

LCQ3: Soliciting public support for bidding to host the 2023 Asian Game

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Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Cheng Kar-foo and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (December 15):

Question :

The Hong Kong SAR Government earlier set up a booth in the waiting area of Hall 3 of AsiaWorld-Expo, where the Animated Version of the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival was exhibited. A conspicuous heading of "Support Hong Kong Athletes with Your Smiles" appeared on the backdrop of the booth, and members of the public might express support for Hong Kong athletes by taking photographs of their own smiling faces, and the photographs were printed for them free of charge. Yet, a line that read: "Support Hong Kong's Bid to Host the 2023 Asian Games" was added to the printout. I have received complaints from some members of the public that they were totally unaware of the line "Support Hong Kong's Bid to Host the 2023 Asian Games" before taking the photographs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the total number of photographs collected during the aforesaid activity, and whether these photographs will be used as proof of public support for bidding to host the Asian Games;
- (b) whether it has reviewed if the addition of the line "Support Hong Kong's Bid to Host the 2023 Asian Games" to the aforesaid photographs had misled the public into thinking that supporting Hong Kong athletes was the same as supporting the bid to host the Asian Games; and
- (c) focusing on the aforesaid complaints from the public, how the Government ensures that genuine consultation which is fair, just, transparent and impartial will be conducted when obtaining public views in the future?

Reply:

President,

The HKSAR Government has been working hard to promote sports through various modes. Taking the opportunity of the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, we launched an electronic platform "Show Your Smile" (including website and mobile phone applications) on November 10 for the public to take photos of their smiling faces. "Show Your Smile" was also part of the roving exhibitions at the Airport AsiaWorld-Expo, Times Square in Causeway, Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui and the International Finance Centre in Central, providing free photography for the public.

The above activities aimed to enhance the sporting atmosphere by encouraging public support for Hong Kong athletes in a relaxed manner during the Guangzhou Asian Games. To encourage public participation, a great variety of designs and statements were available so that people could choose among them as their favourite backdrops. We also instructed staff at the "Show Your Smile" booth to explain to those who took part in the photography that they could choose from a variety of frames with different designs and statements. Aiming to promote a sporting culture in a relaxed manner, the above activities were not related to the consultation exercise on the bid to host the 2023 Asian Games. Even if members of the public chose a backdrop with statements related to the bid, such figures would not form part of the statistics for the consultation on the bid.

My reply to the three parts of the Hon Andrew Cheng Kar-foo's question is as follows:

(a) As at December 9, about 3,600 smiling photographs had been taken in the above activities. As explained earlier, the activities were unrelated to the consultation exercise on the bid to host the 2023 Asian Games. These photographs would definitely not form part of the statistics for the consultation on the bid. As a matter of fact, they were not included in the paper on the outcome of the public consultation on the bid for hosting the 2023 Asian Games released last week.

(b) Since "Show Your Smile" Campaign was not related to the consultation exercise on the bid for hosting the Asian Games, there was no such case as to whether people were misled to show support to the bid.

(c) In conducting its consultation and in gauging public opinion, the Home Affairs Bureau will continue to maintain a pragmatic attitude, uphold the principles of objectivity and fairness, and adhere to transparency and impartiality.

Thank you.

Ends/Wednesday, December 15, 2010

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