

PSHA's speech at the 123rd International Olympic Committee Session (English only)

Following is the speech delivered by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, at the 123rd International Olympic Committee Session at Raffles Beijing Hotel, Beijing today (August 7):

President Rogge, Life President Samaranch, Members of the IOC,

Good morning. First of all, on behalf of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, I would like to thank President Rogge and Members of the IOC for giving us this opportunity to provide you with first-hand information about Hong Kong.

I would like to reaffirm the Hong Kong Government's full support for the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China in bidding for hosting the 123rd IOC Session in Hong Kong in 2011 as has been pledged by our highest authority, the Honourable Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Hong Kong is indeed very honoured to have been chosen as a Finalist Candidate for hosting the 2011 IOC Session, and for that we would like to thank the IOC for having cast their first vote of confidence on Hong Kong.

Now, I would like to run past you a video entitled "A World in a City – Hong Kong" before I supplement further information about our edges in hosting the 2011 IOC Session in Hong Kong.

Facilities

First, we have excellent over conference facilities reserved for the IOC. The Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre will be the official venue for the Session and the Executive Board Meeting. The Centre is the largest conference facility in Hong Kong, and was used in 1997 for the very important ceremony in which the British Administration handed back the sovereignty over Hong Kong to China. The ceremony was attended by many Heads of states and international VVIPs.

The Centre is now a landmark of Hong Kong and is an important feature of the Hong Kong skyline. It has been well maintained and various upgrading and expansion works to keep up its modernity have been carried out over the years.

It is THE place for holding the most important conventions and exhibitions in Hong Kong. More recently, the World Trade Organisation held its 6th Ministerial Conference there in 2005, and in 2006 the Centre was used to hold the International Telecommunication Union Telecom World.

All the facilities within the Centre are well equipped with modern installations to ensure the smooth conduct of the IOC Session.

The Centre is situated right at the harbour-front, and delegates would have plenty of opportunities to enjoy the magnificent views of one of the most beautiful harbours in the world – the Victoria Harbour - from many parts of the Centre as they conduct businesses.

The facilities are well laid out, and delegates will have their meetings and other activities all under one roof.

We have already mapped out a plan for the venues required according to the IOC's set requirements, as stated in the booklet distributed to members.

In terms of hotel accommodation, the official hotel – the Grand Hyatt Hotel - and the supporting hotel – the Renaissance Harbour View, are all 5-star hotels and are in fact attached to the Convention and Exhibition Centre. Delegates can simply commute on foot under the same roof.

There are also a number of hotels in the neighbourhood for other attendees. They range from deluxe hotels to 2-3 Star hotels to suit the different needs of other attendees.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board has pledged the full support of the entire tourism and convention industry of Hong Kong, and will ensure that all participants of the 2011 IOC Session will be impressed by the outstanding standard of our renowned hospitality and professional services.

This photo shows the grand lobby of the Grand Hyatt Hotel, which will be used as the

IOC Official Hotel by IOC Members, Honorary Members, participants from International Federations and Olympic Games Organizing Committees.

The IOC Supporting Hotel, the Renaissance Harbour View Hotel, will supplement the Official Hotel in meeting the accommodation needs of the IOC Session.

The Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China has signed commitments of availability and room rates in 2011 with the Official Hotel and the Supporting Hotel in June 2008. A list of the room rate and allocation is stated in the Executive Summary already passed to Members for reference.

In fact, the Hong Kong community is very enthusiastic and looking forward to welcoming the honourable IOC delegates to Hong Kong in 2011.

Other than our edges in respect of convention and hotel facilities, Hong Kong is visitor-friendly. We adopt a liberal and open visa regime. Nationals of about 170 countries & territories enjoy visa-free access to Hong Kong.

Most imports into Hong Kong are tax-free, including light alcohol like table wine. The Government provides one-stop advisory centre for handling all cargo clearance and import or export declaration matter.

Hong Kong is a Gourmet Paradise with tight food surveillance and control measures.

We are mindful of the importance of ensuring that the IOC members stay afresh for important meetings, and that their spouses are fully engaged and entertained while their partners are attending to businesses.

In fact, there are plenty of things to do in Hong Kong.

And we will arrange a full cultural and spouse programmes for all participants of the IOC Session and their spouses.

They can watch a Cantonese Opera performance or performances by local and overseas art groups; visit the Ocean Park to see the world under the sea and our national treasures – the Giant Pandas; take a hiking trail to see part of our 40% of land preserved as green area;

snorkel at a marine park to see our beautiful corals; visit our Chinese temples; or visit the Giant Buddha on Lantau Island, just to name a few.

Of course, there are our major theme parks, Hong Kong Disneyland and Ocean Park to welcome you too.

Hong Kong also has a highly efficient transportation system

Taking a car from our airport to the Convention and Exhibition Centre will just be about 45 minutes. If you take the Airport Express train, you will be in the Central Business District in around 20 minutes.

In the recent worldwide passenger survey results released by Skytrax, the Hong Kong International Airport is named the World's Best Airport for 2008, the seventh time in ten years.

Our taxis are easy to flag down on the road, and very reliable. They operate round the clock, and can serve our late night shoppers.

Efficiency is key to the successful conduct of any international conference. But we never forget the human element – comfort and user-friendliness are just as important.

Despite the fact that Hong Kong is already a very safe city compared to any metropolis in the world, we do attach great importance to the well being of our delegates and have excellent experiences in this regard having played host to many high-profile international events such as the 6th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in 2005, the International Telecommunication Union Telecom World in 2006. We are all set to organise the best ever Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events in Hong Kong this year.

The Hong Kong Police Force will fully support the Local Organising Committee in defensive search, accreditation, screening, private security, threat assessment and IPP protection.

With the full support from the Hong Kong Government, US\$17.31 million has been earmarked for the staging of the 123rd IOC Session in Hong Kong. The funding commitment has been approved in principle by the Legislature of Hong Kong.

Once the IOC has made a decision to award the hosting right of the 2011 IOC Session to the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, the Hong Kong Government would proceed to work out a detailed budget. We will obtain the funding allocation from our Legislature.

So, we are all set and committed to organising the most successful IOC Session ever in Hong Kong in 2011. We all live in the same global village and members need not focus on the next continent to go. Hong Kong is the city which offers you the best comfort of mind. Just pack up your bags and let us do the rest!

Thank you very much.