

Remarks for Awards Ceremony of the Special Olympic Unified Volleyball Tournament

August 29, 2014

I'd like to thank Special Olympics Poland for organizing this event. Congratulations to all the athletes who have worked so hard to be here today. It is my pleasure to see the achievements of Special Olympics volleyball teams firsthand.

And I'd like to especially welcome my fellow Americans, the members of the Special Olympics USA National Team. I'm so pleased to have you here in Poland for this fantastic event!

The U.S. Embassy is very proud to support the Special Olympics here in Poland. This organization has had an impact on so many lives, and it embodies the spirit of opportunity and personal empowerment that sports bring to us all.

When Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics over 50 years ago, she wanted to recognize athletes who were underrepresented in the sports world, but who were unmatched in their dedication. But what she started has become more than that. It has become a worldwide movement about changing attitudes and recognizing that strength, determination, and incredible accomplishment can come from every single member of our society.

President Obama said it best: ***"The Special Olympics is about overcoming obstacles with love, and kindness, and generosity, and healthy competition. It's about pride, and it's about teamwork, and it's about friendship. And it's about treating everybody with dignity, and giving everybody a chance."***

This is true for everyone, in every country and every society in the world. Few organizations exemplify these essential values more than the Special Olympics, so I want to thank all of you for being part of it here today.

Next year, in Los Angeles, the United States will welcome more than 7,000 competitors from 170 countries to the Special Olympics World Games. President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama will be Honorary Chairs at that event, and I hope all of you will be there, taking your athletic skills to the next level.

I am extraordinarily impressed with you all, and again, please accept my congratulations for your amazing achievement.

Thank you.