

LCQ15: Operation of Hong Kong Girl Guides Association

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Kwok-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (October 27):

Question:

After the Secretary for Home Affairs answered my question concerning the operation of the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (the Association) on July 14 this year, I have received complaints from parents, members of women groups, Unit guiders and kindergarten teachers that there were serious problems with the Association's management, accounts and use of donations. There were even complaints that after the departure of its Chief Executive in early October this year, the Association had appointed a staff member with only secondary education level to fill the important post of the Chief Executive, which has deviated from the basic academic qualification requirements for heads of statutory bodies in general. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it knows if the Association will publish the provisions of its "Constitution" and "Policy, Organization and Rules" on the Internet to enable members of the public and donors to have a clear understanding of the Association; if it will, when the provisions will be published; if not, the reasons for that;

(b) whether it knows if the incumbent Chief Executive of the Association is a university graduate; if she is, of the university from which she graduated and the year of graduation; if she is not, the reasons for the deviation from the basic academic qualification requirements for heads of statutory bodies in general;

(c) whether it knows the number of girl guides units which received raffle refund from the Association in each of the past two years, broken down by the percentage of refund in the following table;

2008-2009	Percentage of refund	No of units
The first 500 lottery tickets	12%	
The 501st to 1,000th lottery tickets	15%	
The 1,001st to 2,500th lottery tickets	25%	
The 2,501st to 3,500th lottery tickets	35%	

The 3,501st and above lottery tickets	40%
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2009-2010	Percentage of refund	No of units
The first 500 lottery tickets	13%	
The 501st to 1,000th lottery tickets	15%	
The 1,001st to 2,500th lottery tickets	25%	
The 2,501st to 3,500th lottery tickets	35%	
The 3,501st and above lottery tickets	40%	

(d) given that the Association had pointed out in its open letter dated September 16 this year that the sale of lottery tickets had been conducted for more than 20 years and the percentage of refund to its units had never been in the region of 50%, whether it knows if it was the case that for each lottery ticket sold at \$2 in 1992 and before, \$1 was refunded to the units;

(e) given that while the Association had asserted in its open letter dated September 16 this year that its 2009 financial report was open information, quite a number of members of the public have complained to me that the report is not available on the website of the Association and requests from members of the public for perusal of the report have been rejected by the Association, whether the Government will immediately publish the report submitted by the Association; if it will, when the report will be published and where the report can be obtained; if not, of the reasons for that;

(f) given that one of the objectives of the Girl Guides Enhancement Scheme (Phase V), which is implemented by the Association using grants from the Education Bureau, is to provide subsidies to schools or institutions for purchasing essential materials for the establishment of new units and leadership training, whereas some teachers have complained that while the deadline for application was January 31, 2011, the Association had refused to accept applications from schools in October this year, whether the Government knows the quota for schools or institutions to apply for subsidies under the Scheme, why the Association has refused to accept applications from schools before the deadline for applications, the names of the schools which have submitted applications, and among them, the number of schools which are operated by or whose operation involves the participation of the incumbent Hong Kong Chief Commissioner and her family members, as well as the names of the schools which had received subsidies under the Girl Guides Enhancement Scheme (Phase IV); and

(g) whether it knows the venue of the Association's annual dinner to be held in November this year, the estimated expenses, the number of tables reserved, the necessity of choosing this venue, and whether it is feasible to choose some other venues that will incur lower expenses (e.g. the Association's Headquarters), so that the savings from dinner expenses may be used on the development of girl guides units?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (the Association) was established in 1916. As an independent statutory body, the Association is subject to legislation, its constitution and internal rules as far as its operation is concerned. The Government respects its independent status. My reply to the question of Hon Leung Kwok-hung is as follows:

(a) At present, any person who wishes to read the constitution of the Association may make a request to the Association by email or in writing for a copy. We understand that the Association intends to upload such information as its constitution to its website for public browsing. The preparation is now underway.

(b) The post of the Chief Executive of the Association is now vacant and its duties are temporarily undertaken by Senior Executives. The Association has conducted an open recruitment for the post. According to the information provided by the Association, possession of a degree is one of the entry requirements.

(c) According to the information provided by the Association, depending on the number of raffle tickets sold, the girl guides units will obtain different percentages of refund from the raffle sales. Such refund will be used by the units as resources in addition to their basic operational funding. The respective numbers of units participated in the raffle sales in 2008-09 and 2009-10 are 714 and 715. The respective numbers of girl guides units which received refund from the raffle sales at various levels of refund percentages are:

2008-09

No. of raffle tickets
sold by units

Percentage
of refund

No of units

The first 500 raffle tickets	12%	714
The 501st to 1,000th raffle tickets	15%	229
The 1,001st to 2,500th raffle tickets	25%	53
The 2,501st to 3,500th raffle tickets	35%	12
The 3,501st and above raffle tickets	40%	7

2009-10

No. of raffle tickets sold by units	Percentage of refund	No of units
The first 400 raffle tickets	13%	715
The 401st to 1,000th raffle tickets	15%	331
The 1,001st to 2,500th raffle tickets	25%	47
The 2,501st to 3,500th raffle tickets	35%	15
The 3,501st and above raffle tickets	40%	8

(d) According to the information provided by the Association, each raffle ticket was sold at \$2 before 1992. Starting from the sale of the 1,001st ticket, a maximum of \$1 was refunded to the units per ticket. The refund was less than \$1 when the sale was below 1,000. Hence, the average percentage of refund was under 50% at that time.

(e) The Association has clearly indicated that its financial report is open information. It is prepared to respond to requests made via email or in writing and arrange for the provision of the report.

(f) According to the information provided by the Association, a quota of seven new units is available to schools or institutions under the HKGGA assistance programme for this academic year. So far, three schools have applied and their applications have been approved. They are:

- i. SKH Chi Fu Chi Nam Primary School;
- ii. Hong Chi Morninghope School, Tuen Mun; and
- iii. FSFTF Fong Shu Chuen Primary School.

The incumbent Hong Kong Chief Commissioner and her family members have not operated or participated in the operation of the above three schools. According to the information provided by the Association, the Association has not refused applications from any schools or institutions since the Scheme was launched for applications on May 17, 2010.

Under Phase IV of the Scheme, a quota of seven new units was available and a total of four applications had been received and approved. The schools or institutions which had received subsidies were:

- i. PLK Wong Wing Shu Primary School;
- ii. CCC Hoh Fuk Tong Primary School;
- iii. TWGHS Wong Yee Jar Jat Memorial Primary School; and
- iv. Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Shatin Children and Youth Integrated Service Centre.

(g) According to the information provided by the Association, the annual dinner is held to thank various organisations and volunteer workers for their support. Considering that the Association's Headquarters is too small to accommodate the estimated number of participants, the Association has chosen the more spacious Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre as the venue for this year's annual dinner. The venue has a capacity for a maximum of 33 tables and the cost of hosting each table is HK\$7,800. The Association has not used its fund for the annual dinner. The expenditure of the annual dinner is financed by fees paid by participants of the event and sponsorship from the Organising Committee.

Ends/Wednesday, October 27, 2010

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