

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 (June 9):

Question:

The 11th Gay Games (Gay Games 2022) is scheduled to be held in Hong Kong from November 11 to 19 next year, and it will be the first time the Games are hosted in Asia. According to the estimation of the organisers, this sports event will attract more than 12 000 participants from around the world, bringing economic benefits of HK\$1 billion to Hong Kong; and apart from facilitating the development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong, this event will showcase to the world Hong Kong's diversity and its support for equal opportunities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

(1) the progress of booking of event venues by the organisers of Gay Games 2022; whether it has any targeted policies or measures in place to assist the organisers in booking government sports venues; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(2) whether the various local national sports associations (NSAs) will support and participate in Gay Games 2022; if they will, of the details, including a list of those NSAs which will send athletes to compete in the Games and the number of participating athletes; whether the Government will encourage the various NSAs to participate in the Games?

Reply:

President,

From a sports policy perspective, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has been promoting sports development in Hong Kong with 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 encourage wider public participation in sports so as to foster a strong sports culture in the community. We nurture potential athletes and provide them with quality training environment and integrated support, enabling them to develop their full potential and achieve outstanding results in the international sports arena. In parallel, we 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 (SF&OC), 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 questions 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 36 sports competitions, 13 arts and cultural activities, opening and closing ceremonies, etc. In other words, organising sports and cultural activities for all is the means to pursue the aim of promoting equality and inclusion. Therefore, 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. I understand that neither SF&OC nor NSAs will send athletes to participate in the competitions. Moreover, the aim of the GG2022 is to promote equality and inclusion through various activities. Sports is merely one of the elements of the event.

I understand that the organiser has, during the search of venues, considered various options, including tertiary institutions, non-governmental venues, space at Central Harbourfront and other cultural venues. 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.

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 been discussing with 26 NSAs or sports organisations to explore possible co-operation, including the provision of referee services, technical support and venue booking support. So far, 11 NSAs have reached agreements with the organiser, four have declined co-operation due to other issues (such as manpower arrangement), and the remaining 11 are still in discussion with the organiser. 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 is pleased to provide necessary assistance and process their applications in accordance with the current procedure.