

LCQ2: Development of cricket in Hong Kong

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Following is a question by the Dr Hon Margaret Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 13):

Question:

The development of cricket in Hong Kong has a long history and cricket is a popular sport among many non-Chinese youngsters. In recent years, Hong Kong Cricket Sixes, which is an international sports event, has been one of the events recommended to tourists by the Hong Kong Tourism Board. At present, there are seven cricket grounds in Hong Kong, but only the three grounds in Kowloon are open to the public. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:

- (a) it has formulated any policy on promoting the development of cricket in Hong Kong; if it has, of the details;
- (b) it knows the existing number of people who play cricket; and
- (c) it will plan to provide additional cricket grounds on Hong Kong Island, in New Territories East and New Territories West for the use of the public, so as to make it convenient for cricket lovers in all districts to take part in the sport; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the three-part question is as follows:

- (a) Promotion of the development of individual sports is mainly the responsibility of the "national sports associations" (NSAs) that are affiliated to both the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and to their respective International and Asian Federations. With their professional knowledge and experience, these NSAs, including the Hong Kong Cricket Association (HKCA), organise and manage local activities relating to their respective sports. The Government's policy is to facilitate the promotion of sport through the provision of

venues and resources to NSAs. Specifically, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provides subventions to individual NSAs through the Sports Subvention Scheme so that they can organise various types of activity, including: squad training and participation in international sporting events; school sports programmes, community sports club projects and local competitions; training for officials; and attendance at sports conferences. In 2010-11, LCSD provided a subvention of about \$2.6 million to the HKCA. This will increase to \$2.9 million in 2011-12.

In 2010-11, the HKCA organised 82 school sports programmes and 91 subsidised training programmes. In response to local needs, cricket programmes are held at the community level to promote public interest in the sport.

In addition, since 2007, the Government has been providing funding support to the annual Hong Kong Cricket Sixes under the "M" Mark Support System. As at 2010, the government subvention for the event amounted to \$6 million.

Although cricket is not at present on the elite sports programme, in view of the improvement in the performance of the Hong Kong cricket squad in recent international events, the Hong Kong Sports Institute provided \$0.98 million in Sports Aid Grants to 38 players in 2010-11 for training purposes.

(b) Current statistics show that over 6 000 participants annually are involved in training programmes subvented by LCSD, local competitions, international events and community cricket activities. The annual Hong Kong Cricket Sixes attracts an audience of more than 5 300.

(c) LCSD currently provides two public cricket venues, namely the cricket pitch at Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground and the cricket-cum-soccer pitch at Po Kong Village Road Park, which opened last year. We understand that the existing cricket grounds, both public venues and those operated by private clubs, offer a substantial number of sessions for use by cricketers at different levels. At present, we have no plans to provide additional public cricket pitches on Hong Kong Island, in the New Territories East or in the New Territories West. We will continue to monitor the use of pitches and liaise with HKCA with a view to identifying suitable sites for new temporary or permanent facilities to promote the development of cricket in Hong Kong.

Ends/Wednesday, April 13, 2011

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