

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PANEL ON HOME AFFAIRS

THE 2009 EAST ASIAN GAMES

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

ON GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT TO ELITE SPORTS

Introduction

In considering the paper referenced LC Paper No. FCR(2005-06)40 on “The 2009 East Asian Games” presented to the Finance Committee on 13 January 2006, Members requested the Administration to provide supplementary information to the Panel on Home Affairs setting out the resources being provided to local athletes in preparation for the 2009 East Asian Games and other upcoming major sports games.

Policy objectives on sports development

2. The Administration is committed to promoting and developing a strong sporting culture in the community as well as raising our international profile on sports. Our policy objectives in respect of sports development are:

- (a) promoting “sports for all” – a sustainable and community-wide sporting culture whereby people of all age groups participate actively in sports in quest of sound physical and psychological health;
- (b) achieving sports excellence – a cadre of high performance athletes who can compete in major international sports events competitively, win glory for Hong Kong and become role models for our youth; and
- (c) promoting Hong Kong as an attractive venue for hosting major sports events and as the Events Capital of Asia – thereby bringing in more tourists and economic benefits.

3. Since the reorganisation of local sports administrative structure in 2004, we have successfully forged a close partnership with the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI), Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC), National Sports Associations (NSAs) and other relevant sectors (such as the educational sector, medical sector and business sector). These key stakeholders have been working together to achieve the policy objectives of sports for all, sports excellence and turning Hong Kong into a sports events capital. Accordingly, the Sports Commission and its three committees (i.e. Major Sports Events Committee, Community Sports Committee and Elite Sports Committee) have been in their full operation since 2005, advising the Administration on strategic matters in their respective areas in the promotion of sports in Hong Kong.

Government subvention for elite sports development

4. The Administration has devoted considerable resources to various areas to promote and support sports development in Hong Kong. As for elite sports, our key objective is to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness in the national, regional and international sporting arena. The HKSI works closely with the relevant NSAs to implement high-performance athlete training programmes, provides coach training and education as well as training of junior and pre-elite squads, and carrying out research projects on enhancement of elite sports performance. Our commitment to maintain a steady funding provision for elite sports training and development under the "athlete-centred" principle will be upheld.

5. In 2004/05, the Home Affairs Bureau provided an annual recurrent subvention of \$91 million to HKSI, the dedicated elite training centre in Hong Kong, for the conduct of its annual elite training programme. It should be noted that despite the across-the-board reduction in subvention to subvented organisations under the Enhanced Productivity Programme, there has been no deduction in subvention for HKSI since 2003/04, in recognition of the importance the Administration attaches to elite sports development.

Dedicated funds for elite athletes

6. In addition to the annual subvention provided by the Government, HKSI also administers a number of funding programmes to support the development of elite sports and athletes as follows:

a) Sports Aid for Disabled Fund (SADF)

To provide financial assistance to disabled athletes with demonstrated performance and potential to achieve or maintain success in the international sports arena. In 2004/05, \$1.43 million was awarded to 47 elite disabled athletes from the SADF.

b) Sports Aid Foundation Fund (SAFF)

To provide financial assistance to athletes with demonstrated performance and potential to achieve or maintain success in the international sports arena. In 2004/05, \$8.145 million was awarded to 129 elite athletes, 51 junior athletes and 12 athletes from team only sports.

c) Hong Kong Athletes Fund (HKAF)

To provide grants for educational and other academic training to individual athletes to facilitate their pursuit for excellence in their chosen sport. HKAF also provides the athletes with the opportunity to develop alternative careers upon their retirement from competitive sport. In 2004/05, \$0.76 million was approved to cover the tuition fees of 7 athletes for furthering their studies.

d) Individual Athletes Support Scheme

To support individual athletes who have reached elite standard but are outside the existing Elite Sports Programme managed by HKSI. In 2004/05, \$1.235 million was granted to 12 athletes in 6 sports, including

Bodybuilding, Mountain Bike, Diving, Karatedo, Shooting and Snooker.

Arts and Sport Development Fund

7. On top of the various funding sources mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF), under the auspices of the Secretary for Home Affairs, also provides funding for our athletes' preparation for and participation in major sports games. In 2005, a total of \$13.98 million has been approved from the ASDF for qualified athletes in their preparation for and participation in major games, including the 10th National Games in Nanjing, 4th East Asian Games in Macau and 1st Asian Indoor Games in Bangkok. In addition, a further sum of \$40 million has been earmarked for the upcoming major sports games, such as 2006 Doha Asian Games, 2008 Olympics Games and 2009 East Asian Games.

Additional “booster” for 2008 Olympic Games and 2009 East Asian Games

8. HAB has earmarked a total of \$9 million as an additional “booster” to enhance support through direct incentive to eligible HKSI scholarship athletes who are going to compete in the 2008 Olympic Games and 2009 East Asian Games. The HKSI Board has been consulted and shown full support to this arrangement. The HKSI management is currently working out a mechanism for providing this additional incentive to eligible athletes in an equitable and efficient manner. It is intended that the funds can be disbursed to the qualified athletes starting from the 2006/07 financial year.

9. With the concerted efforts from various sectors and support of the Government, Hong Kong athletes have been making remarkable improvement in their performance over the years, and have achieved good results in various major international sporting events. For instance, in 2004 Hong Kong athletes won a silver medal in Table Tennis-Men's Doubles at Athens 2004 Olympic Games, the second Olympic medal won by the HKSAR. In 2005, Hong Kong sports teams won a gold medal in Cycling-Men's BMX at the 10th National Games of the People's Republic of China, and 14 gold medals, 11 silver medals and 16 bronze medals at the 4th East Asian Games and the 1st Asian Indoor Games.

10. The Government will ensure that adequate resources are provided to HKSI and its athletes for the effective training and development of elite sports. Besides, we will give due regard to the strategic advice tendered by the Sports Commission and the Elite Sports Committee, and continue to maintain a sustainable partnership relationship with all stakeholders concerned in the furtherance of elite sports development in Hong Kong.

Home Affairs Bureau
January 2006