

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE ASIA PACIFIC LE MANS SERIES  
AT GRAND BALLROOM PALACE OF THE GOLDEN HORSES  
11 NOVEMBER 2000**

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Firstly, let me thank the organising committee for inviting me to the Grand Launch of the Asia Pacific Le Mans Series in Paradise Malaysia 2001 here this morning.

2. It gives me great pleasure to join all of you in this exciting event. Congratulations to the organising committee for bringing another milestone to Malaysia's growing stature as an international sporting capital.

3. I also wish to bid a warm 'Selamat Datang' to Mr Don Panoz, founder of the Le Mans Series and the driving force behind this highly acclaimed international motorsports event.

4. I am confident that Asia Pacific Le Mans Series will be another roaring success given the strong and growing band of motorsports fans in the region.

5. This is especially since Malaysia was entrusted to stage the world Formula One Grand Prix since last year. I'm pleased to say that we have organised this highly-demanding race with flying colours and we are already looking forward to our third GP next year.

6. Thousands of fans from all over the world have made their way to Kuala Lumpur to watch the GP here and millions of other fans followed the race 'live' through the television.

7. The Le Mans is another endorsement of Malaysia on the world's motorsports map. I've been told that like the World Formula One Grand Prix, the Le Mans Series will be staged at the Sepang International Circuit.

8. The Sepang race track is a beautiful state-of-the-art track. It is specially made for world class racing. So drivers and fans alike will be in for another treat when the Le Mans takes place.

9. Indeed, the Malaysian government has committed itself to building top sports infrastructure to host the many international events that have come our way. These excellent facilities complement the efficient organisational skills for which Malaysians are well-known for.

10. In recent years alone, our efforts have been rewarded by the successful hosting of the best ever Commonwealth Games in 1998, Tour de Langkawi Cycling Championship, Malaysian Rugby Sevens, Thomas and Uber Cup Badminton Finals and other major tournaments.

11. We have put in a strong bid for the 2006 Asian Games and the results will be known in a few days. God willing, we will host the Asiad for the first time. We will treat this as another challenge. With the spirit of Malaysia Boleh burning within us, we will be able to host another successful games, if we are chosen as hosts.

12. In return, what we hope our young athletes will take advantage of this momentum to train themselves, to train hard and well, to carry the Malaysian flag at international outings. We must not only be noted as an excellent sports organiser, we must produce the stars as well. My only advice is that we must have confidence that we can do it and we have to work hard to make it. Dreams alone will not help us. But let us use our dreams to motivate us to greater heights.

13. The country has many training facilities, giving young Malaysians the opportunity to decide on the sporting career they want best. The government will continue to provide the support needed in addition to the list of incentives to reward their achievements.

14. As mentioned, motorsports is highly popular in Malaysia and in the region. I hope more will come forward to develop it by training youngsters the skills and equally important, the fine aspects of safety in this precise and thrilling sports.

15. I'm confident that with the proper expertise and guidance, Malaysians will have the opportunity to cheer on one of their own in international competitions. I would look forward to that.

16. Kerajaan sedar bahawa penganjuran sukan peringkat antarabangsa di negara kita dapat menyumbang kepada pembangunan negara. Dengan yang demikian, persatuan- persatuan sukan dan syarikat-syarikat swasta digalakkan menyumbang dan menawar diri menjadi tuan rumah kepada sukan masing-masing.

17. Kerajaan menganggap sukan sama pentingnya dengan program sosial lain dan inilah di antara sebabnya sukan telah berkembang dengan begitu pesat kebelakangan ini. Penglibatan kita tidak hanya terhad kepada acara-acara permainan sahaja tetapi meliputi pengurusan, pengeluaran alat-alat sukan, media sukan, pemasaran, pengurusan venue-venue sukan, pengelolaan temasya sukan antarabangsa, sports tourism, sports science dan sebagainya.

18. Semuanya ini memerlukan profesionalisme di kalangan mereka yang terlibat. Dengan hakikat ini, maka kerajaan sentiasa menyokong usaha-usaha pembangunan sukan seperti peruntukan latihan atlit, peruntukan pembinaan infrastruktur sukan, penubuhan Institut Sukan Negara, penubuhan Sekolah Sukan dan sebagainya. Jika kita terus berusaha dengan gigih, insyaAllah, sukan negara akan maju.

19. In conclusion, may I again record my appreciation to the organisation committee and wish them all the best for the event.

20. I, hereby, launch the Asia Pacific Le Mans Series in Paradise Malaysia 2001.

Thank you.