

**Sila semak semasa dilafazkan**

**UCAPAN YANG AMAT BERBAHAGIA  
DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD ALI  
DI MAJLIS PEMBUKAAN RASMI  
PIALA DUNIA KUMPULAN INVACARE  
(PUSINGAN KELAYAKAN BAGI RANTAU ASIA PASIFIK/OCEANIA)  
DI GELANGGANG TENIS, MAJLIS SUKAN NEGARA  
PADA HARI ISNIN, 3 MEI 1999  
JAM 10.00 PAGI**

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Saya mengucapkan tahniah dan syabas kepada pengerusi dan ahli-ahli jawatankuasa penganjur induk piala dunia kumpulan Invacare, pusingan kelayakan bagi rantau Asia Pasifik / Oceania dan kejohanan tenis kerusi roda Malaysia terbuka kerana menganjurkan acara yang penting ini di Malaysia.

2. The paralympic sports are growing very fast, not only in terms of the professional management of the games and events but also because of the increasing number of handicapped who participate. Often in the past, those with disabilities have simply been left out on their own for physical activity or, worse, excluded from it together. But it has been demonstrated that, provided enriched movement experience through quality instruction, persons with disabilities can learn and benefit from physical activity.

3. However, quality instruction for these individuals cannot occur by chance. It requires a systematic approach of assessment, programme planning, prescription, teaching and evaluation. This process requires great instructor flexibility in order to meet the unique needs of each individual. Even research has indicated that systematic programmes of physical exercise can benefit persons with disabilities, especially in the areas of physical growth and development, movement proficiency, overall health, thereby helping them to be able to successfully perform the functions required in daily life, such as job related vocational skills, sports and leisure activities.

4. Today we see our special friends participating in all levels of championships and festivals. Just like normal sportsmen, they too have to go through the regime of systematic training and maintain the various disciplines so as to excel in their respective events. They too have aspirations to represent their country and want to reach for the sky, just like the able bodied athletes. To achieve this, it requires years of practising and strict discipline. They need special training methods and equipment and I am positive that this involvement in sports will encourage them to continue engaging in physical activity and therefore lead an active lifestyle.

5. Physical activity is for everyone, and therefore our handicapped friends too need to be given the opportunity to experience the joy, satisfaction and benefits that physical activity can bring. Such activity must be integral to their daily lives. And because participation in physical activity is so much part of our society, with the Government's ongoing programmes Malaysia Cergas and Rakan Muda, our special friends will begin to function more confidently in the mainstream of the society. The aspirations of the Government through the Sport For All policy will be further enhanced with the participation of the handicapped in physical activity and sports. This will help to develop a healthy and fit society.

6. Malaysia has participated in the last three Paralympics, which are held immediately after each Olympic Games, and at the same venue. We are now preparing for the Sydney Paralympics in October 2000. There are 20 events in this Games and 17 are Olympic sports. Malaysia has also been participating in the regional Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disable (FESPIC) GAMES since 1982 and I am told that our special athletes have done well to bring honour to the country. I am also informed that Malaysia is making a bid to host the 9th FESPIC GAMES 2006 here in Malaysia, and I hope they receive the full support of all and succeed in their bid.

7. With the caring society concept, much has been done for the handicapped especially in the area of sports. I must commend the various Ministries and organisations for this laudable approach. I am sure there is still much to be done, and hopefully one day we will have the best facilities and programmes for our handicap society.

8. I must personally thank the private sector, which came out in full force to support this laudable sports international event. I hope they will continue to render support so that more such events can be organised at all levels throughout the country. Organising such events for the disabled is really very meaningful. It is not only to encourage disabled people to actively join in physical activities, but also to make the society aware and recognise that people like them have also special abilities in sports.

9. To the officials and participants from visiting countries, I welcome you and hope your brief stay will be memorable. Do find the time to see around our city and if time permits you must visit some of our beautiful destinations in the countryside. To the Malaysian wheel chair athletes, we are proud of you and please continue to excel and provide leadership and motivation to others who also need to exercise throughout their lives.

10. I am very proud of our special friends, and wish them all success and hope they will continue to bring glory for our beloved country. The Wheelchair Lawn Tennis Association and the Malaysian Paralympics Council have together with the support from the various Ministries and agencies have worked hard to put this act together. To them, I say thank you and hope they will continue to hold more of such events, particularly for the rural participants.

11. Saya mengambil kesempatan ini untuk mengisytiharkan piala dunia kumpulan Invacare, pusingan kelayakan bagi rantau Asia Pasifik / Oceania dibuka dengan rasminya.

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