

**SPEECH BY DR. RADHA KRISHNAN, IBSA ASIA CONTINENTAL CHAIRMAN
PRESENTED DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF HONG KONG OPEN
FOOTBALL (B1) CHAMPIONSHIPS HELD FROM 14TH – 18TH DECEMBER 2014.**

First of all let me thank the Organizing Committee of this Championships especially the chairperson Grace Chan whom I know her for many years for inviting me as IBSA Asia Chairman to say a few words in this historical event that is the 1st Hong Kong Open Football (B1) Championships which will be held from 14th to 18th Dec.2014.

On behalf of IBSA Asia, I wish to Congratulate Grace Chan and her Organizing Committee Members for initiating in organizing this Championship. This is very timely especially when IPC having negotiation with IBSA not to include 5-A-Side Football for the Blind in 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo. The reason given by IPC not to include this sport according to IPC there was no statistic to show that there are more than 24 Countries from at least 3 Continents are playing this 5 A-Side Football for the Blind.

IBSA was worried that IPC taking action not to include Blind Football in the Paralympic Games programme. This matter is very serious and it was discussed during the IBSA Board of Executive Meeting held in Tokyo on 22nd Nov. 2014. The IBSA Football Chairman (Ulrich) from Germany and David Sirton, IBSA Football Coordinator from Spain were called to give a briefing on current situation on this matter. With the hard work done by these two persons by collecting statistics and data from all over the world within a short time and submitted to IPC for their consideration. During the IBSA Meeting in Tokyo, IBSA President Jannie announced that IPC is now convinced after submitting all the statistics and data's fulfilling their requirements. Now IPC has agreed to include Blind Football in the Paralympic Games in 2020.

At this point of time I wish to thank the IBSA Football Chairman Ulrich, David Stirton, Eigo San from Japan and Sunny from Malaysia who have helped very much by providing information's to IBSA Football Committee on the development of Blind Football in our region.

So, in other words what I am saying is if more Championships or Football games is organized there will be more Blind participating in this sport which IPC can help in the development of football through IBSA. It is timely the Hong Kong Open Football (B1) Championship organized where the 5 Countries participating will be added to the data of IBSA Football committee. I hope the organizing committee will take note to send the results to IBSA Football Chairman. I hope Eigo San from Japan who is a member of the IBSA Football Committee can help in this matter.

I take this opportunity to thank all the participating Countries namely Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Thailand and India for their support and participating in this Championships. I also hope there will be more Countries will be taking part in future such competitions. I wish more countries will come forward and follow the example of Hong Kong by taking turn to organize this Football for the Blind on a regular basis for the Blind to enjoy playing football like the abled bodied persons.

I wish to thank the Hong Kong Blind Sports Federation, the Government, NPC Hong Kong All the referees, technical officers, volunteers, all the football players and the media for their support to make this championship a success.

Ladies and Gentlemen for your information IBSA Asia Continent with the support of NPC China and IBSA will conduct a workshop next year on the development of Blind and Visually Impaired sports including Football in Asia. We are waiting for the suitable date to have this workshop. It will be held in Hangzhou hosted by NPC China which will be co-ordinated by the IBSA Secretary-General.

Finally one again I thank Grace Chan and her Organizing Committee for inviting me to say a few words at this opening ceremony which I am very honored.

To the participating Countries and their players I wish you all the best in the competition. Have a fair play and enjoy playing football. Hope to see all again at the next championships.

Thank you.