

**Speech by the Hon Mrs Selina Chow Liang Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Motion Debate on Report of the Sports Policy Review Team, 3 July  
2002**

Selina Chow:

Madam President, actually, I am not familiar with sports and I am a layman, but I believe the recommendations in the Report of the Sports Policy Review Team (the Report), which comprise a comprehensive review on the sports policy, are constructive. But I am a bit disappointed because the Hong Kong Tourism Board (the HKTB) was not consulted. We cannot blame the Team in charge of the Report because few people would discuss tourism and the sports policy together. However, when we give the matter a little more thought, we actually find that they are very closely related to each another.

I have some personal interest in sports, but I would come back to this point later. I would like to discuss tourism first. In recent years, the HKTB wished to promote Hong Kong as a city of international events, and such events certainly include well-known world sports contests such as the Formula One Championship races, World Cup Finals and Olympic Games that everybody is familiar with. Yet, Hong Kong is not eligible for applying for rights to host some first-rate world-class sporting events in terms of venues or overall scale. Nevertheless, we are eligible for applying for rights to host certain contests. In recent years, Malaysia has held a Formula One Championship race and attracted a lot of tourists from abroad. The Malaysian authority built Kuala Lumpur as an internationally reputable motor racing centre in Asia, and attracted tourists including the Honourable James TIEN sitting next to me who loves motor racing. He visits Malaysia almost every year for sight-seeing and as a spectator at the motor race. Of course, Macao has hosted similar races but the scale of the races hosted by Macao is smaller than that of Malaysia. If Hong Kong wishes to host such contests, it should target at hosting the Formula One Championship races.

However, hundreds of millions dollars would be incurred on hosting such a race, and it also depends on the co-operation and support of the community as well as other matching actions such as application for permits and constructing roads for motor races. The hosting unit must have great determination and commitment and the race would not only be held in a year or once. From the perspective of the tourism industry, holding such a race once would not be able to attract tourists. Hence, if Hong Kong wishes to host international sporting events, we must consider a more strategic approach. I wish the relevant parties would further consider the matter when studying the Report.

Besides these first-rate international events, there are many fairly attractive activities in the international arena. For example, Hong Kong has hosted two sporting events very well; one of them is the Seven-a-Side Rugby. For many years, Hong Kong has hosted the event, which was organized by non-government bodies at the very beginning, and now the Government has participated in hosting the event. The HKTB also supports the event but the support is inadequate. However, the event itself really attracts a lot of foreign tourists to Hong Kong. More than half of the spectators in the Hong Kong Stadium are foreigners but not Hong Kong people. These tourists would mark in their planner each year when they would come to Hong Kong for the matches. It affirms the significant contribution made by international competitions to the tourism industry.

Another sporting event is certainly the marathon race. Although Hong Kong has hosted the marathon for several years only, some foreign athletes will come to Hong Kong to participate in the race and they drive the participation of more than 10000 local athletes. It reflects the effects of sports meets on Hong Kong and our international image. Since the race is held in Hong Kong, so from the viewpoint of the tourism industry, if the race were broadcast live on television, the special scenery of Hong Kong would be displayed to foreign audiences. However, foreign audiences would not consciously feel the effects and they would only see that Hong Kong has a beautiful environment, a certain bridge is magnificent or a certain road is rather special. Actually, we are softly marketing Hong Kong that way. Thus, the tourism industry takes the view that it is worthwhile to host such sporting events. Some athletes who come to Hong Kong may bring tens of thousands of supporters who are also tourists. The hosting of international contests must achieve a certain status and to this end, it requires complementary venues, commitment on the part of the host and a great measure of co-ordination. I wish the Government would try its best to offer assistance in this respect.

I would quickly touch upon some sporting events that I think Hong Kong would be able to develop, firstly, water sports including a yacht race because it would be able to display the scenery of the Victoria Harbour; and secondly, golf. I heard that tens of thousands of Hong Kong people will leave Hong Kong for Guangdong to play golf every weekend. If we develop this sport, and provide the complementary venues and facilities, we must be able to attract a lot of tourists to Hong Kong. Thirdly, dancing. I believe I have to discuss dancing in future but I am sure it is a very attractive sporting event.

Thank you, Madam President.

