



at the heart of horse sport

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FEI WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES – OPENING SPEECH **Sunday, 20th August 2006**

Given by HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, FEI President

Your Royal Highnesses, Ladies and Gentlemen, World Equestrian Games competitors, equestrian supporters from around the world, dear guests of honour and citizens of Aachen.

As President of the Federation Equestre Internationale, the governing body of horsesport, welcome to this magnificent global festival of competition.

For the next two weeks, the eyes of the world will be on this unique occasion, in this unique setting and I know that we will all be inspired by the quality of the competition which we will experience.

Since the birth of Aachen-Laurensberger Rennverein in 1898, the creation of facilities of excellence has always been a hallmark of the organisation in Aachen. Even before the running of this World Equestrian Games, Aachen, has entered the language of the horse community as a word which is understood to mean world class competition in an elite venue. This magnificent venue has hosted five World Championships and two European Championships and yet, it can still amaze us with its creativity. This stunning new layout, has provided us with the first World Equestrian Games where all seven of the FEI disciplines will be within walking distance.

Aachen, and Germany are special to the horse world... and in so many ways Germany is the benchmark for the organisation of horsesport, in both horse breeding and athletic excellence. We are all grateful, that she now opens her arms to welcome you all here, for two weeks of equestrian excitement.

If you are part of the world of horses, then you are a part of a global family which spans all boundaries and all generations. Like a family your achievements will always be remembered and celebrated. Whatever the outcome of your endeavours during the competition, they will always be rewarded with the memory of your time here. And we will be richer as humans for having the privilege of watching you.

Our memory will undoubtedly be punctuated, by the recollection of the welcome which we received from the people of Aachen. I have no doubt

President
HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein



that our welcome will be at least, as warm, as the one they will give to their local rider, Nadine Capelman.

As the athletes of this generation, you have been chosen to represent your nation in this theatre of dreams. You have strived to achieve the pinnacle of your sport and your path will have been inspired by the heroes and heroines of your discipline. Now is your time to strive for greatness and in doing so to become a hero to future generations of athletes. The experiences that you gain here will last for a lifetime and as ambassadors of your disciplines, I ask you to share your experiences with those who would follow you on your path.

The World Equestrian Games is like no other Championships in the horse world, here we bring together all of our disciplines. All the disciplines are different, but we are united across disciplines and nations by our respect for the human athlete but ultimately it is the horse that brings us together. The horse, who has no understanding of borders, political differences, class or languages, cements us in the simple common bond of friendship and unity. I ask you to broaden that bond by opening your hearts and minds to the stars of as many disciplines and nations as possible.

Horsesport is founded on a bedrock of goodwill and the FEI World Equestrian Games 2006 is the culmination of the vision of the people of Aachen, the organisers, sponsors and officials who have had the foresight to bring this event together, I wish to thank you on behalf of the horse world for your supreme effort. I am certain that your vision will surpass even your own expectations over the next two weeks.

At its heart this FEI World Equestrian Games is about competition and so to each nation and each athlete I send my best wishes on behalf of the global community and my fervent hope that you may reach the heights of your own ambitions in the spirit of goodwill and fairplay.

I declare the 5th FEI World Equestrian Games, Aachen 2006, Open.