

## **ELITE SPORTS COMMITTEE**

### **Sports Policy Review Better Prospects for High Performance Sports**

#### **Purpose**

This paper presents to Members the current position of the issues discussed by the Elite Sports Committee (ESC) and invite Members' views on the way forward in response to Sports Commission's decision of promulgating a sports policy document on the strategy and action plan for long term sports development in Hong Kong.

#### **Background**

2. At the meeting of the Sports Commission (SC) held on 7 September 2005, members noted the progress regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of Sport Policy Review Team since 2002. Members also noted that a review should be conducted with a view to developing a sports policy for Hong Kong.

3. In agreeing to conduct a review on sports policy and to formulate a sports policy for Hong Kong, the SC agreed that the three Committees should hold further discussions to:

- (a) advise on key direction on sports development in its respective areas;
- (b) identify issues and advise on priority in dealing with the issues; and
- (c) hold in-depth discussions as necessary on the issues as identified and develop recommendations as to the way forward.

4. To follow up the discussion of the SC, the ESC held a special meeting on Sports Policy Review on 29 November 2005 to discuss the issues to be addressed by ESC.

5. To recapitulate, the main issues which were discussed by the ESC so far are as follows: -

- (i) To draw up a more structured “athletes plan” to provide better support for full-time athletes with regard to financial, educational and career guidance.
  - The Support to Elite Athletes Sub-Committee (SEASC) set up in August 2004 has initiated discussion on this subject. A conceptual framework for a comprehensive support to Hong Kong’s elite athletes has been worked out with proposals to be taken to improve the support to elite athletes. Measures will be considered to developing a more comprehensive support system for elite athletes.
  - Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI), being the dedicated training centre for elite sports training and development in Hong Kong, is responsible for the delivery of high performance sports services, including management of high-performance athlete training programmes. Hence, HKSI would be in a proper position to draw up proposal/(s) on measures and resources requirement for providing comprehensive support to Hong Kong’s elite athletes for ESC’s consideration of a feasible plan.
  - ESC, as a high-level advisory body, could base on the proposals to be submitted by HKSI and consider the future policy direction on sports development.
- (ii) To strengthen links between Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) coaches and the National Sports Associations (NSAs) by considering an arrangement whereby an agreement is to be signed between HKSI and NSAs at the beginning of each year to spell out the targets and responsibilities for the sport concerned. Regular reviews are to be carried out to monitor progress and results.
  - The Selection and Evaluation of Elite Sports Sub-Committee (SEESSC) has initiated discussion on this subject. A “Business Plan” approach was devised for determining the resources to be allocated to the HKSI for supporting the development of elite sports. The objective is that the three parties i.e. HKSI management, head

coaches and NSAs will collaborate in formulating business plans and budgets amongst individual elite sports. The SEESSC will continue to look into the new funding approach.

- The resources should not be necessarily allocated equally amongst different sports. In addition, there is also a need to review regularly on the adequacy of the resources allocated for individual sports. As previously discussed and agreed, elite sports had to be performance based and medal oriented. More resources would be committed for medal hopeful sports, so that youngsters and their parents would be more convinced to take up sport training as a career which could ultimately arouse more public recognition and interest in sport.
- (iii) To improve the existing provision of high level training bases for the top athletes by upgrading the HKSI and to adopt a more strategic approach in the provision and use of LCSD sports venues and sports facilities in universities/tertiary institutions to better meet the needs of elite athletes.
- A Joint Task Force, co-chaired by Vice Chairman of ESC and Chairman of HKSI, was set up in July 2005 to make an overall review and recommendations on the provision of the facilities in HKSI and the need for new facilities elsewhere. Arrangements on using LCSD venues for elite sports training and development would be further discussed by the Joint Task Force.
- (iv) To enhance ties with the Mainland to provide more exchange of training opportunities and admission of talented sports professionals in the field of sports science and coaching.
- ESC had an initial discussion on the proposed objectives, scope and guiding principles for facilitating the exchange programme of sports talents and professionals with Mainland in an organized and regulated manner. In view of the strong reaction from the local sports community, the subject would be deferred discussion for the time being.
  - The HKSAR Government has, since 2003, signed agreements or memoranda on sport exchange and cooperation with different authorities in Mainland. Local NSAs and sports organizations may continue to initiate and implement their sport exchange programme

with their counterparts in Mainland through the established mechanism.

- (v) To evaluate the choice and number of “Focus” sports in the elite training programmes with a view to optimizing the effectiveness of resources put into the programmes.
  - The ESC discussed and agreed to adopt a new selection mechanism for the sports to be supported under the HKSI Elite Vote starting from the funding cycle 2005-2009.
  - The ESC has also started discussion on the selection of up-and-coming sports which warrant intensive development.
  - A portion of the resources to be retained for nurturing the “up and coming” sports for attainment to elite level. The subject would be discussed in conjunction with the topic on strengthening of “feeder system”.

## **Current Position**

6. At the last ESC meeting held on 16 September 2005, Members were informed vide ESC Paper - 8/2005 summarising the current position in the implementation of the various recommendations of the 2002 Report of the Sports Policy Review Team. Members were also invited to advise on key direction on sports development in its respective areas. Some of these topics were also discussed at the ESC special meeting held on 29 November 2005 vide ESC Paper – 11/2005. The salient points of discussion are summarized below.

- (i) Funding sources
  - Members considered that it worthwhile to explore additional/ alternative funding sources for sports, by way of, for example attracting more commercial sponsorship, implementing a matching fund scheme for sponsors on a dollar-to-dollar basis, issue of lottery tickets for sport etc.

(ii) Nurturing “up-and-coming” sports

- Members were generally of the view that additional resources would be required for nurturing the “up-and-coming” sports to attain an elite level. Otherwise, it would limit the development of sports with medal-hopes.
- A portion of the resources to be retained for nurturing the “up-and-coming” sports for attainment to elite level. The subject would be discussed in conjunction with the topic on strengthening of “feeder system”.

(iii) Club-base infrastructure

- To model on overseas practice by establishing a club-base sports system to facilitate people who would like to advance in a particular sport but not to national squad level. It would be an opportunity for Hong Kong to further develop its sporting culture and arouse public interest in sport. By doing so, young potential athletes could be identified and nurtured which could ultimately enable Hong Kong to attain better sporting achievements. The strengthening of “feeder-system” for sports in Hong Kong could be further examined.

(iv) Support to junior athletes

- To provide more support to young athletes so that youngsters and their parents would be more convinced to take up sport training as a career, thereby strengthening our medal hopes in major games in future.
- LCSD is currently providing subvention and working in collaboration with NSAs to enable the feeder system to be conducted at school/community levels. ESC could, in first place, liaise with Community Sports Committee on the measures on strengthening of the feeder-system.
- The “feeder-system”, in principle, is one of the perspectives of elite sports development. Hence, it is one of the key responsibilities of HKSI. Since both HKSI and NSAs have been conducting talent identification programme, they are to be encouraged to continue organising tournaments and competitions for identifying more potential athletes for further development.

- The current selection criteria of elite sports including the results from two senior and two junior athletes have indeed secured the “supply” of junior athletes for the current elite sports. The key issue is how to steer and develop those good potential athletes into full-fledged athletes.
- A mechanism for providing comprehensive support to athletes retiring and drop out from sports career, e.g. job placement programme, have to be mapped out and put in place in order to convince more youngster to commit themselves to sports.

(v) Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

- Upon the implementation of the new sports administrative structure for sports development, there would be a need to review the duties and responsibilities among different stakeholders, e.g. NSAs and LCSD etc. for better synchronisation in the implementation of sports policies.
- The roles and responsibilities among different stakeholders should be clearly defined. Relevant stakeholders have to work in joint hands to maximize the efficiency on utilisation of resources and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Conceptually, NSAs with the expertise in sports have to take the lead to provide broad policy on implementation, while HKSI as an elite training centre would look after elite training programmes. LCSD would be responsible for coordinating with the ESC on the implementation of new policy directives as well as providing training venues and resources, while SF&OC, in its National Olympic Committee status, is responsible for upholding its mission to develop, promote and protect the Olympic movement in Hong Kong, in accordance with the Olympic Charter.

(vi) Full-time coaches for disabled athletes

- Coaches are important to facilitate the training of disabled athletes. While it may not be feasible to employ full time coaches for all events, the employment of part-time qualified coaches or existing coaches at HKSI would offer another option.

- (vii) Strengthen sports science and medicine support services to high performance athletes for all NSAs
- Sports science and medicine support services could be used to identify potential athletes in a more scientific approach. The sports science and medicine support services, in particular on assessment and screening, have to be strengthened. This issue would be further discussed by the SEESSC.

## **Way Forward**

### *Advice Sought*

7. Members of ESC are invited to give views on the following: –
- (a) the arrangement to develop and implement the conceptual framework for a comprehensive support to Hong Kong's elite athletes worked out by SEASC (para. 5 (i) above);
  - (b) the funding strategy in respect of the “business plans” prepared by HKSI (para. 5 (ii) above);
  - (c) measures to nurturing the “up and coming” sports (para. 6 (ii) above);
  - (d) measures to strengthen the “feeder-system” for sports in Hong Kong and support to junior athletes (para. 6 (iv) above);
  - (e) the duties and responsibilities among different stakeholders, e.g. SF&OC, NSAs, HKSI and LCSD (para. 6 (v) above);
  - (f) the need for providing coaches to facilitate the training of disabled athletes (para. 6 (vi) above); and
  - (g) measures to strengthen sports science and medicine support services to high performance athletes for all NSAs (para. 6 (vii) above).

8. Members are invited to note the latest discussions of the ESC and its Sub-Committee, and are invited to give their comments. Members' comments would be consolidated and collated to the respective Sub-Committees for further discussion and deliberation.

Secretariat, Elite Sports Committee  
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