

LCQ4: Sports facilities and competition events

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, in the Legislative Council today (October 27):

Question:

Hong Kong athletes achieved brilliant results in both the Tokyo Summer Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, rousing a craze for sports among the people of Hong Kong. It is reported that some members of the sports community, academics and Members of this Council have proposed that the Government should sustain such craze and improve the sports policy and facilities. In addition, the State Council has decided that Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will host the 15th National Games in 2025 (the National Games), and required the governments of the three places to fully utilise the existing venues and facilities as well as contain the costs for hosting the competition events. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective current shortfalls of venues for various sports across the territory, as calculated on the basis of the relevant standards stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines; the current number of those sports facilities that are below the relevant international standards;

(2) given that the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities put forward in 2017 included conducting technical feasibility studies on 15 sports and recreation facility projects, of the study outcome of the 11 sports facility projects among them as well as the respective anticipated commencement and completion dates of the works concerned; whether it will consider rolling out a second five-year plan for sports and recreation facilities; if so, of the details; and

(3) of the National Games' competition events that the Government plans to strive for hosting, and whether it will strive for the opening ceremony or closing ceremony of the National Games to be held in Hong Kong, as well as the sports facilities that it intends to use?

Reply:

Acting President,

Attaching great importance to sports development, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) has been promoting sports development in Hong Kong through a three-pronged strategic approach, namely promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports and maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events. We will also

increase and enhance sports and recreation facilities as well as encourage collaboration among communities in fostering a strong sports culture in Hong Kong.

In the Policy Address in January 2017, the Government announced the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities (the Five-Year Plan) to launch 26 projects and conduct technical feasibility studies for 15 sports and recreation facilities, involving an amount of \$20 billion. This is to develop new and improve existing sports and recreation facilities with a view to meeting the demand of the public and promoting greater sports participation in the community. While building new sports facilities, we also make good use of and upgrade existing facilities. Therefore, the Government announced in the 2021-22 Budget to earmark \$318 million to implement a five-year plan for upgrading over 70 football pitches in order to provide more football pitches meeting the standards of Fédération Internationale de Football Association, thereby contributing to the development of football in Hong Kong.

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Vincent Cheng is as follows:

(1) Apart from the sports and recreation facilities provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), other organisations including schools, private sports clubs, public housing estates and private residential estates also provide different sports and recreation facilities in order to optimise land use in Hong Kong.

With regard to the major fee-charging sports and recreation facilities provided by the LCSD, there is a shortfall of 11.8 sports centres, a shortfall of 12.9 11-a-side football pitches, a shortfall of 4.6 sports ground and a surplus of 16.2 swimming pool complexes as compared to the provision recommended by the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. The LCSD does not keep the record on the number of sports facilities not meeting the international standards concerned.

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) reported to the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on September 27, 2021 on the Consultancy Study on Provision of Sports Facilities in Hong Kong conducted by the Consultants. The Consultants conducted a telephone survey to collect the latest population preferences for sports activities and provided recommendations on the planning of community sports facilities for the general public. Besides, the consultants made reference to other jurisdictions and surveyed the need of various stakeholders such as the national sports associations on their demand and usage of the current sports facilities, thereby worked out the number of additional territorial and regional sports facilities required in five and 10 years to cater for athletes' training and competition needs so identified. The Consultants recommended formulating a facility hierarchy, devising new population-based provision standards for core sports facilities for community usage as well as introducing a new methodology to assess provision levels for sports facilities, etc. The Consultants will engage various stakeholders on the study recommendations. Taking into account their feedback, the methodology to assess the demand and supply of sports facilities as well as the existing

provision standard of sports facilities might need to be changed with a view to better addressing the evolving needs for sports facilities arising from an ever-changing sports behaviour and pattern.

(2) With regard to the Five-Year Plan as mentioned above, among the 26 projects, 21 of them have obtained funding approval from the LegCo, involving around \$7.7 billion in total. Facilities in seven of these approved projects have been opened or scheduled for opening this year for public use while the pre-construction activities/construction works for another nine projects have commenced. Construction/design works for the remaining five projects will commence within this year. Projects with approved funding from the LegCo will provide three heated swimming pools and 15 open spaces (including two 7-a-side football pitches, two 5-a-side football pitches, four tennis courts, eight basketball courts, two lawn bowling greens and two cycling grounds) for public use as well as implement the pre-construction activities for the redevelopment of one sports ground and one amenity complex (comprising sports centre and swimming pool).

As to the 15 projects for conducting technical feasibility studies, construction works for one project have commenced and the studies for four projects have completed with the remaining 10 ongoing. Subject to the technical feasibilities being ascertained, HAB will apply for funding for these projects in due course.

(3) The Hong Kong SAR Government is grateful for the trust and support of the Central Government in announcing on August 26 this year its agreement for Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to host the 15th National Games (NG) in 2025. We will spare no effort to work closely with the relevant ministries of the Central Government, the Guangdong Province and the Macao SAR Government to carry out the preparatory work for the "simple, safe and wonderful" 15th NG in 2025.

The Kai Tak Sports Park will be commissioned in 2023. Together with the Hong Kong Velodrome, where many international competitions have been held, and other sports facilities, the good foundation is in place for Hong Kong to take part in the hosting of the 15th NG. The General Administration of Sport of China will later convene a meeting with Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao on event preparation of the 15th NG, including division of work, financial arrangements and other details.