

LCQ19: Broadcasting major sports events

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yung and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (April 10):

Question:

The Paris Summer Olympic Games (Olympic Games) will be held from July 26 to August 11 this year. There are views pointing out that the Olympic Games, as an international event which attracts worldwide attention and showcases athletes' spirit of training hard and struggling with perseverance, is a good opportunity to tell the stories of China and Hong Kong, China well, and it is also necessary to make preparations for the production of Olympic programmes. On broadcasting major sports events, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as there are views that the Government's acquisition of the television broadcasting rights of the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021 for broadcast by television stations aroused a wave of sports fervour, in order to attract members of the public to indulge in the competition atmosphere when the Paris Olympic Games is hosted, whether the Government has planned ahead for the broadcasting arrangements of the events concerned, such as arranging live broadcast free of charge, promoting acquisition of the relevant broadcasting rights by the Hong Kong Jockey Club, or strategically acquiring the broadcasting rights of some of the events (particularly the events in which the national team and the Hong Kong team participate); and

(2) as there are views pointing out that promoting sports development has a positive impact on both the development of the soft power of Hong Kong and the country as well as national education, whether the Government will more actively consider cooperating with the China Central Television to make group purchases of the broadcasting rights of large-scale sports events at more affordable prices?

Reply:

President,

The Olympic Games (OG) and the Paralympic Games (PG) are among the highest-level major international sports events in the world. The 2024 Paris OG and PG will take place from July 26 to August 11, 2024 and from August 28 to September 8, 2024 respectively. Hong Kong athletes are gearing up in full swing to prepare and obtain qualifications for participation in these two Games. As of the end of March 2024, Hong Kong athletes have already obtained qualifications for 15 events in five sports of the Paris OG and 12 events in three sports of the Paris PG. We hope that more Hong Kong athletes will be qualified for these two Games in the coming two months. To help them achieve

good results, the Government will provide comprehensive support to Hong Kong athletes competing in these two Games.

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Chan Yung is as follows:

(1) Of late, the Government has been closely monitoring the negotiations in the local market concerning the broadcasting rights for the Paris OG and PG. At the same time, there have been calls from the community that the Government should procure the broadcasting rights for the OG and PG again in order for members of the public to watch the Paris OG and PG free of charge. Considering the unfavourable market environment for commercial broadcasters to invest substantially in the broadcasting rights for the Paris OG, and the tremendous social value brought by the prior broadcasting of the Tokyo OG, the Government decided to enter into negotiations with the two companies which hold the broadcasting rights for the Paris OG and PG early this year. We have recently reached agreement with these two companies. By procuring the broadcasting rights for these two Games in Hong Kong, members of the public will be able to enjoy the Paris OG and PG on television free of charge, and to cheer for Mainland and Hong Kong athletes.

We have secured the support of three local licensed television broadcasters and the Radio Television Hong Kong to broadcast the Paris OG and PG. The broadcasting arrangements will largely follow those for the Tokyo OG and PG, i.e. the Government will cover the full cost of the broadcasting rights for these two Games, while the participating broadcasters are required to shoulder the full production costs and take up certain responsibilities and obligations, including the production of publicity/promotional programmes for the Paris OG and PG as well as for promoting sports development in Hong Kong. Detailed arrangements will be announced after they have been firmed up.

(2) Broadcasting rights of major international sports events in Hong Kong have always been awarded through competitive bidding among broadcasters, taking into account market and commercial considerations. The procurement of the broadcasting rights for the Tokyo OG and the Paris OG were special arrangements of the Government. We will closely monitor the broadcasting of major international sports events and make suitable arrangements.