

Olympic spirit radiates in Hong Kong

The 200-day countdown to the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the staging of the Olympic Equestrian Events in Hong Kong would be reached next Monday (January 21), the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, said today (January 18).

To engage public participation in the Games, the Government has been working with various sectors to organise activities to promote the Olympic spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play on the theme of "Green Olympics" and "People's Olympics".

At a press briefing today, Mrs Yau said that in entering the 200-day countdown, the Government would be in full swing to engage Hong Kong people in the Olympic atmosphere through various activities in the coming months. Highlights include the 200-day and 100-day countdown celebration activities, Olympic Torch Relay in May and Olympic Live Sites activities in Hong Kong.

"With the 200-day countdown, we not only recap the promotion work of the last three months but also look forward to highlights of cultural, educational, district-participation activities, as well as programmes promoting equestrian events and sports, riding on the theme of 'Green Olympics' and 'People's Olympics' ", Mrs Yau said. (refer to Annex)

To enhance the Olympic atmosphere and promote a Green Olympics, the Government will carry out beautifying and greening work projects in 47 areas, such as areas in Victoria Park, Tunnel Approach Rest Garden, Statue Square, Chater Garden, Harcourt Garden, Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazzas, gardens in Yuen Wo Road in Sha Tin and public transport exchange in Sheung Shui.

To promote greening in the community, the Home Affairs Department will launch a pilot rooftop greening project to encourage non-profit making organisations to implement greening work on rooftops and podiums in suitable buildings. Some charitable organisations have expressed interest in carrying out the project.

The Department will organise "Hong Kong Tree Planting Day 2008" at the end of March. More than 3,000 participants will plant 10,000 trees in Pak Mong Village, Lantau Island, and the plantation area will be named "Olympic Green". An application for naming a trail near the village as "Olympic Trail" is being processed.

Another green activity highlight is the "Inter-school 3D Creative Artwork Competition" co-hosted by 10 major charitable organisations and assisted by the Home Affairs Department. All secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong will be invited to take part in the competition to design and create a three-dimension artwork using recycled materials to demonstrate the spirit of Green Olympics.

Besides providing a world-class competition venue for the equestrian events during the Olympics, the Hong Kong Jockey Club has also incorporated green elements during the design and building of the grounds such as the recycling of stable waste, the re-use of environmentally friendly materials, the tree and wildlife conservation approach taken by the Jockey Club during the construction of the venues and their energy reduction design.

The Hong Kong Equestrian Company has used green materials, re-usable energy during the event. It has also focused on air quality control, waste classification and management in order to participate in Green Olympics.

"People's Olympics" is one of the concepts promoted by the Beijing Olympic Games, which reflects the Olympic spirit by advocating the culture of "sports for all" and integration of life, cultural education and public participation.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, will organise the Schools Sports Education Programme in secondary, primary and special schools in Hong Kong. The activity is supported by the International Olympic Committee and includes talks, seminars and exhibitions. Students who participate in the seminar will get a chance to talk with some elite Hong Kong athletes during which they can have a clearer understanding of Olympism.

RTHK has also produced a programme to promote the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games in general and the Equestrian Events. The new programme consists of 10 episodes of 30 minutes each. It is being broadcast on TVB Jade on Saturday nights, beginning on January 12.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will also hold the Vibrant Blossoms for Beijing Olympics from March 14 to 24 in Victoria Park. Mascots of the Olympics and Paralympics made with "Gerbera", which is chosen as the theme

flower, will be exhibited. Many Olympic-related exhibits and booths will also be displayed. From now until September, relevant Olympic promotional videos are being broadcast at the 147 LCSD major leisure and cultural venues, including sports centres, swimming pools, city halls and theatres.

The Education Bureau and the LCSD will co-organise the "City of Life Welcomes the Olympic Games" 100-day countdown event at the Wan Chai Sports Ground at the end of April, with 3,000 students and parents expected to participate.

Mrs Yau said, "One feature of our promotional efforts for the Games is to promote community-wide participation in the celebration activities. We will encourage disabled people and the disadvantaged community to participate so as to promote the concepts of integration and equality as enshrined in the Paralympic Spirit and the Paralympic Games."

"Through countdown events and territory-wide carnivals, we hope citizens and members of the disadvantaged community alike would share the joy of celebration. For example, we have invited residents from Tung Chung, Tin Shui Wai, Sham Shui Po and Southern District to join the 200-day countdown event at Ocean Park on Sunday."

"We will also separately liaise with local groups and non-governmental organisations and to arrange for groups of the disabled and ethnic minorities to watch selected live Olympic competition events, professional cultural performances and local entertainment activities at the Olympic Live Sites. Arrangements will be made for them to visit the Equestrian Pavilion and have photos taken with ponies."

From today the public can log onto the updated Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Equestrian Events Website (www.equestrian2008.org), a one-stop web portal providing information on equestrian sports in Hong Kong, the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, and latest news about community activities, the Olympic Live Sites of Hong Kong and the Torch Relay.

Also present at the press conference today were the Chief Executive Officer of the Equestrian Company, Mr Lam Woon-kwong; the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Pamela Tan; the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Mr Thomas Chow; Head of Racing Operations for the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr John Ridley; and Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development) for Education Bureau, Dr Catherine

Chan.

Annex

Review of Events in last quarter:

- Beijing 2008 Olympic Games 300-day Countdown (13.10.2007);
- Beijing Paralympic-Games One Year Countdown (11.11.2007);
- Beijing-Qingdao-Hong Kong 2008 Olympic Games Co-host Cities Sport Exchange Programme (13- 14.10.2007);
- New Year's Eve Countdown (Time Square) (31.12.2007);
- New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival (Sha Tin Park) (31.12.2007);
- Run with your Heart 2007;

Preview of Celebratory Events:

- 200-day Countdown to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games (Ocean Park) (20.1.2008);
- 200-day Countdown to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games to promote fitness among the public (21.1.2008);
- 200-day Countdown to the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games (20.2.2008);
- Beijing 2008 Olympic/ Paralympic Torch Relay;
- Olympic Live Sites in Hong Kong to show live broadcast of selected Olympic competition events, and organise professional cultural performances and local entertainments to celebrate 2008 Olympic;

Equestrian Sport Promotion:

- The Hong Kong Jockey Club Equestrian Pavilion in Penfold Park (From now on till 2.5.2008. The Pavilion is closed on certain dates);
- Organise Roving exhibition on Olympism and the Equestrian Events;
- Set up "Equestrian Fun Park" website;
- Commission RTHK to produce a programme to promote the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games in general and the Equestrian Events. The 10 episodes is broadcast on TVB Jade on Saturday nights since January 12 onwards;
- Equestrian and Mascot Exhibition during 2008 Lunar New Year Fair (to be held in Victoria Park from 2.2.2008 to 3.3.2008);
- Hong Kong Flower Show 2008 (14-24.3.2008);

Promote Sports among the public:

- Free Admission for use of leisure facilities from July to September 2008;
- To organise activities for students and to distribute learning and teaching materials to schools in order to arouse students' awareness of the Olympic spirit and encourage their participation;

People's Olympics:

- Funding support for all schools to organise events to promote Olympism/sports;
- LCSD Schools Sports Education Programme;
- "City of Life welcomes 2008 Beijing Olympic Games - 100th Day Countdown Activities" to be organised in schools;
- Bank of China 51th Festival of Sport;
- Bank of China Hong Kong Sports Stars Award 2007;
- 2008 Olympic Day Run;
- Lunar New Year Spectacular Lantern Displays;
- Lunar New Year Lantern Carnival;
- Zingaro Equestrian Theatre;
- International Arts Festival - Special Series for Promotion of Olympism;
- "Visa Olympics for Imagination" Drawing Competition;
- "Fitness for the Olympics" Roving book exhibition;
- Olympic Photograph Roving Exhibition (April to August 2008);
- Olympic Sport and Art Contest - 2008 Winning Entries Exhibition;
- "Horses in Chinese Art and Culture" to be held in Hong Kong Museum of History;
- "The Ancient Greek and Olympic Games" to be held in Hong Kong Heritage Museum;
- "Sports Arena" and "Sports and Health" Exhibition;
- "The History of Horse" to be held in Hong Kong Museum of Art

Ends/Friday, January 18, 2008