

LCQ17: Performance staged by "8-1 Parachute Brigade"

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 (July 11):

Question:

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of the reunification of Hong Kong, the 8-1 Parachute Brigade of the People's Liberation Army (8-1 Parachute Brigade) came to Hong Kong to stage a performance at the Hong Kong Stadium on July 1 this year. However, the performance was not open to the public and the organisations that hosted the performance (the Organisers) distributed the admission tickets to their affiliates or members only. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it knows the individuals or organisations that had invited the 8-1 Parachute Brigade to perform in Hong Kong; whether the SAR Government had assisted in extending the invitation; whether the 8-1 Parachute Brigade's visit to Hong Kong had been supported by the SAR Government; whether the Organisers had successfully invited the 8-1 Parachute Brigade to Hong Kong through the assistance of the SAR Government;

(b) whether the Organisers had, in respect of the aforesaid activity, applied for waiver of charges for hiring the Hong Kong Stadium; whether the Government had offered any subvention for the activity; if it had, why the admission tickets for the activity were distributed to members of the organisations concerned only; if not, of the amount of charges paid by the Organisers; whether a discount had been offered; if so, how such discount had been calculated;

(c) under what circumstances the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) requests the organisations holding activities at government venues to allocate a certain proportion of admission tickets for free distribution to the general public;

(d) regarding the aforesaid performance held at the Hong Kong Stadium on July 1 this year, why LCSD only provided the venue concerned to the Organisers, and the Home Affairs Bureau did not co-ordinate or host the performance which was one of the activities held in celebration of the reunification;

(e) of the principles based on which the authorities had fairly dealt with the applications lodged by the large number of organisations at the same time for hiring the Hong Kong Stadium for holding activities on July 1 this year in celebration of the 15th anniversary of the reunification of Hong Kong; and

(f) given that the Hong Kong Stadium is a vast public space, and the aforesaid activity was held on the day of the 15th anniversary of the reunification of Hong Kong, why the authorities had leased public resources to individual organisations on such an important day, thereby barring the general public from participating in the activity held at the Hong Kong Stadium in celebration of the reunification on that day?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the six parts of the question is as follows:

(a) The Hong Kong Celebrations Association (HKCA) is the organiser of the activity to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Reunification at the Hong Kong Stadium on July 1 this year. Established in October 2006, the HKCA is a non-profit-making organisation. Its incumbent Chairman is Hon Cheng Yiu-tong. Through organising celebration events on various festivals in Hong Kong, the HKCA aims at enhancing social participation, promoting the sense of national identity and building a harmonious community.

The HKCA comprises 15 co-organisers, namely the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Chinese Importers & Exporters' Association, the Hong Kong Chinese Enterprises Association, the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Hong Kong Guangdong Community Organisations Ltd., the Hong Kong Federation of Fujian Associations, the Hong Kong Island Federation Limited, the Kowloon Federation of Associations, the New Territories Association of Societies, the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers, the Hong Kong Federation of Overseas Chinese Association, the Hong Kong Hainan Commercial Association, the Federation of HK Guangxi Community Organisations Limited and the Alliance for Families Reunion.

The HKCA directly invited the 8-1 Parachute Brigade to stage a performance in Hong Kong on July 1 this year, and the SAR Government did not assist in extending the invitation. To facilitate the performance, a "restricted flying zone" was set up by the Civil Aviation Department to ensure air traffic safety.

(b) According to the current fee-charging policy for use of the Hong Kong Stadium, the basic hire charge for events with gate receipts is \$150,000 per day or 20 per cent of the gross receipts. For non-profit-making community or charitable activities organised by registered charitable organisations or non-profit-making organisations, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will only charge the direct expenses it has incurred for the activity concerned, including the expenses for recruiting cleaners, security guards and ushers, etc., plus 10 per cent of the direct expenses as administration fee.

The HKCA is a registered charitable organisation, and the activity concerned was non-profit-making in nature, without any gate receipts. A total of around \$200,000 was charged for the direct expenses and the administration fee according to the existing fee-charging policy for use of the Hong Kong Stadium. The HKCA did not apply for waiver of charges for the above activity.

(c) As far as the hiring of LCSD's venues to hold activities for free admission is concerned, the Department does not set any restrictions on public distribution of free tickets.

(d) and (e) As the Government had no plan to hold any event to celebrate reunification at the Hong Kong Stadium on July 1 this year, the venue was available for hire by other organisations. According to its established practice, where more than one application is received for hiring the same venue for the same session, including the Hong Kong Stadium, the LCSD will co-ordinate such applications by negotiating with the organisations concerned. As the application from the HKCA for use of the Hong Kong Stadium on July 1 was the only application received, the Department handled it in accordance with its established practice, and co-ordination by the Home Affairs Bureau was not required.

(f) According to the information stated in the HKCA's application for use of the Hong Kong Stadium on July 1 to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Reunification, the activity concerned was for free patronage by approximately 40 000 people from all walks of life. On the same day, a variety of activities to celebrate

Hong Kong's Reunification were also held throughout Hong Kong by various organisations for public patronage.

Ends/Wednesday, July 11, 2012