraph 6.33)

Better Prospects for High Performance Sport

- (1) To provide better and more facilities to support the training of high performance athletes
- (2) To reprioritise resource allocation in respect of sports science and medicine
- (3) To draw up an "Athlete's Plan" in order to provide better support for full-time athletes with regard to financial, educational and career guidance
- (4) To strengthen the coaching infrastructure
- (5) To establish formal co-ordination and communication channels between the NSAs and the elite programme coaches at the HKSI

- (6) To invest more resources in developing team sports
- (7) To increase links with the Mainland authorities, and sports organisations and professionals
- (8) To encourage sports organisations to develop more attractive packages for the sponsorship of high performance sport

(Chapter VII: paragraph 7.27)

Creating a More Clearly Defined and Effective Administrative Structure for Sport

- (1) To establish a Sports Commission in order to draw up and co-ordinate the implementation of a strategic plan for sports development
- (2) To clearly delineate the responsibilities for individual stakeholders in the sports community
- (3) To enhance the role of the SF&OC, in particular, to take on a greater role in the marketing and promotion of sport
- (4) To enhance the role and development of NSAs to enable them to become more professionally run and independent

(Chapter VIII: paragraphs 8.12 to 8.15)

Review of Public Funding for Sport

- (1) To review the choice and number of focus sports for the elite training programmes at the HKSI
- (2) To review the criteria in subventing the NSAs
- (3) To simplify the funding procedures to NSAs

- (4) To have one funding body for sport
- (5) To establish a fund to support the hosting of international sports events in Hong Kong

(Chapter IX: paragraphs 9.33 to 9.35)

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Source : LC Paper No. CB(2)1999/01-02(01)

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Promoting the sports development in Hong Kong”
moved by Hon IP Kwok-him
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 6 January 2010**

Motion as amended by Hon LEE Wing-tat and Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po

That the sports development in Hong Kong has long been neglected, but the East Asian Games has been successfully completed, and with the support of the community as well as the strenuous effort of the athletes, Hong Kong players have still achieved outstanding performance and won high praise; in order to further enhance the standard of local sports and promote the sports development in Hong Kong, this Council urges the Government to:

- (a) review the existing scoring mechanism for the elite training programmes, and actively consider including team sports which are popular among the public and have development potentials in such programmes;
- (b) take the lead in providing additional funding and encourage the Hong Kong Jockey Club to put in more resources to support the development of local football;
- (c) allocate funding to directly support the football academy at Tseung Kwan O, and provide adequate funding to maintain and develop football representative teams of different age groups;
- (d) provide sufficient training venues for various First Division football clubs and consider waiving their venue rental;
- (e) examine the effectiveness of the various existing funding schemes, and increase the funding amounts according to actual needs;
- (f) improve the hardware facilities for various sports activities and expeditiously carry out the multi-purpose stadium complex project in the Kai Tak Development Area, so as to provide better support for sports development;
- (g) formulate a specific policy to improve the treatment of athletes and their career development after retirement;

- (h) draw reference from the Mainland and overseas experience to encourage the business sector to take part in the funding of sports;
- (i) step up effort in motivating schools, the general public and enterprises to attach importance to sports, promote sports for all, and create a competition atmosphere among district sports teams, so as to increase public participation and community cohesion;
- (j) strengthen collaboration and exchanges with the Mainland to enhance the standard of local sports; and
- (k) actively consider bidding to host the 18th Asian Games in 2019;
- (l) review the adequacy of resources currently allocated to sports, and enhance the transparency of the funding policy and the funding approval process; and
- (m) assist various national sports associations in enhancing their discipline in corporate governance, accounting and compliance with rules and regulations, so as to ensure that the resources allocated to them are utilized in a proper and effective manner.

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Promoting long-term sports development”
moved by Hon KAM Nai-wai
at the Legislative Council meeting commencing
on Wednesday, 5 January 2011**

Motion as amended by Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon Tanya CHAN

That, as the Hong Kong Government has decided to bid to host the 2023 Asian Games, but all along, it has not put forward any blueprint for long-term and comprehensive sports development, in that it lacks commitment to promote community-wide participation in sports and has no plan to improve training for local athletes, this Council expresses disappointment in this regard; following the Government’s failure to bid to host the 2006 Asian Games 10 years ago, it has failed to honour its undertaking of building sports venues, and the hosting of the 2009 East Asian Games did not foster a culture of promoting community-wide participation in sports, this Council considers that the Hong Kong Government should formulate and implement a long-term and comprehensive policy on sports, enhance training for local athletes and treat them well, take concrete steps to promote sports for all, and establish a sound administrative structure for sports; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to implement the following measures:

- (a) by way of extensive consultation and mobilizing public participation, to draw up a 10-year blueprint for sports development, set objectives for community-wide participation in sports, and undertake planning for local athletes’ training; regardless of whether the bid to host the Asian Games is successful or not, the Government should allocate \$6 billion for establishing a ‘Sports Fund’, with a view to promoting the policy on community-wide participation in sports and enhancing training for local athletes;
- (b) to conduct extensive consultation with the Hong Kong sports sector and athletes, and on this basis, to establish a mechanism for protecting current and retired athletes, and at the same time provide scholarships for their pursuit of further studies overseas or locally, and put in place measures to ensure their employment; and by making reference to overseas experience, to provide commercial organizations with tax concessions, so as to encourage the trades to employ current or retired athletes;

- (c) to allocate funds for supporting athletes' after-training academic learning, with a view to providing them with learning assistance in foundation academic subjects, and to hold discussions with universities on allocating additional resources for providing places specifically for athletes;
- (d) to construct more district sports facilities and venues, and allow members of the public and students to have priority in using such utility-based district sports venues, and at the same time to extensively install simple fitness facilities suitable for people of different ages in parks and public housing estates throughout the territory, thereby promoting sports for all;
- (e) to improve students' opportunities to participate in sports, including increasing the number and duration of physical education lessons in secondary and primary schools, so as to cultivate students' interest in sports;
- (f) to make accurate and precise estimation on the costs of constructing sports venues and expeditiously submit information about all the sports venues and facilities proposed to be constructed or improved under the plan to bid to host the Asian Games to the Legislative Council for scrutiny, so that this Council can scrutinize the Government's applications based on the needs for the development of sports for all and elite sports in different districts and their relevant timetables;
- (g) to urge the relevant authorities to study how to reform the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and the various National Sports Associations by requiring them to introduce professional administrative management and increase transparency of their finances, as well as to establish reasonable selection and appeal mechanisms, so as to ensure fair treatment of all athletes; and
- (h) to urge the relevant departments and sports institutions to undertake studies on the salaries and fringe benefits of sports coaches, instructors and counsellors, etc., and conduct timely reviews, so as to facilitate the retention and nurturing of local sports elites;
- (i) by making reference to the Report of the Sports Policy Review Team entitled 'Towards a more sporting future' published in 2002, to implement the feasible recommendations made therein, and at the same time conduct studies on those areas not covered by the Report for the purpose of formulating a long-term sports policy on sports;

- (j) the Government should split the 'Arts and Sports Development Fund' and enhance training for local athletes and invest more resources, so as to promote sports development;
- (k) to standardize the present reward mechanisms for able-bodied athletes and disabled athletes participating in international events of equivalent levels, so as to give fair recognition to the achievements of all athletes; and
- (l) to review the terms of reference and composition of the Sports Commission, enlist the participation of more athletes, and enhance the transparency of the Commission.

**Relevant papers on
Sports Development in Hong Kong**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	23.5.2002 (Item IV)	Agenda Administration's paper entitled "A Strategic Policy for Sports Development" and the Report of Home Affairs Bureau's Sports Policy Review Team Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	14.7.2003 (Item III)	Agenda Legislative Council Brief entitled "A New Administrative Structure for Sports Development" Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	13.4.2007 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	20.10.2008 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	6.1.2010	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 3868-3949 (motion on "Promoting the sports development in Hong Kong")
Panel on Home Affairs	8.1.2010 (Items IV&V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	20.10.2010 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	10.12.2010 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	17.12.2010 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	5.1.2011	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 4533-4600 (motion on "Promoting long-term sports development")
Panel on Home Affairs	14.1.2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	11.2.2011 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Education	13.5.2011 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	13.5.2011 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	10.6.2011 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	26.8.2011 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	15.11.2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	13.1.2012 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes