

LCQ20:Bidding to host the 18th Asian Games in 2019

Following is a question by the Hon Frederick Fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (November 18):

Question:

The Secretary for Home Affairs was reported to have said earlier on a radio interview that if the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China intended to make a bid to host the 18th Asian Games in 2019, the Government would give its strong support. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it knows the timetable and procedure for bidding to host the 18th Asian Games in 2019; of the authorities' estimation of the decision in respect of bidding for hosting the Asian Games concerned had to be made the latest to ensure that there is sufficient time to carry out the preparatory work, with a view to complying with the relevant procedure;

(b) whether the authorities have summed up the experience of the failure in bidding for hosting the 2006 Asian Games; if they have, of the conclusion, and whether they have already improved and enhanced the shortfalls mentioned in the conclusion; and

(c) before deciding on whether or not to make a bid to host the 2019 Asian Games, what factors and components the authorities will consider and assess, and whether these will include the level of support and enthusiasm of members of the public in Hong Kong, sufficiency of sports facilities, enhancement in the standard of Hong Kong athletes, economic condition and related financial commitment, estimated economic benefits to be brought and long-term development of the sports industry, etc; if they will, of the preliminary assessment on the aforesaid factors and components?

Reply:

President,

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

(a) The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) requires that any bid to host the Asian

Games (AG) should be submitted by the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of the relevant member state or territory. In the case of a successful bid, the right to host the event is awarded to the member NOC concerned. According to information provided by the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC), we understand that the OCA has not yet finalised the timetable, procedures and details for bidding for the right to host the 18th Asian Games in 2019. Nevertheless, past experience shows that the OCA usually invites member NOCs to submit bids and announces the bidding timetable about seven years ahead of the AG.

(b) The 2006 Asian Games was the first major international multi-sports event that Hong Kong had ever bid to host. During the bidding process, we put in considerable effort within a limited timeframe to enlist the support of various sectors of the community, make preliminary arrangements for the competition venues and ancillary facilities required for hosting the event, and lobby for support from other member NOCs. Although Hong Kong did not win the hosting right, the experience that we gained in the process was invaluable. Moreover, Hong Kong will shortly host the 5th East Asian Games, and our experience in organising this event will provide a good foundation if Hong Kong were again to submit a bid to host a major international multi-sports event in future. If Hong Kong were to make a bid to host the AG, we would make sufficient preparation by allowing adequate time and resources for the planning and provision of the facilities required, formulating bidding strategies carefully, and forging a consensus within the community to improve Hong Kong's chances of winning the right to host the games.

(c) If the SF&OC considers that Hong Kong possesses the necessary conditions for hosting the 2019 AG and makes a formal request to the SAR Government to support a bid to the OCA, the SAR Government will carefully consider the matter and assess the relevant factors, such as the level of public support, adequacy of competition venues, availability of hotel accommodation and other ancillary facilities, estimated economic and other benefits to Hong Kong, the contribution to the long-term development of sport locally, and the financial commitment to be borne by the SAR Government.

Ends/Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Issued at HKT 14:01

NNNN