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ORIGINAL TEXT IN FRENCH

What is our fundamental role?

It is to place sport at the service of mankind, or more specifically, at the service of its harmonious development.

Being guided by such a noble mission is an extraordinary opportunity. This opportunity belongs to us. And it is our responsibility, which we have to honour every day. A real responsibility is never sporadic.

This opportunity and responsibility are part of an approach that we have chosen freely, which goes well beyond essential rules, necessary laws and inevitable commercial circumstances. Is it going too far to say that this approach is somewhat philosophical? Is it going too far to say that it is close to spiritual?

For me, it is an ideal. The athletes, the International Federations (IFs), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the organisers of the Olympic Games must, of course, respect this ideal. But they must also find the means to serve the Olympic cause. "Serving" is a good word. It is the exact opposite of "taking". We all know that Olympism transcends sport; goes beyond the playing field; and is a source of inspiration for the young people of the world; and that it is, above all, a principle of balance between the body and the mind.

Olympism has created an enormous event: the Olympic Games. These Games allow the Olympic Ideals to live, endure and be disseminated. Seeking to improve them, therefore, deserves all our attention, thoughts and strength of will! And our commitment.

I know one thing and I know that you do too: the importance of the Olympic Games is constantly increasing. For sport, this is obvious; for society, it is becoming obvious.

When I see the ambitions of Vancouver, London or Sochi coming to fruition in areas as vast and diverse as the environment, urban development, sporting practice, reintegration and social issues, I cannot help but think about the extraordinary power of Olympism. This power can be defined in one sentence: Olympism is a child of its time.

When I see to what extent the Host Cities are visionary and intelligent in their use of the Olympic Games to shape a better future, I say to myself that the Olympic Games are fully used for what they are: the world's biggest sporting and social event. Big, in the noble sense of the word and which represents another way of defining our Ideal.

To wonder about the relationship of Olympism and the Olympic Games with society is already to affirm a conviction – that of the strength of our Movement among people, in their present and future.

This is because the Games are not just part of a story and context. They accelerate the story and they modify the context, even marking some major stages of our societies. We have revealed countries, remodelled cities and made peoples' dreams. We have changed lives.

Here are some highlights and some images:

- Ancient Greece – peace and sharing through sport. An original vision that transcends sport and remains incredibly contemporary.
- 1892 – Coubertin already had a vision of society built with the aid of sport.
- Berlin 1936 – Jesse Owens defied extremism to become the first athlete to enter the history books through his sporting feats.
- Mexico City 1968 – Bob Beamon and his incredible 8.90m, as well as the Black Power demonstrations; the Games reflected society and its evolution.
- Munich 1972 – architectural avant-garde; Spitz and his seven medals; the tragedy.
- Montreal 1976 and Moscow 1980 – great champions: Comaneci, Coe, etc., who became stars. Boycotts that threatened the continuation of the Games and their sustainable financing.
- Los Angeles 1984 – still boycotted, but remembered for the feats of Carl Lewis. Introduction of a new economic model; financing was mainly private.
- Barcelona 1992 – a model of urban transformation; the Games became an accelerator of development.
- Albertville 1992 – creativity; the image of a nation.
- Lillehammer 1994 – village Games; compact, enthusiastic, expert crowd.
- Beijing 2008 – phenomenal performances by Phelps and Bolt. Bridges were built and links forged; cultures came together and doors opened.

As we are the heirs to this universal story, our mission is one of absolute clarity and imperatives: allowing Olympism to perpetuate itself and allowing it to grow even more.

I was very interested to read all the contributions on this theme; there are numerous, creative, realistic and feasible proposals.

A few hours devoted to the Olympic Games will close some 12 months of consultations and studies. It is up to us to make the most out of what might appear to be the least. I have no doubt that, as we leave this Congress, we shall have new ambitions. And that we want to bring them to fruition in the months and years to come: it is a delicate and perilous exercise.

It is, therefore, with great humility that I am delivering these thoughts on the Olympic Games. I hope that these facts, ideas and proposals will feed the discussions that we have.



MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Having seen the Games from practically every angle, I have no doubt that their organisational complexity is increasing. I think there are several areas worth following and pursuing. Even though many improvements have been made over the last few years with respect to the management of the Olympic Games, we must continue to evolve.

We have a programme to assist the organisers, which works very well. We must continue to invest in collecting and transferring know-how and sharing it more widely within the Olympic Movement.

Strategic partnerships with some suppliers of goods and services also help us in this area. Without going as far as imposing service-providers on the Organising Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) could identify the market capacities in the key areas of the organisation.

With the creation of the Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS), an enormous step was taken, as the IOC has total control over the quality of images. This is an extraordinary guarantee. It is also the means to improve the system by keeping the same teams from one edition of the Games to the next. We could spread this type of organisation to other areas.

I think that you will have gathered that I am totally in favour of an IOC that controls its subject better and better. We can step this up still further.

THE GAMES, A TOP EVENT

The management of the Olympic Games has progressed in a phenomenal way. However, as the Games must be financed by private funds and followed by as many people as possible, please allow me to use, in this context, the term “product” to describe the Olympic Games; a product which must constantly be rethought and promoted.

Every two years, alternately in summer and in winter, a very large part of the world lives and breathes the Games. The Olympic Games are a passage between before and after; they are a reference to which everyone can attach memories and emotions, whatever the political, economic or cultural context. The Games bring out heroes, joys and dramas, which break into our collective memory and the universal memory.

What can we change in order to continue to make history, to inspire and therefore provide some breathing space? The recipe is so delicate that this is an acrobatic exercise.

In order to find ideas, it is fundamental to look at the heart of the event. And the heart of the Games is the sports Programme.

The Programme looks impressive at it stands – our 33 sports and some 390 events, from summer and winter, are incredibly varied, and this is doubtless one of the reasons for our current success. But we are also aware that changes, or rather adaptations, are necessary.

The extraordinary interest aroused by new things is a strong sign that we must dare – dare to change!

We must follow the major trends in sporting practice and satisfy the tastes of the consumers, i.e. be fashionable while remaining true to ourselves.

I went to see the BMX event in Beijing. I never miss the snowboard half pipe. And I am already looking forward to the snow cross in Vancouver. These new events are fantastic, as they bring us different cultures and new audiences. This is a breath of fresh air, which also helps the other disciplines to remain young!

You will have gathered that I am an advocate of a degree of stability, as we stand out partly through tradition. But I am also in favour of greater flexibility in modifying the Olympic Programme.

I believe that I understand the dynamics of the IFs and the NOCs. Stability provides the advantage of a long-term vision, establishing models and planning resources and sometimes medals. But what is good on one side is not necessarily in the interest of our common product. Routine is the enemy.

In the framework of successive revisions of the Programme, I think that the IOC must give itself the means to measure the impact of the inclusion or exclusion of a sport, discipline or event. To do this, in addition to the high-quality technical work carried out today, we should not hesitate to have recourse to surveys, both among the public and with business partners.

There is the content of the Olympic Programme. And there is also its “staging”. The presentation of BMX will be different from that of judo, the television production of ski cross very different from that of speed skating. Through their competition format, some sports have literally reinvented themselves.

These thoughts need to be taken further, systematically and with all the partners concerned: IFs of course, but also OCOGs and rights-holders. The balancing act – which consists of evolution while remaining respectful of history and traditions – is sometimes difficult to achieve.

Why not think about an even greater ambition? That during the prodigious Olympic Games fortnight, the Cultural Olympiad could create the time and space for international creations bringing together the greatest authors, troupes and artists, enabling us to reach a global market.

It is also the dimension given to these activities that influences how each edition of the Games is viewed; their long-term image ensures their place in history.

SERVICE LEVELS AND PARTNERSHIPS

There are “consumables”, if you will pardon the expression. And there are service levels, which everyone has the right to expect.

They are constantly changing. This evolution reflects the necessity of aligning the services with the investments made and the need to remain ahead of what is done elsewhere.

At the Games, expectations are based on the notion of excellence, which cannot be ignored and which is directly linked to the fundamental values of Olympism.

The sophistication and growing expertise of the various partners lead them to make increasing demands, especially on the organisers. The inherent complexity and pressure of organising the Olympic Games, sometimes puts the Organising Committee in a delicate position in the face of considerable strategic and financial pressure.



To avoid generating difficulties for the system through constantly increasing demands, we must adopt this attitude of partnership, which allows us to find innovative solutions.

It is fundamental that the OCOG inspires confidence among the partners of Olympism. This starts by compliance with the candidature undertakings. When local agendas, particularly political ones, dominate discussions, the relationship is harder to build.

In this regard, you will be aware that there is no simple recipe. There must be chemistry among structures like the IOC, IFs, NOCs and OCOGs, which are real start-ups that grow in power and then disappear as soon as the Games are over. Attitude and state of mind are essential bases, but sometimes choices also have to be made.

We had an Olympic Games Study Commission, which did remarkable work, a few years ago. I think that we should start it up again in a lasting form. We should study new trends, the evolution of our fundamentals and what we all call the “nice to haves” on an ongoing basis. We need permanent monitoring of the Olympic Games.

COMMUNICATION AND IMAGE

I also wish to address the question of perception and image. As I said before, while the content is fundamental, the container is becoming, or has become, equally important. Systematically dissociating substance from form does not seem a modern approach to me. In any case, the IOC and the key players of the Olympic Movement present an image, and thus the expression of a lifestyle based on the respect of certain values and traditions.

At the same time, we need to question the relevance of this image in an environment, which is constantly being redefined. In the context of the Olympic Games, all that serves to forge the image and perception of our organisation needs to be reviewed on the basis of that which we wish to embody.

We must also look to communicate broadly if we wish to continue to form part of the collective imagination. Between the IOC and its partners, the means of action are considerable. But we need to act in a coordinated way to strengthen the impact of our activities.

To do this, I think that the IOC must provide the Olympic Movement with a vision, precise and clear guidelines, and, why not, simple communication tools. Together, we have an extraordinary power of communication.

The second measure we can reinforce is our collaboration with our sponsors and rights-holders.

They too have huge communication power. It is partly through their campaigns that the image of the Olympic Games is created. By being clear about what we want them to promote, we could count on even more active support from them.

Lastly, working with prestigious ambassadors would enable us to communicate with more impact about the excellent work done by the Olympic Movement. I am sure that great athletes, company leaders and, why not, actors, would be prepared to spread our message for us.

All this would help us to increase our presence, especially between editions of the Summer and Winter Games. The odd years would be less so!

UNIVERSALITY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Olympism belongs to those who love it, which is to say to billions of people. Our movement is fundamentally open. This is how we remain contemporary; this is how we differentiate ourselves.

I believe that the concept of universality is based on some key dimensions.

Participation by athletes from all the NOCs in the Olympic Games is one of them. It is fundamental that, every two years, the Opening Ceremony sees the whole world parading under the banner of the Olympic rings. It is reassuring to see the Olympic Village bring together the cultures and diversity of the five continents in an amazing atmosphere, which is a mixture of celebration, encounters, excellence and performance. People say that the world is a village. The Olympic Village is a world unto itself.

The role of Olympic Solidarity within our Movement is to ensure universality of participation.

The Olympic Programme also helps to ensure universality, through the interests and tastes of the participants. Whatever their culture, socio-economic background or personal interests, the Olympic Programme has the answer. The range is incredible. It is universality of tastes!

This dimension must be preserved at all costs; it must continue to dictate our choices in the future.

And there is the organisation of the Games, which requires an international as much as a local effort. To succeed in the ultimate challenge, winning a gold medal in such a complex event requires expertise and the most efficient companies, often from outside one's own borders.

All local protectionism must be avoided and the most effective solutions found, wherever they come from. The Olympic Games require an intense and global effort.

At the local level, an economic system is mobilised. But above all, there is a population, the volunteers, without whom nothing is possible. The volunteers are the mirror of the country, the expression of a disinterested generosity, the smiles and interfaces who work cheerfully for the success of the Games.

International-local, expertise-volunteerism: diversity is also universality.

Universality is above all a question of attitude: “Welcome, whoever you are, from wherever you come; welcome.”

VALUES

Looking at the values of Olympism through the Olympic Games means leaving the concrete sphere of the event and moving the discussion to another level, involving emotion.

But how do we give this concrete form? How do these values become tangible? And what can we do to promote them?

A large part of what we want to convey involves the athletes. They inspire by their attitude, their conduct on and off the field of play. Each athlete, I am certain, approaches the Olympic gathering with a great



deal of respect and humility. We witness genuine acts of fair play and sporting greatness. These are moments which illustrate the thing that we love.

The athletes are our most valuable asset. They must be in Olympism, and remain there. The Youth Olympic Games, the Athlete Career Programme and Olympic Solidarity enable us to forge links and build a future – theirs and ours.

But the values also require what I would call the “non-sporting agenda”.

Yesterday, Jacques Rogge announced the name of the city, which will have the duty and honour of continuing to write our history. We were witnesses to that great moment.

Beyond the 17 days of perfectly organised competitions, we measured through this vote the scope of the transformations that seven years will bring about.

As a privileged observer of the preparations for the 2014 Games in Sochi, each day I can see the ambition placed in this project. A whole region is reinventing itself, building itself a different future.

With a visionary government fully committed at all levels as its partner, Sochi will be a new destination tomorrow. It will quickly attract the top Russian skiers, and we will practise winter sports in the Caucasus, enjoying the infinite beauty of its landscapes and the richness of its welcome.

In Turin, truly magnificent Games, as President Rogge declared, and Italian culture with its warmth and creativity drove the organisational plans from the outset, especially in the area of architecture.

Urban and social transformations happen thanks to Olympism. In the words of Jean Nouvel, “The stadium will be a place of social activity, an urban and urbane meeting place. A veritable part of the city, where people also practise sport.”

Where education is concerned, I do not think there has ever been a programme as ambitious as at the recent Games in Beijing. As soon as Beijing won the Games, the Chinese government put in place an incredible project aimed at all school-age children. Seven years later, almost 400 million children had been exposed to the greatness and depth of Olympism. Four hundred million children who probably all dream of becoming Olympians themselves. That is a lot of children!

And new words have appeared to describe new values: environment, sustainable development, social responsibility. We should be happy to include them, but must also ensure that the project does not become unmanageable.

London, for example, is a project requiring the activation and coordination of hundreds of public and private organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and of course the government at practically all decision-making levels. I naturally think of the generous, ambitious, international initiative, which seeks to transform the lives of 12 million children in 20 countries through physical education. More than a project, it is a vision which goes beyond sport and even nobility.

All that is wonderful, but, to use an expression dear to our President, in all his wisdom, “that represents complexity”.

In this context, I am certain that the OCOG must be at the centre of things. Its primary mission is to deliver Olympic Games in accordance with the contract signed with the IOC. But it must also control and coordinate the agenda of all ambitions.

This is one of the reasons why, based on the experience of Turin, we recommend that all the local bodies involved be part of the OCOG governance structure and the IOC Coordination Commission process.

I think that we are very well armed from a technical point of view. We can guarantee that the highly complex Games operation will work almost perfectly, whatever the context.

On the other hand, when we look at the new areas mentioned above, be it the environment or sustainable development, we are no longer at ease, and move outside our comfort zone. In these areas, we are reacting whereas we should be proactive and set an example. The monitoring function I mentioned earlier could be very useful in this context, too.

We are faced with an exciting and challenging dilemma. If we limit the ambitions of the organisers, we deprive the Games of their creative and transforming power; if we accept all their ambitions, we potentially endanger the Games. The IOC is by necessity between the two. It must remain firm about what is indispensable, but flexible with regard to local ambition, and offer the support needed to achieve it. The legacy will depend on this.

Legacy in the broad sense of the Olympic Games is probably one of the prime reasons for cities to bid. For the IOC, it is also the first theme in the candidature file. In this area, major progress has been made over the course of recent Games.

Legacy today is considered right from the outset, and is fully integrated into the daily work of the organisers. That we have reached this point is in no small part due to the work and demands of the IOC. So let us go further, let us be truly present in the post-Games phase. That would be a sign of generosity in our relations with the organisers.

It is always good to do the decent thing.

Another role for this new monitoring function which, as you will have understood, is dear to my heart.

I have just spoken about the values of Olympism and the value of the Games. Now I want to say why we are bound to, and must always achieve, excellence.

I shall take the case of an athlete. An Olympic champion tennis player whose path to excellence I have tried to understand.

He is 27, and began playing at the age of five. Over the years, he has played on 6,300 days, with a daily average of 4.075 hours. In all, that represents 25,675 hours, and in detail:

- 58 % of forehands, or 8,577,504 shots;
- 28 % of backhands, or 4,140,864 shots;
- 14 % of serves, or 2,070,432 shots;
- In total, he has hit 14,788,800 shots.

While it is generally accepted that 10,000 hours of practice are needed to approach excellence, our tennis player has reached almost 26,000 hours.



For him, and for all the others, we who represent the Olympic Movement must not fail. This requires a total and constant commitment: an ideal is always a demand. By segments of 10,000 hours, let us build together so that Federers continue to exist.

Olympism is action and values. Our acts will be of value if the values of Olympism guide our daily action.

Value through values is the way of life for the Olympic Movement, and the real condition for its survival.

Mr President, you have given me the immense opportunity to address the Congress. It has been a privilege, and I thank you for it.