

## 100-day countdown to Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games

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The 100-day countdown ceremony to the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, jointly organised by the Home Affairs Bureau and the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled, was held at the Hong Kong Central Library today (May 28).

Speaking at the ceremony, the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, said, "Up to now, 21 athletes will represent Hong Kong in the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, competing in eight events -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," she said.

Mrs Yau said that to organise the Olympic Games was China's dream of a century come true and the nation was ready for the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"Hong Kong is honoured to be one of the Olympic co-host cities to stage the Equestrian Events. We will make every endeavour to ensure the smooth running of the events in Hong Kong," she said.

In addition to the countdown ceremony, there was an exhibition of about 100 drawings with the theme of the Paralympic Games, contributed by special school students and disabled athletes.

Mrs Yau said, "Through their works, they express their feelings about the Paralympic spirit and seek to engage public participation in welcoming the Paralympic Games. These remarkable drawings are most inspiring since they bring out vividly the perseverance of the disabled."

Mrs Yau also took the opportunity to call on Hong Kong people to continue to put their donations to help the Sichuan earthquake victims. "I am sure the citizens will offer the same strong support to the earthquake relief efforts as they have been giving to the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics."

Also speaking at the ceremony, Chairman of the Hong Kong Paralympic

Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled, Mrs Jenny Fung said that 16 students from eight local special schools had been selected, for their respective achievements in sports, arts, design and computer science, to become "Student Ambassadors for the Beijing Paralympics". They would be entrusted with the important task of promoting the Paralympic spirit and culture among fellow students, family and friends.

"In September, these chosen 16 will leave for Beijing, where they will experience firsthand, the first Paralympics on Chinese soil, as well as to cheer and support the athletes of the HKSAR delegation," Mrs Fung said.

Also officiating at the countdown ceremony were Deputy Mayor of Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Village Miss Elsie Leung, Chairman of Hong Kong Jockey Club Mr John Chan, and Chief Executive Officer of Equestrian Events (Hong Kong) of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Company Limited Mr Lam Woon-kwong.

Ends/Wednesday, May 28, 2008