

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MR EDWIN TONG, MINISTER FOR CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH & SECOND MINISTER FOR LAW, AT 6<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING ON SPORTS (AMMS-6) ON 28 OCTOBER 2021 (THURSDAY), 9.00AM**

1. Thank you, Your Excellency Ramirez, Philippines AMMS Leader for the opening remarks.
  
2. Excellencies, Senior Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen. A very pleasant morning to all gathered at this virtual 6th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports, or AMMS-6, today.
  
3. This session marks the sixth edition of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports and also the first virtual convening of the AMMS.
  - (a) In spite of the physical restrictions and challenges posed by COVID-19,
  
  - (b) I am heartened to see all of you virtually, and in good health, on this alternative medium of engagement.
  
4. Despite the obstacles and challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic,

- (a) ASEAN has remained committed to realising the sporting goals and aspirations of the region,
  - (b) as we work tirelessly to inspire resilience and strength in our people through sports.
  - (c) By banding together, as ONE ASEAN, we can do so much more and go so much further.
  
- 5. As we move towards the next stage of ASEAN's sporting journey,
  - (a) I am confident that the **ASEAN Work Plan on Sports 2021-2025**, which AMMS-6 will be adopting,
  - (b) will steer AMMS forward as we forge a new path for sports in the region.
  
- 6. It is one thing to move forward. It is another to move forward deliberately and with a plan in mind.
  
- 7. I am delighted to share that, with participation from all ASEAN Member States,
  - (a) we conducted the first ever **ASEAN Regional Benchmark Report on Sports Participation** as part of the **Active**

**Citizens Worldwide (ACW) Research Study on the Socio-economic Value of Sports.**

- (b) I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all Member States for their support for this ACW Research Study report.
  - (c) This Regional Benchmark report will provide ASEAN Member States with recommendations and insights in designing better sport policies for our citizens and increasing sports participation in ASEAN.
8. I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our ASEAN para-athletes and athletes at the Tokyo 2020 Games.
- (a) I was privileged to be at the Olympics and Paralympics at Tokyo in person and was able to witness the spectacular displays and matches by our ASEAN para-athletes and athletes.
  - (b) ASEAN as a region achieved significant milestones at this edition of the Olympics and Paralympics, as we brought home 48 medals in total.
  - (c) We are proud of our collective achievements and optimistic of the many successes to come for our ASEAN sporting talents.

9. To further support our ASEAN athletes in their sporting journeys,
  - (a) AMMS-6 will adopt the Joint Statement of ASEAN Sports Ministers on Cementing Strong Foundation for ASEAN Athletes at the Southeast Asian Games,
  - (b) as we seek to work with our National Olympic Committees to incorporate more Olympic and Asian Games' sports into the Southeast Asia Games roster as mainstays.
  - (c) I thank all ASEAN Member States for their strong support for the Statement and am confident that this would be the first of many steps in providing our athletes that additional edge to do well at major sporting events.
  
10. That said, these achievements and victories are worth celebrating only when played fairly.
  - (a) As a region, we continually look to further strengthen our capabilities in the fight against sport doping.
  - (b) We will be formalising our commitment to clean sport with an ASEAN Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Anti-Doping Agency, or WADA.
  - (c) This would mark another milestone in our commitment to raise the level of sports integrity in ASEAN.

11. While we may not be physically together, we, as ONE ASEAN, are united in our shared cause to promote sport in the region and further our people-to-people ties bilaterally and regionally.

(a) Sport plays a critical role in fostering stronger people-to-people relations and engagement within ASEAN and has this ability to unite and rally us – just as it has done so today.

(b) Let us continue to work together as One ASEAN to realise our region's sporting aspirations.

12. Once again, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my fellow Excellencies, Senior Officials and the ASEAN Secretariat for their presence at this virtual Meeting.

13. I wish all a fruitful meeting ahead.

14. Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*