

LCQ17: Bidding for the 2019 Asian Games

Following is a question by the Hon Tanya Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (November 25):

Question:

In 2000, the Government supported the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China in bidding for hosting the 2006 Asian Games, but the bid ended in failure. In response to a recent proposal by some members of the community for Hong Kong to consider making a bid to host the 2019 Asian Games, the Government has indicated its support and its willingness to provide assistance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) given that the 2010 Asian Games will be held in Guangzhou, and the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea, whether the Government has assessed the probability of the 2019 Asian Games continuing to be held in the East Asian region, and whether Hong Kong still stands a good chance to succeed in its bid to host the Asian Games;

(b) whether the Government will consider adopting more measures to enhance the degree of participation of members of the public so as to ensure that the degree of participation in sports by members of the public in various forms are high enough to support Hong Kong's bid for hosting the Asian Games; if it will, of the details; and

(c) whether it will allocate additional resources to assist in the development of a wider variety of sports in Hong Kong, and include more sports that are promising and well received by Hong Kong people in the category of elite sports, with a view to improving the standard of Hong Kong athletes and attracting more participation of members of the public so that Hong Kong will be in a more advantageous position in future to bid for hosting large-scale sports events such as the Asian Games; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

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 and that the award of the right to host the games should be decided by a ballot of all Member NOCs at its Annual General Assembly. In selecting the host city of an AG, Member NOCs will consider the capacity and experience of the bidding cities with regard to hosting multi-sports events. Relevant considerations include the standard of the competition venues and the athletes' village for participating teams, as well as factors such as the local climate, transport facilities, and the law and order situation. If the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China considers that Hong Kong has the capacity to host 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 such a request and assess all relevant factors, including the strengths of other states or territories which may also bid to host the 2019 AG.

(b) To achieve its policy objective of providing "Sport for All", the SAR Government has in place various programmes to encourage the public to participate in sports. Specifically, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provides sports venues and training programmes for the public. It also administers the Sports Subvention Scheme, which provides subventions to National Sports Associations (NSAs) and other sports organisations for the promotion of sport in schools and in the community. The SAR Government also seeks to nurture more major sports events locally through the "M" Mark System, thereby giving the public more opportunities to enjoy high quality sports events in Hong Kong. If Hong Kong decides to bid for the 2019 AG, the support of the general public will be crucial. The Government will implement suitable measures to encourage the public to participate in sport and to support Hong Kong's bid for the AG. The detailed measures will be carefully considered having regard to the requirements at the time.

(c) Under the current policy framework for sports development, the NSAs play a leading role in setting the direction for the development of their respective sports whilst the Government plays a supporting role by providing funding and venues, and by implementing other relevant measures. Through the Sports Subvention Scheme administered by the LCSD, the NSAs receive subventions for organising sports promotional activities and for other operational needs. The annual subvention provided by the Government to the NSAs under the Scheme has increased in recent years. The subvention in 2009-10 is close to \$180 million.

As regards support for elite sports, the aim is to focus resources on sports with good potential or strong track records, or on individual athletes who have performed particularly well, with a view to raising Hong Kong athletes' chances of winning medals in international competitions. The Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) is responsible for supporting elite sports and the development of athletes in Hong Kong. From 2005 onwards, the Sports Commission has adopted a set of criteria for the selection of sports for HKSI support. Under this selection mechanism, billiard sports, athletics and karatedo have recently been selected as elite sports and, together with another 11 sports, will receive elite sports subvention for a four-year cycle starting from 2009. Furthermore, the Commission has recently selected judo as an "up-and-coming" sport, which will receive additional subvention starting from 2009. Under the selection mechanism, other sports can also become elite sports and receive additional subvention if they reach the standards specified in the criteria.

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