

LCQ6: Gay Games

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, in the Legislative Council today (August 25):

Question:

Hong Kong athletes performed brilliantly at the Olympic Games which ended recently, and the whole city was jubilant. Subsequently, the Chief Executive indicated that the Government would endeavour to achieve the targets of maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events, supporting elite sports, promoting sports in the community, and fostering the development of the sports industry. On the other hand, the 11th Gay Games have been scheduled to be held in Hong Kong in November next year. The organiser plan to hold 36 sports competitions, 13 arts and cultural activities, as well as opening and closing ceremonies. By then, athletes from 100 countries and regions will gather in Hong Kong and take part in this major sports event. However, under the prevailing policy on booking recreational facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the organiser is not among the organisations belonging to the top priority category, and they have to compete with the other organisations which also belong to the second priority category. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether, on the premise of achieving the targets of maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events and fostering the development of the sports industry, the Government will accord priority to the aforesaid organiser for booking the recreational facilities under LCSD, so that this major sports event can be held smoothly, thereby bringing economic benefits to a number of industries; and

(2) given that the Gay Games aim at promoting the values of equality and inclusion through sports competitions as well as arts and cultural activities, whether the Government will take the opportunity of the Games being hosted in Hong Kong to showcase to the world the facet of Hong Kong as a pluralistic and inclusive society?

Reply:

President,

Attaching great importance to the development of sports, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has been promoting sports development in Hong Kong with a three-pronged policy approach, namely promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports and maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events. The Chief Executive highlighted that we will examine in detail the directions of development on promoting the professionalisation of sports and the development of the sports industry. We encourage wider public participation

in sports so as to help citizens develop a healthy lifestyle, enhance their overall quality of life and foster a strong sports culture in the community. In addition, we nurture and support potential athletes and provide them with quality training environment and integrated support services, enabling them to achieve outstanding results in the international sports arena. In parallel, we actively promote Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events and facilitate the national sports associations (NSAs) in launching major international events in Hong Kong, thereby allowing members of the public to appreciate high-level sports competitions.

To complement the promotion of sports development, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has put in place a booking procedure for recreation and sports facilities, allowing eligible organisations to make priority booking of such facilities to organise sports competitions or activities. According to the LCSD's current booking procedure, the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, NSAs, district sports associations and the Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation are among the top priority category, under which they are allowed to reserve all peak or non-peak slots of recreation and sports facilities up to 12 months in advance. Affiliated clubs of NSAs, charitable organisations, bona fide associations and corporations are among the second priority category, under which they are allowed to reserve peak slots of recreation and sports facilities up to three months in advance, or all slots of squash courts as well as non-peak slots of main arenas and activity rooms of sports centres up to six months in advance.

My consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip is as follows:

According to the information provided by the organiser, the 11th Gay Games (GG2022) to be held in Hong Kong has been recognised by the Federation of Gay Games and will be hosted by the Gay Games Hong Kong. Under the theme of "Unity in Diversity", the event plans to feature a number of sports competitions, arts and cultural activities, opening and closing ceremonies, etc. Everyone is welcome to participate in the event, regardless of ethnicity, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability or background.

Unlike international multi-sports games in general, the GG2022 is not a sports event recognised by the International Olympic Committee, the Olympic Council of Asia or any international sports federation. There is no need for participants to go through any selection process. It can be seen that the GG2022 mainly promotes the message of equality and inclusion through sports and cultural activities.

In accordance with LCSD's current practice, the Gay Games Hong Kong may, as a locally registered organisation, reserve non-peak slots and peak slots of sports facilities up to six months and three months in advance respectively.

We understand that the organiser has approached some tertiary institutions, sports clubs, club houses, etc. for hiring their sports facilities to organise some competitions. Separately, the organiser has

discussed with NSAs or sports organisations to explore possible co-operation, including the provision of referee services, technical support and venue booking support. If the organiser secures the support of NSAs in co-organising the relevant activities, it may reserve related sports facilities up to 12 months in advance under the current policy. Upon receipt of the applications from the organiser and/or the relevant NSAs, the LCSD will process their applications in accordance with the current procedure.

Separately, the Government is committed to promoting equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientations and gender identities, with a view to fostering in the community the culture and values of inclusiveness, mutual respect and non-discrimination. Relevant measures include broadcasting promotional videos through various channels, such as public transport network, Government premises, Internet and other media, broadcasting Announcements in the Public Interest which promote equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientations and transgenders on television and radio, and providing funding support to worthwhile community projects which aim at promoting equal opportunities on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity through the Equal Opportunities (Sexual Orientation) Funding Scheme. Thank you President.