

**Extempore remarks by Tariq Mustafa, President NPC, Pakistan at the “100 days to go” function organized by the UK High Commission at Islamabad on April 19<sup>th</sup> ‘2012**

It is always a pleasure to visit the UKHC especially today when they are celebrating the 100 days to go to the Olympic/Paralympic Games London 2012.

This is a great year for the Athletes when they are all training hard and dreaming of participating in the Games to show their prowess, be they regular or special athletes who have every bit the same aspirations and ambitions of doing well and winning laurels.

At the last Games held in Beijing in ‘2008, the Chinese with their vast population and large financial resources had organized marvellous Olympic/Paralympic Games of equal splendour and set the bar very high. I remember hearing remarks that it will be very difficult now for the successors i.e. the British to match the Chinese effort. My views were not to underestimate the British. They may not have the human and financial resources of the Chinese but they have centuries of experience to draw upon and who can forget London’s pageantry. Remember the Bull Dog mentality and the spectacle of the Cold Stream Guards of Int’l fame. Knowing the British and the London Games Committee Chairman Sebastian Coe we should be prepared to see many rabbits being pulled out of their bowler hat.

Two of which have already been produced. First is that most countries have a run up to the games in the form of 365 days, then 180 days and 100 days to the games, but they are generally celebrated within the host country. To the best of my knowledge, by doing it at an International scale the UK has scored a welcome first which reflects the spirit of an increasingly globalizing World. The second is their initiative dubbed “International inspiration Programme” in which some two dozen developing countries were invited to join the effort led by UKSport, British Council and UNESCO to stimulate community activities in the field of outdoor Sport and physical activity to help in improving the overall health and wellbeing of the population. Pakistan as one of the participants is benefitting from this wonderful programme.

Now a few words about the National Paralympic Committee of Pakistan which since its formation in 1998 as an NGO, with the irregular support of the Government has succeeded in regularly fielding a Pakistani team of special Athletes in ALL the Paralympic and Asian Games held since then and has brought in over 50 medals including 15 Gold medals for the country. The high point of their performance was the world record breaking long jump by its Cerebral Palsy afflicted athlete “Haider Ali” who managed to win Pakistan’s first ever Silver Medal in Athletics at the world level. We have great hopes from Haider Ali in the forthcoming Paralympic Games in London and will be praying for his success.

In the end I commend the UK effort to make the Games a memorable event and NPC Pakistan and all its athletes look forward to giving their very best in making the Games a success.

Please join me in giving Three Cheers to the forthcoming London 2012 Games.

Hip Hip Hurray, Hip Hip Hurray, Hip Hip Hurray.