

# LCQ15: Promoting development of e-sports industry

Following is a question by Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (January 22):

Question:

To promote the development of the electronic sports (e-sports) industry in Hong Kong, the Government injected \$100 million into Cyberport in 2018-2019, half of which would be used for developing the Cyberport Arcade into an e-sports and digital entertainment node, including the conversion of the Ocean View Court of the Arcade in Cyberport into a dedicated e-sports venue, while the other half would be used for promoting the development of the local e-sports industry. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the projects launched by Cyberport to promote the development of the e-sports industry; the respective durations of such projects and the respective numbers of people/organisations benefiting from them;

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on the utilisation rates of the dedicated e-sports venue at the Ocean View Court of the Arcade in Cyberport in the latest three years, and the respective percentages of professional, local and international e-sports competitions held in that venue; whether it has compiled statistics on the average attendance rates for such e-sports competitions;

(3) as it has been reported that e-sports was included as a medal sport in the last Asian Games in Hangzhou and will also be so in the next Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, and the inaugural Olympic Esports Games will be held this year, and that meanwhile many countries and regions have recognised e-sports as a sport, whether the Government has plans to officially include e-sports in the scope of sports policy, so that practitioners in the e-sports industry gain the same protection and support as those in traditional sports industries, and the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau can promote e-sports in the community, support elite e-sports, promote Hong Kong as a centre for major international e-sports events, enhance professionalism and develop e-sports as an industry in a regulated manner; and

(4) as there are views pointing out that the attraction of more than two million visitor arrivals by the inaugural Esports World Cup, held this year in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, showcases the effectiveness of e-sports as mega sports events, and Hong Kong is actively organising mega events to consolidate its reputation as Asia's events capital, whether the authorities have plans to create a competitive and internationalised e-sports ecosystem and support local e-sports associations or relevant organisations

in bidding for the hosting rights of large-scale international e-sports competitions and professional leagues, thereby attracting tourists to come for watching the competitions and thus generating more tourism revenue?

Reply:

President,

The Government noted the rapid development of electronic sports (e-sports) around the globe. With its fusion of competition, skills, technology and entertainment, e-sports is one of the emerging competition events which is particularly attractive to young people. The Government has been closely monitoring the development of e-sports in Hong Kong and exploring ways to support the development of the e-sports industry from different perspectives, including technological development, peripheral products and professional competitions.

Having consulted the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, my consolidated reply to the four parts of the question raised by Hon William Wong is as follows:

(1) and (2) The 2018-19 Budget announced an allocation of \$100 million to Cyberport to help promote the development of the e-sports industry, of which some \$50 million was used to convert part of the Cyberport Arcade to provide a venue suitable for hosting small to medium-sized e-sports competitions and training activities, as well as a digital entertainment hotspot. Over the past three years, around 200 events were held at the venue, including 21 e-sports tournaments, six of which were international competitions and 15 were local competitions, including activities related to the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou E-sports Representative Selection and Qualifying Tournament and Hong Kong E-sports Super League. The average on-site attendance ranged from a few dozen to 300 people. Many of these events were conducted in both offline and online format, enabling local and international audiences to participate through live streaming. Hence, some international events garnered online viewership in tens of thousands.

In addition to venue support, with the support of the above dedicated funding, Cyberport launched the "Esports Industry Facilitation Scheme" from 2019 to 2021 to provide subsidies for the industry to organise e-sports tournaments and activities, participate in overseas exchanges and explore business opportunities, offer e-sports education programmes, and host promotional events, involving 167 projects in total. Furthermore, Cyberport introduced the "Esports Internship Scheme" in 2019 to offer internship opportunities to students, graduates, and eligible youth interested in joining the e-sports industry and with relevant qualifications or experience. The internship scheme ceased accepting new applications in November 2021. A total of around 90 internship positions had been approved and about 50 of them were successfully matched.

(3) and (4) In recent years, e-sports has gradually been recognised as a competition event by some international sports organisations, and Hong Kong

players have achieved good results in international and Asian competitions. With e-sports being a competition event in the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou held in 2022, the Government provided funding support to the Esports Association of Hong Kong, China (ESAHK) to send more than 30 players to compete in seven e-sports events. The team brought home a silver medal in one of the events. In view of the achievements of the Hong Kong team at the Hangzhou Asian Games, the Hong Kong Sports Institute has been providing funding to 12 athletes through the Individual Athletes Support Scheme in 2024-2025. Additional funding is also being provided to ESAHK for hiring coaches and supporting athletes' competition and training needs, with a view to promoting e-sports as an elite sports.

Popular major e-sports competitions around the world have created a global fervour for participating in and watching e-sports games. These competitions can attract a large number of overseas audiences to watch the competitions, which provide business opportunities by generating revenues and benefits from gate receipts, peripheral spending, advertising sponsorships, technological innovation and support, etc. The Government is committed to promoting Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events through the "M" Mark System. We welcome major international e-sports competitions to be held in Hong Kong, and will provide funding support to such events through the "M" Mark System.