

## Joining hands to promote Olympic spirit

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The Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, said tomorrow (October 13) will be the 300-day countdown to the opening of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. The next 300 days will be very important to Hong Kong as an Olympic co-host city and the Government would cultivate and promote the Olympic atmosphere in the city, involve the public in the celebration and arouse their interest in the Games with a view to laying a good foundation for the promotion of Olympism in Hong Kong.

Speaking at a press conference today (October 12), Mrs Yau said Hong Kong people share the joy of and take pride in the Beijing Olympic Games, which is the first-ever Olympic Games held on Chinese soil. Hong Kong is presented a precious opportunity to co-host the Olympic Equestrian Events, which helps demonstrate to the international community the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong as Asia's World City and the achievements of the "One Country, Two Systems".

Mrs Yau said, "We will also ride on the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games to strengthen national education among our young citizens and promote their sense of belongings and awareness to the Nation."

To celebrate the 300-day countdown to the Beijing Olympic Games and Hong Kong's Equestrian Events, there will be a Beijing-Qingdao-Hong Kong 2008 Olympic Games Co-host Cities Sports Exchange Programme. It will take place at West Kowloon and Ma On Shan on October 13 and October 14 respectively.

On the same day of October 13, teachers and students from 12 tertiary institutes will visit the naval base at Stonecutters' Island and attend the extravaganza in the evening to celebrate the 300-day countdown to the Olympic Games. The event is jointly organised by the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison and the Hong Kong Youth Activities Committee.

In the evening, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) will co-host a 300-day countdown ceremony at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza. Elite athletes, representatives from Hong Kong's sports sector and representatives of the official sponsors and suppliers of the Olympic Games as well as singers and artists will participate in the countdown event. The ceremony will mark the 300-day countdown

to the opening of the Games and the launching of our Olympic City Dress Up programme. It is produced by TVB and will be broadcast in the afternoon of October 14.

Also to be held on the same day will be a series of the Hong Kong International Horse Show organised by the Hong Kong Equestrian Federation and subvented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). It will be held at the Beas River Country Club in Sheung Shui from now to November 4, 2007. Apart from the equestrian competitions, there will be an equestrian carnival and exhibition. Admission is free.

Mrs Yau said, "We hope that the Olympic atmosphere will be built up through these activities. We believe these activities will attract a large audience and help promote the image of Hong Kong as a co-host city."

She said, "Mass participation is one of the distinguishing features of the Beijing Olympic Games. To the Hong Kong people, participation in the Olympic Games is not confined to athletes, volunteers or audience. The public can participate in the Olympic Games in various ways, feeling the Olympic atmosphere and sharing the joy."

"In the past year, we made use of Hong Kong as an Olympic City and worked closely with our partners and relevant organisations, including the SF&OC, Hong Kong Jockey Club, the Equestrian Company, 18 District Councils, Hong Kong Equestrian Federation, Riding for the Disabled Association Ltd, youth bodies, school and tourism organisations to hold promotional events to arouse the public's interest in equestrian."

The promotional activities focused on education in the initial stage, with a view to deepen public's knowledge and appreciation in equestrian. Emphasis was then put on participation such as viewing the events on spot in the second stage.

The following is some of the promotional activities organised by the government and relevant organisations:

- \* Celebration of the 500-day countdown of the Beijing Olympics – 27.3.2007
- \* Beijing 2008 Olympic Games One-year Countdown – 8.8.2007
- \* Good Luck Beijing – HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup Eventing Competition –

11-13.8.2007

\* Jumping Fence Competition (November 2006 – April 2007)

\* 2007 Guangzhou-Hong Kong- Macau Inter-Primary School Quiz

"At the implementation level, we will be working closely with all major stakeholders including the SF&OC, Hong Kong Jockey Club, the 18 District Councils, Hong Kong Equestrian Federation, Riding for the Disabled Association, youth groups, schools and tourism bodies.

"In fact, it is not hard for us to understand the strong attachment of Hong Kong people to the Olympics. In essence, the Olympic Spirit, representing a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play, can be identified with the typical elements of the Hong Kong spirit, i.e. harmony, fair competition and mutual care. Therefore, the focus of our promotion exercise is to encourage community-wide participation and to demonstrate our Olympic Spirit."

"Our overall strategies can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, the HKSAR Government has been working closely with various partners, including the SF&OC, the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the Equestrian Fund and the HK Equestrian Company, as well as the other sectors including statutory bodies, the District Council, private sector companies, youth groups and disabled bodies groups to plan for the Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events and to promote the Beijing Olympic Games.

Secondly, to create a strong Olympic atmosphere in Hong Kong, raise public awareness of the Beijing Olympics, encourage community involvement in the Olympics and promote the Olympic Spirit, we are, in collaboration with the SF&OC and related organisations, launching a series of activities and publicity campaigns and carrying out the City Dress Up programme."

With the coming of the 300-day countdown, the HKSAR Government will launch a new wave of promotion programmes for the Olympic Games and intensify the efforts as the Games draw near.

The four major components of our publicity and promotion programmes are as follows:

- \* Major celebration activities carried out on dates of significance with contents of the activities being in line with the theme of "Green Olympics", "High-tech Olympics" and "People's Olympics";
- \* Education, community involvement and sports and cultural activities;
- \* Publicity programmes; and
- \* City Dress Up.

On celebration activities, Mrs Yau said, "We will carry out major community involvement projects cum celebration activities on dates of significance, such as the 300, 200 and 100-day countdowns to the Olympics. As for the Olympic torch relay to be held in May next year, 120 people from different sectors of the community and members of the Olympic Family will become torchbearers to carry the Olympic torch through various parts of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories by different modes of transportation to spread the Olympic spirit and showcase our gorgeous scenery and unique city glamour to the world.

"On education, community involvement and sports and cultural activities, as the Chief Executive (CE) had said in his Policy Address that "the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games presents an excellent opportunity to promote national education. We will highlight this important event as the main theme of our promotional activities, so people will understand our country better and have a shared sense of national pride", we would continue to work with relevant government departments and organisations, to promote national education through schools while promoting Olympism and equestrian events. We would also

- \* Set up Live Sites during the period of the Beijing Olympic Games from August 8 to 24, 2008 for people to meet and enjoy the spirit of the Olympic Games by watching the sporting competitions on giant screens, as well as participating in diversified cultural and entertainment activities;

- \* Widely distribute educational materials to educate primary and secondary students through the web to promote understanding of the Equestrian Events and Olympism; and

- \* Provide a platform to involve different sectors of the community, especially the youth sector, in the promotion of the Olympic Games. Meanwhile, to encourage community participation in sports activities through the Olympic Games promotion exercise, CE announced in his Policy Address that LCSD would offer sports facilities

for public use free of charge between July 1 and September 30, 2008. No hiring fees will be charged in order to encourage more people to join "a sport for each individual" campaign so that the health of all citizens can be improved.

On publicity, we will

- \*promote Hong Kong as an Olympic Equestrian Co-host City through the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the Economic and Trade Offices of the HKSAR Government, with a view to attracting tourists;

- \* take part in overseas promotions such as the London Lord Mayor's Show in November;

- \* launch a number of Announcements in the Public Interest to promote the Olympic Games, Equestrian Events and Olympic spirit, and encourage the people of Hong Kong to act as a good host to the guests and tourists visiting Hong Kong;

- \* set up a dedicated website as a one-stop portal for the updated information about Hong Kong as a co-host city;.

- \* commission RTHK to produce a programme to promote the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games in general and the Equestrian Events. The new programme will consist of 10 episodes of 30 minutes each. It will be broadcast on TVB Jade on Saturday night from January 12, 2008 onwards.

On city dress-up, we will

- \* collaborate with the official sponsors/suppliers of the Olympic Games in putting up buntings/banners/posters at the main thoroughfares, footbridges and external walls of the government buildings in the city in order to cultivate and promote the Olympic atmosphere. We will intensify the decoration efforts in due course;

- \* arrange for the display of posters at the airport and the MTR stations, conveying Olympic promotion messages to the public and tourists; and

- \* appeal for support from the commercial buildings on both sides of the Victoria Harbour to incorporate the Olympic promotion messages into their façade lighting has been received positively. Some of these buildings will incorporate the Olympic

themes into their Christmas/Chinese New Year lighting display, thus further enhancing the festive atmosphere of the harbour.

"While we will try to maintain a momentum of building up the Olympic atmosphere in the city, we are mindful of prudent spending of taxpayers' money. On resources, we will get direct funding from sponsors on productions such as street buntings and giant wall banners. The Equestrian Fund will, depending on results of the donation campaigns, provide funding on organising cultural and community involvement activities. We will get funding from District Councils part of which will be from the \$300 million of the community involvement vote. We will apply for additional resources from the Legislative Council to hold community involvement activities for members of the public.

"Our strategy is community involvement and we are actively communicating with the private sector, in particular the official sponsors of the Olympic Games, with a view to partnering in their promotional activities relating to the Olympics.

"With 'One World One Dream' in our mind, I am sure Hong Kong will be able to pool all strengths with all stakeholders in fostering the spirit of Olympism advocated under the Olympic Charter," Mrs Yau said.

Joining today's press conference were the President of the SF&OC, Mr Timothy Fok; Chief Executive Officer of the Equestrian Company, Mr Lam Woon-kwong; Secretary of Hong Kong Equestrian Federation, Mr Soenke Lauterbach; Executive Director of Tourism Board, Mr Anthony Lau; and General Manager of Retail and Marketing of Airport Authority Hong Kong, Ms Eva Tsang.

Ends/Friday, October 12, 2007