

THE WORLD TAEKWON-DO CHAMPIONSHIP

STADIUM SULTAN ISMAIL NASIRUDDIN SHAH, KUALA TERENGGANU, 28
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It gives me great pleasure to be given this opportunity to address this distinguished gathering today. On behalf of the Government, the Organising Committee and myself, I bid a warm 'Selamat Datang' to all the delegates and participants to this Ninth World Taekwon-Do Championship which is being held in Terengganu.

2. This occasion is made possible by the confidence placed by the International Taekwon-Do Federation in its Malaysian counterpart. Malaysia is happy to play host to such an event, especially now that work is being focused on preparations for the Commonwealth Games to be hosted by Malaysia in 1998.

3. An international event with participation from more than 80 countries may be quite a new experience for the State of Terengganu. I therefore would like to commend the efforts by the State Government and the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture and all the officials involved in making possible this event today. This could not have been a better way of introducing Terengganu to foreign participants and delegates especially in terms of its strategic location. The Taekwon-Do Championship which is being held here can complement the State's efforts to promote not only tourism but also to encourage foreign and local investments to be located in the East Coast region generally and Terengganu in particular.

4. Besides, this event today represents yet another opportunity for participants and delegates to get to know each other better. This will go a long way towards strengthening the relations between Malaysia and other countries, particularly in helping to bridge the cultural gap between member countries.

5. I understand Taekwon-Do in Malaysia had its beginning in 1963 when His Excellency General Choi Hong Di was Korea's First Ambassador. Today with more than 100,000 members I am sure this occasion will be a special home-coming for His Excellency General Choi Hong Di. His early efforts in introducing Taekwan-Do in Malaysia have proved to be a seed well-sown.

6. Although I may not be involved in the martial arts, I still believe that martial arts are useful in moulding the character of a nation. With discipline, i.e. self-control as its basic requirement, martial arts can develop our younger generation to be more responsible and to have qualities that are important to nation-building and the development of human

values. Today in a world where the powerless and the weak are being openly oppressed, it becomes our social responsibility to inculcate and nurture in our young an understanding of right and wrong and the need to uphold good moral values. This Taekwan-Do Championship is therefore most appropriate as a platform where the fostering of friendship among participants could be enhanced and to promote world peace and goodwill.

7. Though this is not a proper forum to dwell on such a philosophical issue the sight of the contingents today reminds me of the hope for the international community to do what is morally right, especially when so many around the world are being so blatantly forced to migrate or be massacred. It is no longer considered honourable to get slightly hurt in order to help the less fortunate.

8. This Championship may be just another event but it is my hope that participants and delegates will take some time off to see and enjoy the beautiful and enchanting spots here in the East Coast and bring home with you the memories of Terengganu and Malaysia.

9. On that note, I have great pleasure to officially launch the Ninth World Taekwan-Do Championship. Thank you.