

Minutes of Thirtieth Meeting of the Children's Rights Forum

Date : 16 June 2017 (Friday)
Time : 5:15 p.m.
Venue : Committee Rooms I to III,
Queen Elizabeth Stadium,
18 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Attendance:

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau

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| 1) Mr D. C. CHEUNG (Acting Chairperson) | Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs |
| 2) Miss Ellen CHOW | Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs |

Non-government organisations

Representatives

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| 1) Hong Kong Committee for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) | Ms Joanne LAI
<u>UNICEF Young Envoys Club and Voices of Youth</u>
CHEUNG Hoi-lam Hermes
WONG Yeuk-lam |
| 2) Hong Kong Unison | Ms Phyllis CHEUNG
Mr RAI Akash Santosh
Ms RAI Neha
Mr LEUNG Lok-tin Oscar |
| 3) Hong Kong U-Rounders | Mr Ian LI
Miss LAM Hoi-yan
Mr YU Chun-ning
林添森
周錦濤
張儒翔 |
| 4) 彩雲關懷社區服務協會 | Mr Sam AU YEUNG
楊政先生 |

Attendance by Invitation:

Discussion Item

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| 1) Mr SIU Yau-kwong | Chief Leisure Manager (Sports Development),
Leisure and Cultural Services Department |
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- 2) Miss June LO Senior Leisure Manager (School Sports Programmes), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
- 3) Ms Violet CHAN Senior Leisure Manager (Sports Development), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
- 4) Ms Cindy CHOW Leisure Manager (Community Programme), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
- 5) Mr Leslie LEUNG Leisure Manager (Sports Development), Leisure and Cultural Services Department

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The acting Chairperson welcomed representatives of non-government organisations (“NGOs”) and children representatives to the meeting.

2. Discussion item

Sports Development (Paper No. CRF 2/2017)

- 2.1 2.1.1 The acting Chairperson invited the representative of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) to brief the meeting on Hong Kong sports development.
- 2.1.2 Mr SIU gave a brief account of the paper (Paper No. CRF 2/2017) as follows:
- 2.1.3 Promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports and maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events were the three main axles of Hong Kong’s sports policy which carried the objectives of promoting recreation and sports activities at district level, identifying and providing training to athletes with potential, and encouraging public participation in sports activities by hosting major or international sports events, e.g., the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, the Standard Hong Kong Marathon, the New World Harbour Race, etc. respectively. All in all, the Government’s policy on sports was to strive to raise public concern about sports, inspire more widespread community participation in it and encourage potential athletes to undergo elite training, so as to promote a sporting culture in Hong Kong and enhance our local athletes’ competitiveness in the international sporting arena.
- 2.1.4 The existing administrative structure for sports in Hong Kong mainly comprised three components: the Home Affairs Bureau (“HAB”), the Sports Commission (“SC”) and the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (“SF&OC”). LCSD, which was under the purview of HAB, was mainly responsible for organising district-based recreation and sports activities (such as training courses, competitions and play-in activities), providing and managing recreation and sports facilities,

and providing funding support to national sports associations (“NSAs”) and other sports organisations under the Sports Subvention Scheme (“SSS”) to promote Hong Kong’s recreation and sports development. The development of elite sports and athletes was undertaken by the Hong Kong Sports Institute which identified and trained local athletes with potential, supported them in their pursuit of sporting excellence and attaining remarkable achievements in the international sporting arena. The SC advised the Government on the policies, strategies and implementation framework for sports development in Hong Kong. It also maintained close liaison with SF&OC and NSAs under its purview to learn about their needs so as to advise the Government on the provision of funding and resources in support of sports development in Hong Kong. The SC was underpinned by three committees, namely the Community Sports Committee, the Elite Sports Committee and the Major Sports Events Committee, which helped develop and promote sports in the community, elite sports and major sports events in Hong Kong respectively. SF&OC was responsible for co-ordinating the development of local sports organisations, planning of international sports events and encouraging wider participation of Hong Kong athletes in the events, and selecting members of Hong Kong delegations to compete at various international multi-sports events, including the Olympic Games and Asian Games, etc.

- 2.1.5 In 2016-17, LCSD organised a total of some 38 000 recreation and sports activities for more than 2 200 000 participants. Major events included the Hong Kong Games, the Sport For All Day, the Corporate Games, the Masters Games, etc. LCSD’s recreation and sports programmes covered a wide range of activities, including athletics and aquatics, dance and fitness, individual games, team games, outdoor pursuits and water sports, of which swimming, children dance, fitness exercise for children, BMX and track cycling, mini-tennis, parent-child social dance and parent-child badminton were recreation and sports activities that were more popular among children.
- 2.1.6 Mr SIU then gave a brief account of the School Sports Programme (“SSP”) and the Primary/Young Athletes Training Schemes. The SSP provided subvention to NSAs and sports organisations for introducing students to various sports promotion programmes/schemes and encouraged their participation by organising sports talks, arranging visits to sports facilities and including play-in sessions in the visits, arranging students to watch soccer matches, organising joint school training, organising the Badges Award Scheme and Sport Captain Programme, etc. Under the above-mentioned programmes/schemes, the mode of exercise would be suitably adjusted according to the youth’s ability to meet their needs in various aspects. For example, soft baseball game and touch rugby were introduced for children to reduce the risk of body injury as a result of collision, encouraging more children to experience the fun of the sport. The SSP also provided parents with ample opportunities to do exercise and share the fun with their children, promoting parent-child relationship. In 2016-17, a total of 8 180 activities were organised with 611 800 students from 983 schools participated in the activities.

- 2.1.7 In addition, children and young people who were interested and had potential in sports might realise their potential by joining the Primary/Young Athletes Training Schemes. The Schemes aimed to identify athletes with potential through systematic and progressive training, and provide them with further coaching. Participants with outstanding performance might be selected to join national squads and take part in international competitions. In 2016-17, 30 sports disciplines were included in the Young Athletes Training Scheme, while 5 were included in the Primary Athletes Training Scheme, attracting 30 330 and 9 700 participants respectively.
- 2.1.8 On the other hand, LCS D had been promoting and encouraging public involvement in sports by supporting the hosting of major international sports events such as the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, the Standard Hong Kong Marathon, the New World Harbour Race, the Track Cycling World Championships, etc. To foster a strong sporting culture in the community, steadily taking forward Hong Kong's sports development.
- 2.1.9 Mr SIU encouraged the attendees to participate in sports activities and welcomed views from them.
- 2.1.10 The acting Chairperson thanked Mr SIU for his brief introduction.
- 2.2 Comments and questions on sports development put forward by attendees and children representatives, as well as responses from the representatives of LCS D were as follows:
- 2.2.1 A children representative pointed out that the scarcity of ice-skating rinks and rugby pitches, and the high admission fee for ice-skating rinks which were mostly privately operated had made it difficult for skaters to practice regularly, and thus suggested that LCS D should provide more support. He/she said that the provision of a fitness room in the school he/she attended had helped raised schoolmates' interest in doing exercise, and suggested that more schools should set up fitness facilities for students. He/she also expressed concern that the over-emphasis on academic learning in the community had resulted in the importance of exercise being neglected, and suggested that students might be given the opportunity to expose to different sports (e.g. golf) in Physical Education (PE) lessons to arouse their interest in sports.
- 2.2.2 A children representative said the school he/she attended did not have any badminton courts and had difficulty in making advance booking of LCS D's badminton courts. He/she opined that LCS D's inadequate support for schools had impeded the continuous training of the school's badminton team. He/she also noted that an organisation's efforts to seek the building of a sports centre in the district to relieve local demand were in vain. In addition, he/she noted that the implementation of Project Phoenix, which had received a funding of nearly \$20 million for promoting football, was also affected due to venue restriction. As

practice on a regular basis was not possible, it would be difficult to nurture elite players, the children representative thus casted doubt on the development of the Project.

- 2.2.3 A children representative pointed out that students only stressed the importance of study and had gradually lost interest in physical activity. He/she considered that schools should put more efforts in promoting the benefits of doing exercise. He/she also noted that the Taekwondo training rooms available for the public were small, which reflected that the resources input was inadequate to meet the needs of the community. He/she also expressed concern about the inadequate lesson time allocated for PE which in turn dampened students' interest in physical activity. The children representative hoped that the school authorities could allocate more lesson time for PE.
- 2.2.4 An attendee pointed out that a number of schools only set aside one-third of a school year for conducting two PE sessions per week, while the other two-third of the school year were for teaching music or dancing, as a result of which students had too little time for physical activity. He/she said that schools had put too much emphasis on academic learning, neglecting sports development.
- 2.2.5 A children representative expressed concern that most young people and tertiary students had placed much emphasis on academic achievements and neglected their physical well-being. He/she thus suggested that LCS D should step up promotional efforts to encourage people of different age groups to become involved in physical activity. In addition, he/she complimented the school he/she attended for organising diversified sports activities, but noted that tertiary institutions' support for development of sports for students was still inadequate.
- 2.2.6 Ms CHAN pointed out that LCS D was currently providing funding support to a total of 60 NSAs, including the Ski Association Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Rugby Union, the subject of sports covered were many and varied. With LCS D's subvention, the NSAs organised different sports activities to meet the needs of the public; the fees charged for such activities were lower than those for training classes organised by private organisations. She also pointed out that 30 sports disciplines were included in the Young Athletes Training Scheme which provided a platform for sports participation. Ms CHAN advised those young people/children who wished to enhance their skill level in sports to join the Young/Primary Athletes Training Schemes for further coaching and development.
- 2.2.7 In response to the children representative's concern about the building of a sports centre, Mr SIU advised that the policy concerned involved consideration of a number of factors including population and urban planning, the established procedures had to be followed and views of local residents had to be considered. Besides, the DCs had currently set aside some resources for application by local organisations to organise different programmes (including those incurred higher costs or charged higher fees)

to allow grassroot people to take part in such sports activities.

- 2.2.8 Mr SIU opined that our society was becoming more aware of students' need for study and physical activity, and had struck a balance between the two. The Education Bureau ("EDB") and LCSD had been complementing each other as the former monitored the implementation of PE lessons in schools, while the latter assumed the role of promoting sports development. LCSD needed to strike a balance in the allocation of resources to various sports, making it difficult for the department to provide funding support for all sports. He encouraged the attendees to express their views to facilitate LCSD to adjust its funding allocation in light of the demand of the community. As for the allocation of lesson time for PE, it was a matter of schools' internal affairs and the attendee was advised to relay his/her concern to the relevant authorities.
- 2.2.9 An attendee expressed concern about the language barrier between ethnic minority participants of sports training courses and their coaches as some of these coaches could not use ethnic minority languages or English as a medium of instruction. He/she also mentioned that quite a number of ethnic minority students who would like to participate in elite athlete training programme or represent Hong Kong in international competitions were deterred from doing so due to language barrier. The attendee hoped that, in future, LCSD could provide ethnic minority students with more support to allow those with potential to become athletes and represent Hong Kong in international competitions.
- 2.2.10 A children representative shared his/her personal experience, the children representative said that his/her application for enrolment in a training course had been refused by an institution on the grounds that the course was conducted in Cantonese. He/she opined that many ethnic minority children had potential in sports but language barrier had hindered their development in this respect. He/she suggested that LCSD should provide more support to the ethnic minorities and looked forward to seeing more ethnic minorities representing Hong Kong in international sports competitions, enhancing the city's image as an international metropolis.
- 2.2.11 An attendee considered the entry threshold for PE teachers who had to be able to read and write Chinese as too high and enquired about the entry threshold for NSAs' coaches. In addition, he/she pointed out that the websites of some NSAs (such as the Hong Kong Archery Association, Hong Kong Basketball Association, Orienteering Association of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Federation of Roller Sports) only provided Chinese interface, the ethnic minorities who did not know Chinese were unable to understand the information thereat. He/she also said that LCSD had refused some small organisations' applications for hiring of sports facilities and asked whether private organisations had the obligation to make available the facilities they operated for public hiring. He/she was also concerned that the policy of promoting sports in the community did not cover support for people with special needs. He/she enquired whether LCSD had organised any sports activities suitable for people with

special needs.

- 2.2.12 An attendee pointed out that there were quite a number of restrictions on the use of DC funds and the amount of funds was inadequate to organise training courses that were popular among grassroot children, e.g. ice-skating courses. He/she suggested that LCSD should launch subsidy scheme or organise experience day specifically for grassroot children.
- 2.2.13 A children representative enquired about the policy of promoting sports in the community and supporting elite sports, and the resources input. He/she also expressed concern about whether funding support from NGOs (such as the Hong Kong Jockey Club) was adequate. He/she considered that it was important for grassroot people to engage in regular physical activity and asked whether LCSD had devoted resources to allow grassroot adults to engage in sports activities.
- 2.2.14 An attendee shared his/her experience in organising activities in districts with a higher concentration of grassroot population. He/she noted that the level of subvention had posed restrictions for some organisations to hold sport activities that charged higher fees, such as golf, ice-skating, etc. He/she also pointed out the inadequate provision of community hall facilities in some districts. The attendee hoped that LCSD could increase funding support to small organisations for planning a diverse range of activities for the grassroots. He/she suggested that LCSD might form partnership with non-government organisations (“NGOs”) under which the department arranged for coaches and venues while the NGOs invited grassroot children to take part in the activities, thereby providing more children with the opportunities to experience the fun of sports activities. In addition, the attendee said that some grassroot people who would like to participate in LCSD’s sports activities were unable to do so given the high cost of travelling to and from the venues. He/she hoped that LCSD would provide appropriate financial assistance to those in need.
- 2.2.15 In respect of activities organised by some NSAs, Mr SIU responded that suitable arrangements would be made in light of the needs of the participants, say training courses with ethnic minority participants were conducted in English. He suggested that the welfare organisations that provided services to the grassroots or people with special needs might seek funding support from the Hong Kong Jockey Club or Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation for planning popular programmes that incurred higher costs (such as golf and tennis training courses). Mr SIU also welcomed attendees to continue to express their views so as to ensure the resources were properly spent.
- 2.2.16 In addition, he pointed out that NSAs did not have the resources to provide language training for their coaches and so had difficulty in meeting the needs of individuals. He understood that many private clubs had specially arranged coaches to take care of the ethnic minorities or people with special needs and suggested that the attendee could approach such private clubs to seek room for co-operation.

- 2.2.17 An attendee said that e-sports would be included as a medal sport in the 2022 Asian Games, but members of the public did not quite understand the concept of e-sports being a form of sport, and asked whether the department concerned had held discussions on how to promote this virtual sport and support its development. He/she added that e-sports was different from traditional sports in terms of modes of physical activity, and also noted that many netizens had expressed the desire to form teams to compete in it. He/she asked whether the Government had provided corresponding support.
- 2.2.18 An attendee pointed out that e-sports had gained a certain level of popularity in Hong Kong. He/she said that e-sports players underwent physical fitness training in their regular training and in this respect he/she did not find much differences between the players and athletes of traditional sports. He/she expressed concern about the lack of relevant policy that support the development of e-sports, and as a result of which e-sports development in Hong Kong lagged behind other regions. The attendee remarked that in Taiwan, support for e-sports was becoming more comprehensive, for instance, financial support was provided to e-sports players. He/she thus suggested LCSD considered putting in place corresponding measures and facilities to support the development of e-sports.
- 2.2.19 Mr SIU stressed that LCSD's resources were allocated to NSAs to facilitate the development of respective sports in light of the community's different needs. He also suggested that organisations that wished to promote emerging sports such as e-sports might seek funding support from District Councils ("DCs") or through other channels.
- 2.2.20 Mr SIU advised that every year LCSD would allocate subvention to support the organisation of sports activities that were more popular or representative, while views of different sectors of the community would be considered to ensure the resources were spent efficiently.
- 2.2.21 An attendee also expressed concern about Hong Kong's over-reliance on sports facilities in schools which resulted in a shortage of public sports facilities. He/she remarked that some traditional prestigious schools were well-equipped with comprehensive sports facilities, this had helped enhanced the quality of training of school squads which achieved better results than schools that had to rely on outside facilities for training.
- 2.2.22 A children representative pointed out that some school squads could only hold athletic and long jump training in sports grounds during public sessions, and the progress of training was prone to be affected by other users. He/she thus suggested designating some evening sessions as sessions not open to the public for school squads or personal training purposes, by so doing, the number of hirers could also be restricted, enhancing training efficiency. He/she opined that the existing treatment of full-time athletes was not quite favourable and students had found it hard to pursue a lifelong career in sport. He/she therefore suggested

incorporating information on elite sports into the curriculum of General Studies for primary schools, thereby enhancing students' and parents' understanding of full-time athletes.

- 2.2.23 Mr SIU responded that there were many sports venues available for public use in Hong Kong, while some newly built schools were equipped with up-to-standard sports facilities, the opening up of such facilities for public use was subject to respective restrictions. Miss LO also pointed out that the Sports Subvention Scheme launched by LCSD in 2001 strived to promote sports in primary, secondary and special schools. As of today, an annual subvention of some \$20 million was provided to 43 NSAs to organize 8 000 sports activities in schools. In response to an attendee's enquiry about the differences between the sports facilities in Hong Kong and those in overseas countries, Mr SIU pointed out that Hong Kong's sports facilities were mostly up to international standards. Given the differences in population, land area, social systems, etc., between Hong Kong and overseas countries, it would be difficult to make a direct comparison.
- 2.2.24 An attendee suggested converting the open space on the rooftops of service reservoirs as cricket pitches. In response, Mr SIU said that some of the recreation and sports facilities on the rooftops of service reservoirs were opened for public use and members of the public were welcomed to submit applications to relevant government departments. Mr SIU also advised that some private clubs would make available their facilities for public use at specific time slots under the land leases, the details of which had been made available on HAB's website. He understood that some private clubs had partnered with NGOs to co-organise sports activities and advised the attendee to approach the relevant organisations for enquiries.
- 2.2.25 In respect of some organisations' applications for different use of individual sports venues, Miss LO pointed out that different sports activities (e.g. soccer, rugby, athletics) had different requirements on the facilities, say for example, a turf pitch for soccer and rugby required different grass thickness and line-marking, it took time for growth after grass cutting to achieve the standard thickness before the pitch could be put to use for the design purposes. Coupled with a limited number of venues and the restriction of various factors affecting the usable hours, it would be difficult to accept all applications from organisations. She thus appealed for public understanding.
- 2.2.26 Mr SIU, Miss LO and Ms CHAN thanked the attendees and children representatives for their questions and suggestions.