

SPEECH BY YB DATO' SRI LIOW TIONG LAI
MINISTER OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

AT WORLD PARKINSON'S DAY AND
MALAYSIAN PARKINSON'S DAY 2010 CHARITY DINNER

DEWAN PERDANA FELDA, KUALA LUMPUR
11 APRIL 2010 @ 8.30 PM

Professor Tipu Aziz,
Expert on Parkinson's Brain Surgery and
Consultant Neurosurgeon, Oxford, United Kingdom.

Dr Chew Nee Kong,
Consultant Neurologist, Pantai Cheras Medical Centre.

Ms Gharizah Hashim,
President of the Negeri Sembilan Parkinson's Society.

Y.Bhg Datuk Lela Mohd Ali,
CEO of Yayasan Penyayang.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman.

Good evening to all of you and Salam 1 Malaysia.

1. Welcome to the celebration of World Parkinson's Day and Malaysian Parkinson's Day 2010. It is a pleasure to be here again with all of you, since the last World Parkinson's Day celebration in April 2009.
2. Parkinson's is a brain disorder that mainly affects elderly people. It leads to slowness of movement, uncontrollable trembling of the hands, and body stiffness. As there is presently no treatment that can either cure or slow down the progression of Parkinson's, many Parkinson's patients have to endure physical and mental disabilities for their entire lives.
3. Fortunately, over the past decade, there have been many important developments that lead to improved health care for the Parkinson's community. A variety of medications can now provide good relief from the symptoms, and the disease can be fairly well managed through medications and lifestyle modifications, especially in the early stages.
4. The Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery, which is effective in relieving the symptoms of Parkinson's during the advanced stage of the

illness, was started in Malaysia in 2003. Till today, only a total of 25 Parkinson's patients have undergone DBS surgery in local hospitals. This is mainly because DBS surgery is a very expensive treatment that many patients cannot afford. In a government hospital, the costs are RM 80 000 for the first surgery and RM 60 000 for the battery replacement every 3-5 years onwards.

5. In this respect, I am pleased to note that the Lloyd Tan Parkinson's Trust Fund has successfully sponsored DBS surgery for a Parkinson's patient. I am also told that a Parkinson's Round Table Dialogue was held a few days ago, on 8th April, involving Parkinson's experts and officials from the Ministry of Health. Among the things discussed was the funding for DBS surgery. I hope that you will be able to come out with novel and sustainable ways to enable more Parkinson's patients to undergo DBS surgery.

6. I am also happy that over the past one week, Prof Aziz has been assisting the DBS team at University Malaya Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur, to set up a regular DBS surgery centre in Malaysia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. In many parts of the world, Parkinson's has started to gain recognition as an important brain disorder. The Working Group on Parkinson's, formed by the World Health Organization in Geneva, has called on world government leaders to join them in taking strong and decisive actions to improve the management of Parkinson's. This is echoed in the Global Declaration on Parkinson's, which states that people with Parkinson's have the right for better health care. Since the first signing of the Global Declaration on Parkinson's in Mumbai, India, in 2003, the Global Declaration has been signed in about 14 other countries.

8. In Malaysia, patients with Parkinson's Disease have access to the appropriate care and treatment at both government and private hospitals. At the hospitals, patients are taken care of by specialists in various disciplines, including physicians, neurologists, psychiatrists, as well as rehabilitation medicine specialists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and dieticians.

9. We are fully aware of the sufferings of the Parkinson's community. In this regard, awareness programs which highlight the plights of Parkinson's patients would be an important first step towards improving the care and support to them. As such, I sincerely hope that with the signing of the

Global Declaration on Parkinson's today, and the celebration of World Parkinson's Day 2010, would signify the beginning of a better tomorrow for the Malaysian Parkinson's community.

10. On that note, ladies and gentlemen, I have pleasure in officiating this celebration of World Parkinson's Day and Malaysian Parkinson's Day 2010. Thank you.