

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Panel on Home Affairs**

### **Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 11 November 2016**

#### **Support for athletes with disabilities**

#### **Purpose**

This paper summarizes past discussions of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on issues relating to support for athletes with disabilities ("AWDs").

#### **Background**

2. The Chief Executive announced in the 2015 Policy Address that the Government would commission a consultancy study on how to support AWDs and promote comprehensive participation in sport by persons with disabilities. Commencing in May 2015, the consultancy study aimed to investigate the current level of sports participation by persons with disabilities in Hong Kong; their needs in relation to sports participation; current levels of support provided by relevant sports and other organizations to persons with disabilities (including athletes); and support provided by comparable places in developing opportunities for persons with disabilities. Recommendations in the following areas are made by the consultancy study:

- (a) promoting sports participation by persons with disabilities: enhancing the provision and management of facilities to assist people with disabilities, and to provide more activities, training programmes and competition opportunities for them;
- (b) enhancing support for high-performance AWDs, including the provision of full-time training opportunities;
- (c) the structure and mode of co-operation of sport organizations for persons with disabilities; and

- (d) capacity building: enhancing the understanding of relevant people on participation in sports by persons with disabilities, and training more excellent coaches for persons with disabilities.

3. The consultancy report, namely the Consultancy Report on Sport for People with Disabilities (the "Consultancy Report"), was submitted to the Government in August 2016. On 5 August 2016, the Home Affairs Bureau launched a three-month public consultation exercise on the Consultancy Report to solicit public views on how to support AWDs and promote sports participation by persons with disabilities in a more comprehensive manner. The consultation period ended on 4 November 2016.

### **Deliberations of the Panel**

4. While the Panel has not discussed specifically the provision of support for AWDs before, relevant issues were raised during the Panel's deliberations on the sports policy and sports development programmes at its meetings on 14 January 2011, 10 April 2015, 12 June 2015 and 24 March 2016. The major issues relating to support for AWDs raised at these meetings are summarized in the following paragraphs.

#### Support for athletes with disabilities

5. Members were in general of the view that given the less advantaged position of AWDs and the many difficulties they faced in committing to sports training and competitions, more effective measures should be mapped out to encourage their participation in sports events.

6. The Administration advised that the Hong Kong Sports Institute ("HKSI") adopted an integrated approach in training and providing support to both disabled and non-disabled athletes. Upon completion of its redevelopment project, HKSI featured new sports facilities and more space for providing better training environment and equipment, as well as support in sports science and sports medicine, to elite athletes, including AWDs. HKSI also supported the elite training of the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled ("HKPC&SAPD") and the Hong Kong Sports Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability ("HKSAPID") by financing the hiring of coaches, participating in local and overseas training and competitions, procuring of equipment, etc. Furthermore, AWDs were eligible to apply for financial support under the Hong Kong Athletes Fund to study degree or other courses, and HKPC&SAPD also offered career development programmes for AWDs.

7. In response to members' concerns about training opportunities for AWDs with sporting potential and raising their standard at international competitions,

the Administration advised that under the Feeder System Scheme, national sports associations ("NSAs") were provided with financial support for talent identification, training for regional and junior squads, and participation in overseas training and competitions. In the 2015-2016 financial year, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department allocated \$16.3 million to 52 NSAs (including HKPC&SAPD and HKSAPID) to implement their feeder programmes.

#### Disparity in the amounts of incentive awards and financial subsidy

8. In discussing the provision of incentive awards and financial subsidy for elite athletes at the Panel meeting on 14 January 2011, members noted that HKSI was supporting a wide range of elite sports, and that a top-level full-time elite athlete could receive monthly financial assistance of around \$30,000. Concern was raised about the disparity in the amounts of incentive awards for able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes who won medals at the major games and monthly subsidies provided by HKSI to able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes. There was a view that the Administration should accord the same treatment to disabled and non-disabled elite athletes, so that disabled elite athletes might participate in sports on a full-time basis.

9. The Administration advised that the disparity in the levels of incentive awards for able-bodied and disabled elite athletes was mainly due to historical reasons. The Government of the last term had reviewed and increased the levels of incentive awards for medalists at major games. The level of adjustment for disabled elite athletes was proportionately higher than that for able-bodied elite athletes in the last review exercise. The Sports Commission would take heed of the situation when reviewing the levels of incentive awards again.

10. The Administration further advised that under its Hong Kong Paralympians Fund, the Social Welfare Department provided grants to relevant sports associations for hiring coaches and enhancing technical support for target sports programmes with the aim of assisting AWDs. The Fund also provided subsistence allowance to AWDs to participate in training and purchase individual supplies, and provided an employment facilitating grant to assist retired AWDs in their job attachment and vocational training.

#### **Relevant question raised at Council meeting**

11. At the Council meeting of 2 December 2015, Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan raised a question on the Government's support for AWDs. The question raised by Dr CHIANG and the Administration's reply are in **Appendix I**.

### **Latest development**

12. The Administration will brief the Panel on the Consultancy Report and the views solicited from the public consultation at the next meeting on 11 November 2016.

### **Relevant papers**

13. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
4 November 2016

## Appendix I

### Press Releases

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LCQ11: Support the development of athletes with disabilities  
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Following is a question by the Dr Hon Chiang Lai-wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (December 2):

Question:

It has been reported that earlier a team, comprising an amputee runner and two able-bodied persons from Hong Kong, took part in an extreme desert marathon in Chile, which is one of the four extreme desert races, and won the championship in the team division of the race. The amputee runner concerned is the first-ever amputee athlete to have completed the race. Regarding the support for athletes with disabilities (AWDs), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that apart from undergoing sports training, quite a number of AWDs have to work and receive rehabilitation treatments, of the policies formulated by the authorities to support and train such athletes;

(2) whether the authorities have put in place policies to encourage AWDs to participate in international sports events held locally or overseas, including whether commendations are given to AWDs who have outstanding performance; if they have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the authorities have reviewed if the sports training and employment support currently provided to AWDs are sufficient; if they have reviewed, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been taking various measures to support the development of athletes with disabilities (AWDs). The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provide a range of supporting services through related national sport associations (NSAs) and the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) to meet their needs.

My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) At present, the Government provides appropriate support to AWDs through various channels, including:

(a) Subsidising AWDs to prepare for and participate in major sporting events

(i) Financial support is provided under the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF) by the HAB to AWDs in preparation for and participation in major games and to relevant NSAs in organising international events in Hong Kong. The Fund granted \$5.58 million and \$9.29 million to subsidise AWDs to prepare for and participate in the London Paralympic Games and the Incheon Asian Para Games in 2012 and 2014 respectively. Up till present, the

Fund has already allocated \$5.69 million to assist AWDs to prepare for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games.

(ii) To support athletes' preparation for and participation in the London Paralympic Games and the Incheon Asian Para Games, the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (HKPC&SAPD) implemented the "Striving for Excellence Programme", from 2011 to 2014, in addition to providing additional trainings. The programme enhanced the planning for the participating athletes' preparation for the games, and provided better support to athletes who retired after the games. In this regard, the HAB has allocated grants of \$4.61 million from the ASDF to support the programme. For the period from 2015 to 2018, an amount of \$5.49 million has been earmarked to support HKPC&SAPD's "Sustaining Optimal Performance Programme" to provide additional support for planning for preparation and support for participation in the 2016 Paralympic Games and the 2018 Asian Para Games.

(b) Subvention for relevant NSAs

(i) Through its Sports Subvention Scheme, LCSD provides subvention to the HKPC&SAPD, the Hong Kong Sports Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability (HKSAPID) and the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Deaf (HKSAD) every year for hiring coaches, arranging local and overseas training, organising competitions and participation in the feeder system. The LCSD also meets with organisations for persons with disability (PWDs) (including HKSAD, the Society for the Welfare of the Autistic Persons, the Hong Kong Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied Association, the Hong Kong Blind Union, the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association and the Community Rehabilitation Network under the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation) every year to discuss organisation of sports and recreational activities at the community level to meet the needs and interests of people with disabilities.

(ii) The HKSI also provides direct financial support to the HKPC&SAPD and the HKSAPID for hiring coaches, arranging local and overseas training as well as procuring gears.

(c) Training venues and facilities

(i) Upon completion of its redevelopment project, the HKSI features new sport facilities and more space for providing better training environment and equipment, as well as support in sports science and sports medicine, to elite athletes including AWDs.

(ii) The LCSD also accords priority to relevant NSAs for booking designated venues for training of representative teams. At present, the three sports organisations for PWDs mentioned above are provided with LCSD venues as "national squad training centre" respectively.

(d) Financial subsidy and subsistence grant

(i) The HKSI provides training and direct financial subsidy to elite AWDs according to their individual competition achievements. The amount of individual annual subsidy ranges from \$21,860 to \$72,800 in 2015-16.

(ii) Under its Hong Kong Paralympians Fund, the Social Welfare Department provides grants to relevant sports associations for hiring coaches and enhancing technical support for target sports

programmes with the aim of assisting AWDs. The Fund also provides subsistence allowance to AWDs to participate in training and purchase individual supplies, and provides an employment facilitating grant to assist retired AWDs in their job attachment or vocational training.

(e) Career and Education

(i) Launched by the HKPC&SAPD for AWDs, the Athlete Career Programme, in conjunction with human resource companies, provides career consultation, referral services and related workshops. The HKPC&SAPD also creates in-house internship positions to enable disabled interns to upgrade their work skills while meeting training and competition needs.

(ii) Under its Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme Support, the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China provides consultation services to AWDs, giving them advice on the pathway for career development and further education.

(iii) Athletes who receive training at the HKSI may apply for grants under the Hong Kong Athletes Fund to cover their tuition fees on education and academic pursuits as well as subsistence allowance.

(2) In training elite athletes, including AWDs, the HKSI renders support, including assistance in sports science and sports medicine, for their participation in local and overseas major events. Apart from direct financial subsidy for their preparation for and participation in major international events, medalists of individual major sports events (e.g. Paralympic and Asian Para Games) will receive cash incentive awards. Details are listed in annex.

Through the Athlete Incentive Awards Scheme, the HKSI disbursed incentive awards of \$1.86 million and \$1.58 million respectively in 2012 and 2014 to athletes with outstanding achievements in the London Paralympic Games and the Incheon Asian Para Games.

(3) As indicated in (1) above, the HAB has been maintaining close contact with various stakeholders in the sports sector for providing AWDs with appropriate support that meets their needs. A consultancy study undertaken by the HAB is in progress, which aims to obtain a better understanding of development of sports for PWDs in Hong Kong, and to make recommendations on how to promote sports for PWDs and support AWDs. A preliminary report of the study is expected to be completed within the next few months. The HAB will then further consult stakeholders and consider their views in details.

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Medalists of individual major sports events (e.g. Paralympic and Asian Para Games) receiving cash incentive awards:

<b>Medals</b>	<b>Paralympic Games (\$)</b>	<b>Asian Para Games (\$)</b>
<b>Individual Events</b>		
Gold	300,000	40,000
Silver	150,000	20,000
Bronze	75,000	10,000
<b>Team Events</b>		
Gold	420,000	80,000
Silver	210,000	40,000
Bronze	105,000	20,000



**Relevant papers on  
Support for athletes with disabilities**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Home Affairs	14.1.2011 (Item V)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
	14.12.2012 (Item VII)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
Legislative Council	19.3.2014	<a href="#"><u>Official Records of Proceedings – Members' motions dealt with on 21.3.2014 (Pages 40-137)</u></a>
Panel on Home Affairs	10.4.2015 (Item IV)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
	12.6.2015 (Item IV)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
Legislative Council	2.12.2015	<a href="#"><u>Official Records of Proceedings – Written answers to questions (Pages 84-89)</u></a>
Panel on Home Affairs	24.3.2016 (Item IV)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>