

Proposed research outline

Olympic Committees, sports federations and sports development in selected places

1. Background

1.1 In Hong Kong, the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (abbreviated as "SF&OC") is responsible for organizing the participation of Hong Kong delegation in all major international multi-sports games such as the Olympic Games, Asian Games and East Asian Games. SF&OC was formally recognized by the International Olympic Committee ("IOC")¹ as the National Olympic Committee ("NOC") of Hong Kong in 1951. There are currently 204 NOCs over five continents with the authority to handle matters relating to sending participants to the Olympic Games.

1.2 As a NOC, SF&OC is also dedicated to the development and promotion of sports and the co-ordination of the development of local sports organizations. At present, there are altogether 75 National Sports Associations ("NSAs") and sports organizations under SF&OC. NSAs are empowered to co-ordinate and conduct a wide range of activities relating to their sports, ranging from recreational programmes for beginners to training elite athletes. They also organize and sanction participation in overseas multi-sports competitions and train coaches and referees.

1.3 Meanwhile, the Home Affairs Bureau co-ordinates Government policies on recreation, cultural, heritage and sports. On sports policy, the bureau formulates and coordinates policy and legislation for developing sports in Hong Kong, as well as coordinating the strategic planning of sports and recreational facilities. It also supports local competitions, training programmes, athletes' participation in international sports events and staff training for different sports by providing funds to NSAs, SF&OC and the Hong Kong Sports Institute. As regards participation in international sports events, the bureau examines and approves funding applications from NSAs and SF&OC for preparation for and participation in such events, and monitors their use of public funds.

¹ Based in Lausanne of Switzerland, IOC is the governing body of the Olympic Games. In addition to establishing and administering the Olympic rules, IOC selects the host country every four years, accepts or rejects new sports and events on the Olympic programme, and oversees the efforts of various other bodies. The latter include NOCs, the Olympic Organizing Committee for each host city, and the International Federation governing competition in each sport.

1.4 In February 2014, an athlete representing Hong Kong in the Olympic Winter Games held in Sochi alleged that he had requested repeatedly SF&OC to arrange for a team doctor to accompany him before his departure for the Games, but his request was turned down. The issue has aroused concerns over the criteria adopted by SF&OC to determine the composition of the Hong Kong delegation. In response, the Home Affairs Bureau stated that SF&OC had full discretion in determining the Hong Kong delegation list in accordance with the provisions of the Olympic Charter and the regulations of the games concerned, and that the Government had no right to be involved in the process.²

1.5 At the meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs held on 24 March 2014, members agreed that (a) matters relating to the participation of the Hong Kong delegation in large-scale international multi-sport games and (b) the authority of SF&OC to determine the composition of the Hong Kong delegation to these games should be discussed at a future meeting. To facilitate the discussion, the Panel also agreed to request the Research Office to undertake a research on overseas places with respect to the institutional structure and governance of NOCs and NSAs, as well as the Government's role in monitoring the operation of NOCs/NSAs and promoting elite sports development.

2. Proposed places to be studied

2.1 The Research Office has conducted a preliminary study on the Olympic Committees, sports federations and sports development in 10 overseas places, namely the United States ("the US"), Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. Each place has established a NOC to oversee the organization of its participation in Olympic Games. Another feature in common is the existence of a number of NSAs for different sports, and the NSA of a particular sport is responsible for all of the decision making and organization of that sport in the place concerned.

² See "LCQ10: Sochi Olympic Winter Games Hong Kong Delegation", *Government Press Release*, 26 February 2014; "LCQ21: Support for Hong Kong athletes participating in mega sports events", *Government Press Release*, 19 March 2014; and LC Paper No. CB(2)996/13-14(01).

2.2 Nevertheless, the above 10 places differ in terms of the relationship between NOC and NSAs. NOC is the only umbrella organization of NSAs in these places, with the exception of Japan and Taiwan where NSAs are affiliated to both NOC and a separate umbrella sports association. In addition, the extent of the government's involvement in sports development also differs among the 10 places. The US has not established any federal agency for sports development, whereas the other places have put sports under a minister's portfolio or even established a dedicated government agency for sports development. For example, sports are within the portfolio of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth ("MCCY") of the Singapore government, whereas Australia has established the Australian Sports Commission as the statutory authority solely responsible for sports development. Against the above, the Research Office proposes to confine the research study to Australia, Japan, Singapore and the US in view of the salient features of the sports system in these four places as elaborated in the ensuing paragraphs.

Australia

2.3 The Australian Olympic Committee ("AOC") is the NOC of Australia, which is composed of national bodies of sports on the Olympic programme. AOC is a non-profit organization, independent of government and government funding. It raises the necessary funds for the preparation and participation of the Australian Teams in the Olympic events through corporate sponsorship, licensing and traditional fundraising activities. AOC also receives an annual distribution from the Australian Olympic Foundation established by the late Julius L. Patching³ in 1996 to help Australian athletes develop and compete at the Olympic level.

2.4 The Australian Commonwealth government has funded the elite sports development in Australia through the Australian Sports Commission. The commission is a statutory authority established under the Australian government's Department of Health portfolio. It is governed by a board of commissioners appointed by the Australian government and is accountable to the Minister for Sport and the Parliament. On behalf of the Australian government, the Australian Sports Commission plays a central leadership role in the development and operation of the Australian sports system, administering and funding innovative sports programmes, and providing leadership, coordination and support for the sports sector.

³ Julius L. Patching was an Australian businessman and sport administrator who had involved deeply in Olympic Games. He served as the Secretary General of AOC during 1973-1985.

Japan

2.5 The Japanese Olympic Committee ("JOC") is the NOC of Japan. When it was founded in 1911, JOC was an integral part of the Japan Sports Association ("JASA"). At that time, JASA was not confined to participation in the Olympic events, but took on the responsibilities of promoting national sports and improving Japan's international competitive advantage as well. In 1989, JOC became independent from JASA. Since then, JOC and JASA have assumed different roles in the Japanese sports system: JOC is responsible for training elite athletes and organizing and sending teams to the Olympic Games, whereas JASA coordinates national sports in Japan and promotes sports in the whole country. Most NSAs in Japan are affiliated to both JOC and JASA.

2.6 Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology ("MEXT") is the policymaker for the promotion and development of sports in Japan. MEXT works through its Sports and Youth Bureau and the Japan Sport Council⁴ to promote sports to all walks of life in Japan and enhance the performance of elite athletes in international sports events.

Singapore

2.7 Singapore has been sending athletes to the Olympic Games even before it achieved independence in 1965. The Singapore National Olympic Council ("SNOC") is the NOC of Singapore. It coordinates the selection of athletes for competition at the Olympic Games, the Asian Games, the Commonwealth Games and the South East Asian Games. Some 38 NSAs belong to SNOC as full voting members while another 10 NSAs are associate members. Although SNOC is a non-profit organization, it has been led by a government minister. The Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister⁵ is currently the President of SNOC.

2.8 Sports are within the portfolio of MCCY of the Singapore government. MCCY seeks to inspire Singaporeans through the arts and sports, strengthen community bonds, and promote volunteerism and philanthropy. On sports development, Sport Singapore (originally named as "Singapore Sports Council") has been established as the national sports agency within MCCY specifically tasked with promoting a sporting culture in Singapore.

⁴ The Sports and Youth Bureau is responsible for sports promotion, including developing an environment where people can practice sports, enhancing the performance of top-level athletes, improving children's fitness, and enhancing school physical education. For the Japan Sport Council, it is a non-departmental public body under the supervision of MEXT specializing in sports promotional activities.

⁵ Singapore has two Deputy Prime Ministers, who are concurrently the Co-ordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs, and the Minister for Finance respectively.

The United States

2.9 The United States Olympic Committee ("USOC") is the NOC of the US, which is composed of national governing bodies of sports.⁶ Pursuant to the *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act*, USOC is a federally chartered non-profit corporation and does not receive any funding from the government. Its main sources of revenue are television broadcast rights, sponsorships and philanthropy. Apart from serving as the coordinating body for participation in international sports events, USOC is also tasked with, among other things, promoting and supporting public participation in athletic activities by encouraging developmental programmes in its member organizations.

2.10 In the US, there is no federal agency with any responsibility for sports development. Nor are there any government officials whose portfolio encompasses sports. However, the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition advises the President through the Secretary of Health and Human Services on physical fitness and sports policy, and recommends programmes to promote physical activity for the health of all Americans.

3. Proposed research outline

3.1 The Research Office proposes the following outline for the research:

Chapter 1 — Introduction

Chapter 2 — Hong Kong

Chapter 3 — Australia

Chapter 4 — Japan

Chapter 5 — Singapore

Chapter 6 — The United States

Chapter 7 — Analysis

⁶ National governing bodies are organizations responsible for training, competition and development for their individual sports, as well as nominating athletes to the international games.

3.2 Chapter 1 depicts the background, scope and method of the research. It also provides an overview of the Olympic Movement⁷ and the organization of IOC.

3.3 Chapter 2 gives an account of the institutional structure and governance of SF&OC, as well as the Government's role in monitoring the operation of SF&OC and promoting elite sports development. This chapter also highlights the major issues of concern relating to the sports system in Hong Kong.

3.4 Chapters 3 to 6 examine NOCs, sports federations and sports development in selected overseas places in terms of the following areas:

- (a) institutional structure and governance of NOC;
- (b) organization of the sports associations or sports federations;
- (c) ministry or government agencies responsible for sports development;
- (d) relationship among NOC, sports federations and the sports ministry (if any), and the role of the government in monitoring the operation of NOC and sports federations;
- (e) government's role in promoting elite sports development; and
- (f) major review of the sports system, if any.

3.5 Based on the findings in the previous chapters, Chapter 7 compares the salient features of the sports systems in the places studied and highlights the major observations of the research.

⁷ The Olympic Movement encompasses all organizations, athletes and other persons who agree to be guided by the Olympic Charter.

4. Proposed completion date

4.1 The Research Office proposes to complete the research in September 2014.

Research Office
Information Services Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
8 May 2014