

LCQ7: Promoting the development of new sports

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

Some participants of new sports, or alternative sports, such as kin-ball, dodgebee and cycle ball, have relayed that such sports have been gaining popularity in Hong Kong in recent years, and they are fairly popular among members of the education sector and members of the community. However, the tight supply of local sports venues has made it difficult for athletes as well as members of the public to find suitable venues for such activities. Furthermore, as the majority of new sports are at an early stage of development and are not known to members of the public, efforts made to promote such sports have been rather ineffective. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the terms and conditions adopted by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) for vetting and approval of applications for hiring its venues for conducting activities relating to new sports;

(2) of the respective numbers of applications (i) received and (ii) approved by LCSD in each of the past five years for conducting activities relating to new sports in its venues, with a breakdown by the District Council districts in which the venues are located;

(3) whether the needs and demands relating to the various types of new sports have been taken into account in the planning and design of sports venues, so that sufficient and suitable venues will be provided for such kind of activities; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct relevant studies;

(4) whether it will develop multi-purposes sports venues for new sports in order to address the problem of the lack of venues for such sports; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct relevant studies;

(5) whether it will take measures to assist in the development and promotion of new sports and facilitate their popularisation; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) of the roles and duties of the Commissioner for Sports in promoting new sports; and

(7) given that a list of sports organisations eligible for hiring school facilities is provided under the "Opening up School Facilities for Promotion

of Sports Development Scheme", whether the authorities have put in place any mechanism for selecting organisations relating to new sports for inclusion in the list?

Reply:

President,

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is committed to promoting "Sport for All" to encourage members of the public to develop habits of regular exercise through participation in various recreation and sports programmes. My reply to Hon Chan Hoi-yan's question is as follows:

(1) To cater for different sports, the leisure venues under the management of LCSD are, in general, multi-purpose sports venues with various facilities and markings. Of these venues, activity rooms of indoor sports centres and a lot of outdoor leisure venues can be used for various sports activities. For venues with designated use, they can be used for other sports and activities, including various new sports, subject to the suitability of the venues and consent from the venue management. At present, organisations which would like to hold competitions or training activities for new sports may submit block booking applications to suitable leisure venues. LCSD will consider such applications in light of factors such as the nature of activities, possible impact on other users in the venues, safety measures during the activities (including whether damage will be caused to the venues or facilities) and ancillary facilities available at the venues.

(2) The numbers of applications for conducting activities relating to new sports in LCSD venues received and approved by District Leisure Services Offices in the past five years are at Annex.

(3) & (4) In the planning of new sports venues, LCSD will make reference to the guidance in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and take account of other relevant factors, including policy objectives for sports development, existing provision of sports facilities in various districts, usage rates of existing facilities, demographic changes, views of relevant District Councils, availability of land sites and technical feasibility. To dovetail the development of various sports, the existing sports venues of LCSD in general can be used for various purposes.

(5) To dovetail with sports development and meet the needs of the public, LCSD reviews from time to time the usage and conditions for use of its facilities and closely monitors the needs of the public. In order to meet public aspirations for new sports, LCSD will launch a trial scheme in the second half of this year, making the non-peak hour sessions of arenas of designated sports centres available for booking by members of the public directly for activities related to new sports such as dodgebee, kin-ball, dodgeball through the Leisure Link computerised booking system. Details of the trial scheme will be announced in due course.

(6) Since his appointment in February 2016, the Commissioner for Sports has been leading the Recreation and Sport Branch of the Home Affairs Bureau in

promoting and implementing the Government's three policy objectives and taking forward the various initiatives to promote and support sports development. Major sports initiatives include Kai Tak Sports Park project, Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities, Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (the Scheme), Major Sports Events Matching Grant Scheme and District Sports Programmes Funding Scheme. The above work helps provide a favourable environment and conditions for the development of new sports.

(7) Given that some schools and parents are concerned that opening up school facilities may pose security and operational problems, and that some places of the activities held under the Scheme are also reserved for students, the Scheme is currently open to national sports associations recognised by the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and their affiliated club members, district sports associations and sports organisations subvented by LCSD. These organisations are experienced with proven track record in organising sports programmes, so that the participating schools, students and parents could have more confidence in them. If other organisations, including organisations promoting new sports or parties which intend to develop new sports, are interested in hiring school facilities to organise sports programmes, they may collaborate with eligible sports organisations (e.g. district sports associations) to join the Scheme. This could also help these organisations promoting new sports to develop at the community level.

The Education Bureau and the Home Affairs Bureau will continue to enhance the Scheme and take into account schools' feedback in considering whether to further expand the list of eligible sports organisations so that more school facilities can be used for sports activities.