

CE announces measures to further promote sports development

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, together with the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, today (August 10) announced various measures conducive to the sustainable development of sports in Hong Kong. She also called on the academic sector, enterprises and members of the public to further support Hong Kong athletes to scale new heights, as well as to promote the professionalisation of sports and the development of the sports industry in Hong Kong.

"The performance of the Hong Kong, China Delegation at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games was distinguished, with it achieving the best results in Hong Kong history and making all Hong Kong people feel proud. The success of the Hong Kong athletes did not come about by chance. In addition to their own efforts and the support of different sectors, the Government's policy directives and its resource allocation were also indispensable," Mrs Lam said.

Mrs Lam pointed out that the Government has been promoting sports development through a three-pronged approach since more than a decade ago, namely supporting elite sports, promoting sports in the community and maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events, and has invested heavily in it in recent years. The Government has allocated \$60 billion of new resources from 2017 to date, and the recurrent expenditure on support for sports development has been increasing. In the year 2021/22, the Government's annual funding for the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI), through the Elite Athletes Development Fund, amounted to \$737 million, representing an increase of about 42 per cent over the amount in the year 2017/18.

"The Government will step up efforts in supporting sports development in the future. It is hoped that more elite athletes can bring glory home in international competitions down the road," Mrs Lam said.

Measures announced by Mrs Lam today to further support sports development are as follows:

Expediting the new building project of the HKSI

The HKSI is a training centre for elite sports in Hong Kong that provides direct financial subsidies and comprehensive support services for elite athletes. To enhance the facilities for training athletes in the HKSI, the Government has decided to allocate \$990 million (in money-of-the-day prices) as the project cost for the new building in the HKSI with about 9 000 square metres of net operating floor area to expand its Scientific Conditioning Centre and Sports Medicine Centre, and provide additional training, resting and accommodation facilities for athletes. The Government will strive to have the funding approved by the Public Works Subcommittee and

the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (LegCo) before the current term of the LegCo ends in late October, so that works can be launched as early as possible. The target is to commission the new building in June 2024, that is, before the opening of the Paris Olympic Games.

Establishing a fund to enhance the competitiveness of athletes

The Government and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust will finance jointly the setting up of a \$300 million special fund to enhance the competitiveness of athletes at international events in the coming few years. The fund will be used to conduct research in sports science and sports medicine, improve athletes' gear, purchase extra equipment for the Scientific Conditioning Centre and the Sports Medicine Centre in the HKSI and more, benefiting elite athletes including athletes with disabilities. Meanwhile, the HKSI will continue to provide targeted support and competition preparation plans for athletes, and enhance training to raise the levels of sports science and sports medicine of its teams.

Strengthening sports development at the school level

The Government encourages schools to attach greater importance to sports development. The Home Affairs Bureau and the Education Bureau will study how to build a good foundation of sports for students through the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities and increase the opportunities for them to participate in various sport events and competitions, promoting sports in the community and its development as well as nurturing more elite athletes for Hong Kong in the future. The Government will also step up efforts to support the Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation to scout for elite athlete successors.

Strengthening support for elite athletes' dual career development in sports and academic pursuits

The Government encourages tertiary institutions to provide support for elite athletes, enabling them to engage in dual career development in sports and academic pursuits and encouraging parents to let their children with sporting talent join the ranks of elite athletes. In fact, the Government injected \$250 million into the Hong Kong Athletes Fund in 2020 to increase scholarships to support athletes' dual career development, including stepping up support for athletes to study bachelor's degrees or above. In addition, the HKSI has collaborated with 12 local tertiary institutions to create multiple pathways for athletes and provide them with more flexible learning arrangements. Currently, about 170 active HKSI athletes are studying in tertiary institutions, and about 60 of them have benefited from the co-operation agreements between the HKSI and various tertiary institutions. More than 200 other active athletes have already completed post-secondary programmes.

Development of the sports industry

With the commissioning of the Kai Tak Sports Park in 2023 and the growing importance the community attaches to the development of sports, the

Government aims to promote the development of sports as a career, a profession and an industry to provide retired athletes as well as young people with job and development opportunities in areas including venue management, sports administration, sports science, sports medicine and organisation of mega sports events. The Secretary for Home Affairs will chair a working group to discuss with the business and sports sectors on the development of the sports industry in Hong Kong and the relevant manpower needs, and will submit a report to the Chief Executive later.

"There will be a number of important sports events taking place in the future, including the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games to begin later this month, the National Games to be held in Shaanxi Province next month, the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games and the Asian Games in Hangzhou to be held next year, as well as the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. I call on members of the public to continue their support for Hong Kong athletes and also encourage them to do more exercise to create a sports-for-all atmosphere," Mrs Lam said.