

LCQ14: Consultation paper on "Should Hong Kong bid to host the 2023 Asian Games?"

Following is a question by the Hon Kam Nai-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (October 20):

Question:

The Home Affairs Bureau published a public consultation paper on "Should Hong Kong bid to host the 2023 Asian Games?" (Consultation Paper) last month to brief the public on the potential costs and benefits in hosting the Asian Games. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) given that the high prices of construction materials in recent months have resulted in soaring construction costs, in respect of the Government's current cost estimates for the alterations, upgrading or construction works for the venues planned for staging the Asian Games (including existing government and non-government facilities as well as sports centres that have been studied or planned), by how much the costs of such works will increase during the construction stage as compared with those estimated according to the current level;

(b) what temporary alterations or upgrading works will be undertaken by the authorities for the proposed competition venues for staging the 35 sports mentioned in the Consultation Paper and, among these venues, the number of those which require installation of additional seats, and the respective additional number of permanent or temporary seats to be installed in each of such venues; whether these seats need to be removed after the Asian Games; if so, of the number of temporary seats that have to be removed in respect of each venue and the respective amount of charges involved for the removal;

(c) of the anticipated usage of the various venues (including the venues listed in Annexes B and C to the Consultation Paper) in (b) after the Asian Games, and list the usages against the names of the venues concerned, together with the user organisations or the sports for which the venues will be used;

(d) of the respective original timetables for the construction, completion and

commissioning of each of the sports venues listed in Annex C to the Consultation Paper, and whether such timetables are expected to be revised after Hong Kong has successfully bid for the Asian Games; if so, of the details;

(e) given that it was stated in the Consultation Paper that the proposed Multi-purpose Stadium Complex (MPSC) at Kai Tak will be the main competition venue for the Asian Games, of the estimated number of branch venues that MPSC will comprise, the respective seating capacity of each branch venue and the aggregate seating capacity of MPSC; of the difference in the seats and equipment of such venues as compared with their original plans; apart from MPSC, of the number of seats provided by each of the sports venues listed in Annex C to the Consultation Paper;

(f) of the estimated construction cost of the athletes' village and the land premium involved; and

(g) what criteria the authorities will adopt in evaluating public views on the bid for hosting the Asian Games; whether the authorities will decide not to bid for the Asian Games on the ground that the majority of the public do not support the bid?

Reply:

President,

In late September, the Home Affairs Bureau launched a public consultation exercise to gauge the public's views on whether Hong Kong should bid to host the 2023 Asian Games. In the light of the views of Legislative Council (LegCo) Members and the public that the original six-week consultation period was too short, we have extended the consultation period by four weeks until December 1, 2010. In other words, the consultation exercise will now run for two and a half months. In addition, we provided the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs on October 8, 2010 with detailed information regarding the financial implications for hosting the 2023 Asian Games in Hong Kong, including the breakdown of the estimated operating and direct capital costs, projected revenue, and number of jobs created. We hope that the community would be able to analyse different arguments and facts, and express their views during the consultation period.

Our reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(a) The capital cost set out in our consultation paper is estimated at the current price level. If the public supports the proposed bid, we will plan and implement a number of tasks carefully and comprehensively, including making a detailed assessment of how Hong Kong can meet the requirements of the Olympic Council of Asia as a host city of the Asian Games in terms of venue facilities, accommodation, security, transportation and other ancillary facilities, and preparing the estimates of expenditure. Should Hong Kong decide to bid for the 2023 Asian Games, we will submit a detailed discussion paper to the LegCo Finance Committee to seek its approval-in-principle on the financial implications for hosting the 2023 Asian Games and the Asian Para Games (which follows shortly after), including the financial assessment of the costs at both the current and the estimated 2023 price levels, prior to the submission of the formal bid document.

(b) As set out in the consultation paper, we proposed to adopt a three-pronged strategy on the provision of venues, namely (a) to make optimal use of existing Government and non-Government sport facilities; (b) to expand and bring forward planned sports facilities with a view to meeting the requirements for staging the Games; and (c) to speed up consideration of redevelopment and new projects. The direct capital costs for items (a) and (b) above (including the temporary modification works to existing facilities and upgrading works for bringing proposed new venues up to Asian Games standards, i.e. works/projects which would not have been planned and rolled out if we were not hosting the Games) amount to some \$10.5 billion. The estimated expenditure covers temporary provisions required by 35 competition venues (including the hired venues and proposed venues in neighbouring cities) such as temporary seating, media work area, temporary toilets and changing rooms, venue dressing, signage, etc, and reinstatement works after the Games.

(c) The sites for the Multi-purpose Stadium Complex (MPSC) at Kai Tak and other long-term projects have long been identified for development/redevelopment to meet community needs. Assuming the proposed MPSC at Kai Tak would serve as the main competition venue for the Asian Games, it is expected that after the Games, the MPSC could be used by different National Sports Associations, schools as well as business and trade organisations for sports competitions and training purposes. For example, major football or rugby events can be held in the main stadium, track and field events or school athletic meets in the secondary stadium, while the multi-purpose indoor sports arena is suitable for gymnastics, wushu and different ball games or activities. Apart from sports events, the Kai Tak MPSC can also be used for other purposes such as concerts, exhibitions and performances. Other newly-built or redeveloped facilities

can be put to different uses, having regard to their features. For example, high level competitions can be held at the new hockey ground and the redeveloped/reprovisioned tennis centre, while other indoor sports arenas can be used for competitions and training activities, as well as different ball games by the public.

(d) According to the latest programme, construction work of the MPSC at Kai Tak is expected to commence in April 2014, with the target date for trial run in April 2019. The work schedules of other long-term projects are subject to further planning and study. If Hong Kong succeeds in bidding to host the 2023 Asian Games, the construction or upgrading works of all competition venues must be completed before 2023.

(e) According to the consultation paper, the athletic and gymnastic events are proposed to be held at the Kai Tak MPSC. The current plan for the Kai Tak MPSC includes a 50,000-seat main stadium, a 5,000-seat secondary stadium, and a 4,000-seat multi-purpose indoor sports arena. The proposed scale of the MPSC has not been changed as a result of our consideration in supporting the proposed bid. Our plan has always been to bring the proposed facilities at Kai Tak MPSC up to the standards for staging international sports events. If Hong Kong succeeds in bidding to host the Asian Games, we only need to carry out temporary works to meet the prevailing requirements for individual sports events for staging the Asian Games.

The scales of other sports venues listed in Annex C of the consultation paper are still under planning. According to preliminary planning, the estimated numbers of seats of the relevant sports venues (including fixed and temporary seats) are as follows:

- (a) two new sports centres with a total of about 4,600 seats;
- (b) a new sports ground with about 3,000 seats; and
- (c) a redeveloped/reprovisioned tennis centre with about 5,000 seats.

(f) The host city of the Asian Games is required to provide an "athletes' village" with about 3,000 flat units to accommodate the delegations. As we are still considering the mode of delivery and the proposed sites for the athletes' village, information on the construction cost and the land premium involved are not available at this stage.

(g) The Home Affairs Bureau is responsible for collecting and analysing views collected through various channels. To ascertain the views of the public, the Bureau will, in addition to considering the numbers of those who are in support and those

who oppose, study the grounds of all parties carefully. We keep an open mind on the consultation and will listen to the public's views conscientiously. We hope that the community would be able to analyse different arguments and facts, and express their views during the consultation period. We will come to a conclusion and make the decision after the close of the consultation period.

Ends/Wednesday, October 20, 2010

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