

**For Information
20 October 2010**

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Sports Development Policy and Objectives**

Purpose

This paper briefly sets out the core objectives of the Government's sports development policy and describes key initiatives that are currently being implemented or are under planning with a view to achieving these objectives.

Sports Policy – Three Core Objectives

2. The Government's policy for sports development takes its cue from the 2002 report of the Sports Policy Review Team, entitled "Towards a more sporting future". The report set out the broad strategic aims for sports development policy, in terms of the need to: "develop a strong sporting culture in the community, achieve greater excellence by our elite athletes and raise our international profile on sport."

3. With a view to establishing a framework for implementing the sports development policy in line with these strategic aims, we have established three core objectives, under the umbrella of which we take forward the planning and implementation of specific initiatives. The objectives are –

- To promote greater community participation in sport;
- To develop sport at the elite level; and
- To raise Hong Kong's profile as a centre for international sports events.

4. Underlying these objectives is the view that participation in sport contributes significantly to sound physical and psychological health and

provides a basis for social interaction and a sense of belonging to the community. It also offers opportunities for career development and commercial diversification, thereby adding value to the economy. As shown by Beijing's successful hosting of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, sport can also galvanise an entire country and promote national pride and confidence – a feature that was also evident in the public's reaction to the outstanding performances of our athletes in the 2009 Hong Kong East Asian Games.

A. Promotion of greater community participation in sport

5. We aim to promote far higher levels of sports participation in the community, in particular among young people. This will require us to make popular sports programmes easily available, and to provide sufficient venue capacity to allow people at all levels to have regular opportunities for practice, training and competition. To this end, we are planning or implementing the following specific initiatives –

- (a) To adopt a more strategic approach to planning new facilities and programmes to ensure that we can effectively promote much wider participation in sport at the district and schools' levels by –
 - Identifying current shortfalls in the provision of key sports facilities such as indoor sports centres and sports grounds;
 - Building new facilities to the appropriate standards to ensure that we at least meet the basic requirements in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines – we have already begun planning for new facilities in districts that would otherwise have serious shortfalls of some types of facility by 2018; and
 - With reference to surveys conducted by the Sports Commission and the Census and Statistics Department, ascertaining the preferred sports of people from various age and gender groups and based on these preferences developing facilities and programmes, including territory-wide events such as the “Hong Kong Games” and “Sport for All Day” that will encourage far higher levels of participation.

- (b) To allocate more resources to schools'; and district level sports programmes by –
- Continuing our efforts to promote the “School Sports Programme” to encourage students to participate in sport on a regular basis;
 - Using part of the investment return from the new capital injected into the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF) to provide more opportunities for training and competition at school and district levels; and
 - Working with the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) to ensure that talented youngsters can be identified from schools' and district programmes and encouraged to develop their potential fully – in 2010 the HKSI launched the Talent Development Programme, with the aim of identifying up to 400 potential junior elite athletes through sport-specific testing of students.
- (c) To review and expand the feeder scheme established in 2009 to encourage the recruitment and training of young potential athletes by “national sports associations” (NSAs), with a view to these athletes eventually representing Hong Kong at international level, including –
- Analysing the effectiveness of the scheme to date – since 2009 we have allocated some \$15 million to 22 NSAs (which include the two associations for athletes with disabilities – the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled and the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped) to conduct talent identification and training programmes;
 - Reviewing the number of young athletes identified and trained by the NSAs who have the potential to join the elite squads of the sports concerned; and
 - Considering potential refinements to the scheme, including extension of the scheme to more NSAs with the potential to develop junior athletes to the elite level.

- (d) To provide greater support from the additional ASDF resources and the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation to NSAs that are responsible for developing team sports, in particular football, but also sports such as basketball, baseball, cricket, handball, hockey, rugby, softball and volleyball, by -
- Starting with football, supporting the engagement of development officers to supervise talent identification across schools, district-based and private sector (e.g., private housing estate-based) programmes for team sport players aged from 9 to 16; and
 - Providing grants to help NSAs develop temporary or permanent facilities at the district level – since 2009 we have earmarked \$26 million from the Sir David Trench Fund to fund projects in various districts, several of which involve team sports, including baseball, cricket, rugby and volleyball.

B. Developing sport at the elite level

6. Hong Kong athletes have made great progress in terms of the results that they have achieved in international events. Our most recent Asian Games and East Asian Games results were our best ever, and in mid-2010 we had 32 athletes from seven different sports ranked in the top 20 in the world. However, other countries and regions continue to upgrade their elite training programmes and make better facilities and support available to their top athletes. If Hong Kong is to keep pace and move ahead, we must do likewise. We will therefore –

- (a) Improve the quality of local training facilities so that athletes, including elite level disabled athletes have the support required to enable them to perform competitively at the highest level, by –
- Completing the redevelopment of the HKSI at Fo Tan at a total cost of around \$1.8 billion – the main features of the project, including a new 9-storey block, multi-purpose sports hall, 52-metre swimming-pool and boathouse will be completed in 2012. The redeveloped HKSI will feature integrated facilities to provide for training by elite level athletes with disabilities;

- Providing more support in the areas of sports science and medicine by allocating more space in the redeveloped HKSI to these areas and ensuring sufficient allocation of funds;
 - Earmarking funding from the ASDF to enable athletes to prepare properly for and have appropriate levels of support when competing in major international events – for the 2010 Asian Games and Asian Para Games we have reserved some \$28 million to support our athletes’ preparation for and participation in the games; and
 - Ensuring that new facilities that are built primarily to meet community needs are also of a sufficient standard to support training of elite athletes in sports that might not have easy access to the facilities at the HKSI, especially team sports.
- (b) Maintain and where appropriate increase the level of direct funding to top-level full-time athletes for training and living expenses, as well as ensuring that there are attractive incentives available to those who achieve good results at international level, for example, by –
- Allocating funding to the HKSI that is specifically earmarked for athletes and increasing the level of such funding as appropriate – in 2009-10 we allocated about \$96 million in direct financial and training support to HKSI-based athletes;
 - Reserving sufficient funds to ensure that we can offer appropriate levels of incentive to athletes who perform to a high level in major international sports events – the Sports Commission has recently reviewed and raised the levels of incentives for athletes, taking account of the levels of competitiveness of the events concerned; and
 - Providing funding through the Hong Kong Athletes’ Fund for athletes to obtain scholarships that will enable them to pursue further education and career-related training.
- (c) Ensure that full-time athletes are properly equipped to begin a “second career” upon retirement from top-level competition through the

provision of educational and career guidance, for example by –

- In the newly redeveloped HKSI providing ample space and facilities for full-time athletes to pursue part-time educational opportunities;
- Continuing to work with universities and other tertiary institutions to encourage them to recognise the value of athletes’ experience and knowledge gained from high level international sports competition and to give priority to accepting athletes with acceptable levels of academic ability – in 2010 16 athletes recommended by the HKSI or the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) were accepted to tertiary education; and
- Supporting the efforts of the SF&OC to strengthen the Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme established in 2008, which equips athletes with skills to help them enter new careers and provides job-specific guidance – we initially allocated over \$11 million to establish the ACEP for a “pilot” period, and we are now reviewing the funding allocation to ensure the long-term viability of this programme.

C. Raising our profile as a centre for major sports events

7. Every year Hong Kong hosts major international events that attract large numbers of local and overseas sports enthusiasts and showcase the city’s ability to organise and to appreciate high-level sports competition. Our annual rugby, golf, volleyball, badminton and cricket events are a firm fixture on the world’s sporting calendar, and the Hong Kong Marathon now draws some 60,000 participants. Hosting international events brings economic benefits and raises our international profile. It also encourages our athletes to perform at their best and inspires members of the public to become involved in sport themselves. With the aim of strengthening our major sports event calendar, we will –

- (a) Plan for the development of facilities that will allow us to host events at the highest international level in terms of the provision of spectator capacity and support facilities, for example, by –
 - Taking forward plans for the design, procurement and delivery of a modern, multi-purpose stadium complex at Kai Tak, to include a

50,000-seat stadium and a 4,000-seat indoor arena that would allow us to attract more top-level international sports events to Hong Kong; and

- Working with NSAs to identify the need for new venues or the redevelopment or refurbishment of existing venues that would allow Hong Kong to host attractive, world-class events on a regular basis.
- (b) Help NSAs to raise their capacity for organising major international events, in particular attracting new events to Hong Kong, by –
- Reviewing the “M” Mark scheme whereby the Government provides financial and technical support to NSAs for the staging of major events, with a view to using the investment return from the new resources injected into the ASDF to increase the funding available for individual events;
 - Considering the provision of one-off grants to NSAs to help them market and promote new events in order to raise the profile of these events and build up a strong and sustainable spectator base; and
 - Identifying more private sector sponsors to help NSAs organise major events by providing funding as well as marketing and organisational skills that can help improve the profile of events.

Conclusion

8. The core objectives set out in paragraph 3 above form the broad framework for our sports development policy. The specific initiatives outlined in this paper have been designed with a view to implementing this policy in a coordinated and practical manner. As we go forward, we will review and modify these initiatives as appropriate, in consultation with members of the sports community and other stakeholders, in particular at the district level. We will identify appropriate sources of funding for new and improved measures, including the sourcing of further sponsorship from the private sector.