

PSHA's speech at 100-day countdown ceremony to Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games

Following is a speech by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, at 100-day countdown ceremony to Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games today (May 28):

I will say a few words. First of all, may I welcome all of you here to be with us today.

In exactly 100 days, and that is the 6th of September, the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games will open. I am sure all of you, like me, are looking forward to this very exciting event.

In the coming Paralympic Games, there will be a total of 21 athletes from Hong Kong to compete in eight events, namely equestrian sports, athletics, boccia, wheelchair fencing, table tennis, shooting, rowing and weightlifting. I am sure our talented athletes will give their best at the Games.

Together with the celebration of the 100-day countdown, as you can see, they are also hosting an exhibition of about 100 drawings with the theme surrounding the Paralympic Games. These drawings are contributed by special school students and also disabled athletes. So, I would like to thank them all here. Through their works, they express their feelings about the Paralympic spirit and also seek to engage the public in welcoming the Paralympic Games. These remarkable drawings are most inspiring since they bring out vividly the perseverance of the disabled.

I will just say a few words on the Sichuan earthquake which struck sixteen days ago. This is most devastating and the young children lost their limbs overnight but they never lose hope. I heard when I was watching late news one evening the remarks made by a disabled child at the hospital bed and she said, "My friends lost their lives but I consider myself lucky because I was given a second life." So we can see the fighting spirit of the disabled is really amazing and this again reminds us of the fighting spirit of our own athletes participating in the Paralympic Games. So, I just call upon all of us to continue to put our donations to help and I am sure you offer the same strong support to the earthquake relief efforts as you have been giving to the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics. And I wish that with your generosity, the Sichuan victims would be able to overcome all difficulties and re-build their lives soon.

Hong Kong and the rest of the nation is ready for the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We will make every endeavour to ensure the smooth running of these Events in Hong Kong. On behalf of the SAR Government, may I once again thank all our partners or agencies: Hong Kong Jockey Club, the Paralympic Committee led by Jenny, and all of you who are involved in making all the necessary preparations to meet the expectations of our nations as well as the international community.

Thank you very much.

Ends/Wednesday, May 28, 2008