

For Information

**Summary Report on the
Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events
(9 to 21 August and 7 to 11 September 2008)**

PURPOSE

This paper gives a summary report on the staging of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events (the Equestrian Events) co-hosted by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) from 9 to 21 August and from 7 to 11 September 2008.

SUMMARY

2. Thanks to the advice and guidance of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), we have set the following precedents for the equestrian sport:

- (a) We managed to stage two world class Equestrian Events by utilizing compact but well planned and well managed temporary venues/facilities. That makes it possible for the sport to be staged in places which do not have the equestrian tradition; and
- (b) We successfully held the Events under hot and humid conditions by providing state-of-the-art cooling facilities and through high standard veterinary care. Again, that helps to dispel the conventional wisdom that the sport can hardly be held outside the usual regions.

3. We are also proud to have attained the following achievements:

- (a) Full safety record - no fatalities or major injuries for all athletes, both human and equine;

- (b) Full participation – average spectator attendance was 80% for the Olympics and close to 60% for the Paralympics. The former amounted to full house by BOCOG standard. The latter was a record for the Paralympic Equestrian Events.

4. In less than 3 years, we have achieved the following milestones, making it the fastest provision of an Olympic equestrian venue:

- (a) The first air-conditioned stables and indoor training area
- (b) The first mobile cooling units for horses
- (c) The first on-site testing lab for equine samples
- (d) The first recycling of 100% of stable waste
- (e) The first on-site weather station for an equestrian event.

AN OVERALL VIEW ON THE OPERATION OF THE EVENTS

Competition Management

5. We created a most welcoming and safe environment for riders and horses from all over the world so that they could give their best. 197 athletes and 218 horses from 42 National Olympic Committees competed in 13 sessions of the three Olympic Equestrian Disciplines in 12 days from 9 to 21 August 2008, with the award of 6 sets of medals. It is worth noting that 28 Asian athletes took part in the Olympics, which is a record. Hong Kong and China both fielded a team respectively to participate in the Equestrian Events which is also unprecedented.

6. For the 9 sessions of Para-Equestrian Dressage conducted in 5 days from 7 to 11 September 2008, 73 athletes and 71 horses from 28 National Paralympic Committees competed in the events. 11 sets of medals were awarded. The Paralympics saw the first medals for both Asia (2 bronzes for a Singapore rider) and South America (2 bronzes for a Brazil rider).

7. Hong Kong's hot and humid weather could pose a challenge to equestrian horses, particularly those from cooler temperate regions. The Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) places great emphasis on the health and well being of the horses which are essential to the success of

the Events. Accordingly, the issue of weather condition in the summer in Hong Kong was considered at all stages of planning so as to minimize the impact on horse welfare. All competitions were carefully timed to be conducted either in the early morning or in the evening so as to avoid the intense heat in the afternoon.

8. Practically all competition sessions were on schedule, with only a very minor delay on one occasion. The officials, volunteers, contractors and paid staff all worked together smoothly throughout the two Equestrian Events. Horse transportation, both locally and overseas, were conducted smoothly and all horses returned home safely, fulfilling our performance pledge and marking Hong Kong out as an outstanding co-host city that is fully capable of looking after the welfare of the horses. The transport agencies worked well with the local multi-agency work teams to make this complex task a huge success.

9. Veterinary services were of the highest standard. A few minor operations had to be undertaken but all horses recovered. A few Paralympic horses arrived in bad shape after the long distance travel but they fully recovered after intensive care and treatment. Quarantine arrangements were fully satisfactory and horses were free from infections.

10. The complementary service offered useful and educational information to spectators, helping them understand and enjoy the Games and keeping them entertained during intermissions. All victory ceremonies were conducted smoothly and were attractive to spectators as a high proportion of them stayed behind for the ceremonies, including those for the Paralympics.

11. We in Hong Kong have a world-class quarantine system and have established equine protocols with the participating countries. We have achieved something which previous Olympic cities found challenging and that is: all the participating horses left the host city in good shape.

Competition Venues

12. The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) designed and constructed the two competition venues at Sha Tin and Beas River at a cost of HK\$1.2 billion. The Sha Tin Venue was the core competition venue for dressage and jumping. It was a temporary venue by converting the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) into the competitions area and stables for horses and support services; and the Penfold Park adjacent to the Sha Tin Racecourse was used for training purposes. The half-day cross-country competition venue was temporarily converted from the Beas River Country Club of HKJC and part of the adjacent Hong Kong Golf Club (HKGC).

13. Both venues were universally well regarded, especially the Field of Play, training arenas and the stables at the Sha Tin Competition Venue, plus the cross-country track and its cooling facilities at the Beas River Venue were appraised as top of the range.

14. HKJC demonstrated its commitment to the Green Olympic concept by adopting environmentally friendly principles in four aspects of the construction and management of the Olympic and Paralympic equestrian venues:

- (a) Recycling of stable waste and horse manure into environmentally friendly fertiliser, using the vermicomposting (earthworm) and In-vessel composting methods;
- (b) Re-use of environmentally friendly materials during the construction process for the Olympic and Paralympic equestrian venues, including use of recycled rubber tyres for internal walkways in the stabling complex and the use of engineered wood made of sustainable bamboo for the interior walls in the stables;
- (c) Conservation – during the construction of the venues, 500 new trees and 17,000 new shrubs were planted, while 90% of trees at the Sha Tin venue were retained in their original positions; and
- (d) Energy saving – the air conditioning system and lighting in the stabling complex offered energy savings of up to 30% compared with conventional installations.

15. The footing for the main arena and training arenas was made up of a mixture of fine quartz sand, imported geotextiles and fibres. The state-of-the-art footing had a special top layer that provided protection for horses' leg when landing and turning, as well as specially constructed layers that maximised drainage. The footing was designed to be suitable for both dressage and jumping.

Equine Services

16. HKJC provided full back-up support during the Equestrian Events. The Club provided a purpose-built Veterinary Clinic at the Olympic and Paralympic venue for diagnostic and treatment services. Furthermore, the facilities and services at the Club's Equine Hospital at Sha Tin Racecourse were made available for emergency surgery during the Games period.

17. HKJC made available their air-conditioned horse transportation floats to transport the Olympic and Paralympic horses to and from the airport and also to the cross-country course at Beas River. The Club's on-site Racing Laboratory is the sole reference laboratory in Asia for the Fédération Equestre Internationale and one of only four reference laboratories in the world. The Racing Laboratory tested samples taken from 64 Olympic and 20 Paralympic horses for the presence of prohibited substances during the Games.

Olympic/Paralympic Village and Other Accommodation

18. BOCOG's appointment of Ms Elsie Leung as the Mayor of the Olympic / Paralympic Village proved to be a major boost to our hospitality service. Her accessibility and personal approach made the Village residents feel very much welcome and enhanced their already good impression of our hospitality service.

19. A total of 199 Olympic / Paralympic Family guests were received at the Olympic / Paralympic Family Hotel. Top VIP guests included Dr Rogge, Sir Philip Craven, Mr Samaranch, Princess Ann of UK, Prince Edward of UK, Prince Albert of Monaco and Prince Orange of Netherlands.

20. Likewise, the Media Hotel and the Grooms Village operated

smoothly, with no undue incident.

Spectators

21. 155 509 and 30 220 spectators attended the Olympic and Paralympic Events respectively, representing an attendance rate of 80% and 56%. All locally available tickets were sold out prior to both Games. To put these figures in context, a 80% turnout is actually regarded by BOCOG as practically full, whereas a 56% average Paralympic turnout rate (70% average for evening sessions) is unprecedented and far exceeded those for previous Paralympic Equestrian Events.

22. Our spectators' behaviour was exemplary. Despite the relatively new experience of equestrian events in Hong Kong, most of our spectators have participated actively and supported the athletes enthusiastically. This was a truly cosmopolitan and mature audience, who observed the house rules, cheered the riders and the horses regardless of their nationalities, at the right time.

Medical

23. The medical team for the Olympic Equestrian Events comprised some 2 000 staff to provide services which was the biggest operation by local medical professionals in terms of manpower resources being deployed. The manpower deployment for the Paralympic Equestrian Events was over 1 400 staff. The team made sure that the best medical services were provided to all participants at the Equestrian Events without compromising the standard and operation of local medical services.

24. From 26 July to 14 September 2008, a total of 500 medical encounters were reported. All medical encounters were of minor nature.

Transport

25. To facilitate the staging of the Equestrian Events and to balance the needs of different sectors of the community, special measures, including traffic diversion and prohibited zone were implemented during the Equestrian Events period. Both the Sha Tin and North District Councils were consulted and gave advice on the best transport arrangements which proved to be effective during the competition period.

26. At our request, the MTR Corporation Limited extended train services to ensure orderly arrival and dispersal of spectators in early morning hours. The Equestrian Company provided free shuttle bus services and deployed 115 double-decker buses to transport spectators between the designated stations on the MTR East Rail Line and the two competition venues for spectators holding valid entry tickets for the Equestrian Events, and hired Rehab buses for spectators with mobility problem. The number of trips made by Rehab buses in the two Equestrian Events was 243.

Hospitality and Reception

27. A number of VIPs from overseas and BOCOG visited Hong Kong to learn of the preparatory work following the announcement of Hong Kong as the co-host city. The number peaked during the two competition periods. The VIPs including the international dignitaries were all satisfied with the full range of hospitality services provided to them.

Security

28. The responsibility for security inside the competition and non-competition venues mainly lied with the Equestrian Company, while the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) assumed overall responsibility for the security of the Equestrian Events, including monitoring the security arrangements by the Equestrian Company and exercising direct command and supervision of the security staff employed by the Equestrian Company.

29. The HKPF adopted a “low key, efficient and effective, but as unobtrusive as possible” approach in providing security for the Equestrian Events in line with standards set by IOC and BOCOG. The security plans were developed towards this approach, but with a capacity for rapid escalation if required. There was thorough and continuous risk assessment, and close communication and liaison with BOCOG throughout the planning process. The work of the HKPF encompassed a multitude of areas and involved various disciplines like risk assessment, defensive search, security screening at control points, escort, protection of key persons and VIPs, etc. HKPF screened 284 100 people, checked 5 217 vehicles and seized 382 articles throughout the period of the two

Equestrian Events.

30. Given the high international profile of the Olympic Games, adequate contingency planning was essential to prepare for all possible situations that might adversely affect the events in Hong Kong. Apart from producing venue-specific contingency plans by the Equestrian Company and updating of plans by the Government departments, these plans were well-tested through a series of exercises, drills and rehearsals in the run-up to the Equestrian Events.

31. During the period of the Equestrian Events, the Equestrian Company set up a Venue Operation and Coordination Centre to oversee all functional operations in relation to the Equestrian Events, and key Government bureaux and departments were represented in the centre to provide an operational linkage in case of emergencies. At the same time, a multi-agency emergency monitoring and support centre was set up by the Government centrally to monitor the overall security situation and to provide support to operational departments and agencies where necessary.

Food Safety

32. With the putting in place of a specific food safety strategy by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, we achieved the target of ‘zero incident in food poisoning’ set by BOCOG.

Promotion, Publicity & Community Involvement

33. To widely publicize the Games and the Equestrian Events, a comprehensive network was established to reach out to different sectors of the community. At the implementation level, HKSARG took a cross-sectoral approach and worked closely with all major stakeholders in rolling out the vast number of territory-wide events and district-based activities.

34. The series of countdown celebrations since August 2006 (i.e. two years countdown) helped promote the Games and build up the atmosphere. The Hong Kong leg of the Olympic Torch Relay conducted on 2 May 2008 was well received with hundreds of thousands of members of the public lining-up en-route to welcome the flame and cheer up for the torchbearers. The two Live Sites set up by the Leisure

and Cultural Services Department at Victoria Park and Sha Tin Park during the Olympic and Paralympic Games period, as well as the Olympic Piazza set up by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza from 25 July to 24 August 2008 attracted large number of spectators. On top of these activities was a wide range of cultural, sport and education programmes organised by various bodies.

35. HKSAR implemented a comprehensive local and overseas publicity programmes, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders including the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the Economic and Trade Offices.

36. The Information Services Department (ISD) brought in three groups of 30 sponsored equestrian journalists from 12 countries to look at preparations and promote Hong Kong as the co-host city for the Equestrian Events. This was the first time in Olympic equestrian history that an organising city had arranged a sponsored visitors programme for media ahead of the events.

37. With the approval of the Legislative Council, HKSARG provided financial support for the cultural, educational and community involvement activities. In addition, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Equestrian Events Hong Kong Fund was set up under the Secretary for Home Affairs Incorporation Ordinance in December 2006 and raised over \$40 million to support the various aspects of the Equestrian Events, in particular the Volunteers Programme.

Media

38. A total of 664 accredited media covered the Olympic Equestrian Events. ISD set up a City Media Centre at City Hall for the use of non-accredited media and some 290 visiting journalists used the service. For the Paralympic Equestrian Events, there was 101 accredited media.

Climate

39. Hong Kong Observatory provided outstanding support throughout the Events. No competition session was disrupted despite the hit by two typhoons before and immediately after the Olympic

Equestrian Events. This August was surprisingly dry and we had not been affected by the rain.

Protection of Olympic Intellectual Property

40. The Intellectual Property Department spared no efforts to protect Olympic Intellectual Property against misuse and infringement, and to prevent any attempt by a third party to associate itself with the Olympic Games in order to gain recognition and benefits without paying sponsorship fees. The multi-pronged action plan endorsed by the Equestrian Committee proved to be very effective and we received no complaint from IOC or BOCOG, which is quite an achievement compared to previous Olympics.

41. On the enforcement side, the Customs and Excise Department adopted a two-pronged enforcement strategy against the supply side as well as the retail end of pirated and counterfeit goods to combat against copyright and trade mark infringements in Hong Kong.

Community Buy-In

42. We organised a series of consultation and briefing to a vast number of stakeholders and community groups. These included the HKSI, the HKGC, 18 District Councils in particular Sha Tin and North District Councils, Sha Tin Rowing Centre, residents of the HKJC staff quarter, the Consular Corps in Hong Kong, Heads of Department, Sport community, Tourism industry, international and local chambers, Civil Servants and community of Sha Tin and North Districts.

Manpower Deployment

43. On average, the strength of the workforce (including full-time, contract staff and volunteers) on duty in a competition venue on competition day ranged from 2 500 to 3 000, excluding Police Officers and other Government staff on Event related duties outside the Venues.

Volunteer Service

44. 2 400 volunteers (1 800 for Olympics and 600 for Paralympics) were recruited and trained for servicing the Events. The average turnout rate was 92% and 93% respectively. These rates are very high by international standard. The performance of our volunteers was

exemplary, with very many positive feedback from many sectors, praising them for their friendliness, initiatives, knowledge and language abilities.

LEGACY

45. We are considering ways to leave a lasting legacy of the Equestrian Events for Hong Kong. One such project was to produce a documentary video to commemorate Hong Kong's staging of the Equestrian Events and sustain Olympic legacy after the Games. Penfold Park, an important part of the Olympic venue, will be retained as an interactive equine park for the community. We are also conducting a stock-taking exercise to see what legacy items would be kept by whom, and may set up a museum in Hong Kong. So far, we have already identified a list of items to be donated to the Beijing Heritage Bureau. The Sha Tin and North Districts where the Equestrian Events were held are also planning to keep certain legacy items in their districts.

CONCLUSION

46. Organising a good equestrian event is not easy. Hosting the Olympic Equestrian Events successfully is a far more daunting task. Our security, transport, medical, quarantine, and food safety teams provided meticulous services in a highly professional and responsible manner. To express our sincere thanks to the workforce and volunteers for their dedicated work, the Chief Secretary for Administration on behalf of the Equestrian Committee, awarded Certificate of Appreciation to some 28 700 workforce and volunteers who have assisted in the Events.

47. We are pleased to receive numerous positive feedback from the constituent groups. Below are some examples of the quotes:

- “Beautiful hosts, great sport, thank you Hong Kong.” -- Christophe Dubi (Director in charge of IOC Athletes Commission)
- “Fantastic Games.” -- Carlos Arthur Nuzman (IOC Member)
- “Fantastic run and organization. Congratulations!” -- Alexander

McLin (FEI Secretary General)

- “A wonderful competition. Very well organised.” -- Christopher Hodson (FEI 2nd Vice President)
- “Well done for this marvellous game! Thank you for all.” -- Bernard Lapassei (IF Member)

48. We are proud to note that our hard work were appreciated by all, dispelling the many concerns and doubts throughout the equestrian community at the beginning on the choice of Hong Kong for the Equestrian Events. The IOC President Dr Jacques Rogge said of Hong Kong “what you have achieved is outstanding” and hailed the Beijing Olympic as “truly exceptional”. The President of the International Federation for Equestrian Sports, Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, gave Hong Kong a thumbs up for its organisation of the Olympic Equestrian Events which help create a “gateway to equestrian sports in Asia”. The State Council of the People’s Republic of China on 29 September 2008 gave an Advanced Collective Award to the Equestrian Committee in recognition of its outstanding work for the Olympics and the Paralympics.

49. By presenting to the world the best ever Equestrian Events, we have again proved the can-do spirit of this city. These Events have entered the collective memory of people in Hong Kong. The people in Hong Kong will continue to embrace the Olympic spirit of “Solidarity, Friendship and Fair Play” and the concepts of “Transcendence, Integration and Equality” as enshrined in the Paralympic spirit in building a harmonious community which is an invaluable legacy for Hong Kong.

Home Affairs Bureau
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