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INTRODUCTION

I would first like to thank the International Olympic Committee (IOC) President, Jacques Rogge, and the IOC Congress Organising Committee for inviting me to give the plenary address on behalf of the IOC at this historic conference on the topic of “Olympism and Youth”, a topic of great importance to the future of the Olympic Movement. An IOC Congress is a rare event, being held every 15 or 20 years, and is an important opportunity for the Olympic Movement to assess its strengths and weaknesses and forge ahead with purpose and unity.

I have been an IOC member and President of the Indonesian Olympic Committee for only the past two years, but have a great commitment to furthering the Olympic Movement and the principles of Olympism throughout the world. As one of the few women members of the IOC, it is important to recognise the important role that women play both in the administration of sport and as participants. It should also be acknowledged that, on occasions, there have been limitations placed on the participation of women in sport.

We must all recognise and unite behind the ideal expressed in the Olympic Charter that:

“The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.”

The title of this Congress is “The Olympic Movement in Society” and the topic to which this session is directed is “Olympism and Youth”, which contains three main themes:

- Moving towards an active society
- Is competitive sport still appealing?
- Youth sport events

I will briefly address each of these three main themes and present some ideas and points which can be further discussed in the breakout sessions that will follow.

THEME 1: MOVING TOWARDS AN ACTIVE SOCIETY

The reality of our ever-advancing technological society is that all of us, including our children, are becoming less active, increasingly spending education and leisure time sitting in classrooms or in front of the television or computer. This fact is causing great problems for our health systems and for the enjoyment and happiness of our people. Human activity, sport and exercise are natural requirements for a full and healthy life, for both physical and mental health.

There are many causes for this problem, including:

1. Lack of sporting facilities;
2. Poor resourcing of sports within the school system;
3. Difficulties in communication and access to individuals living in remote areas;
4. An ever-increasing demand on children’s time for study purposes;
5. Parents and the community in general being poor role models; and
6. General misunderstanding of the important role of sport and exercise on the body’s health and well-being.

All governments throughout the world spend increasing amounts of money each year on health care. However, comparatively few resources are directed towards preventative health measures, such as providing quality sporting infrastructure and qualified coaches. Such measures can enable young people to develop healthy lifestyle habits, which will serve to sustain and enhance their physical and mental health throughout their lives, for a fraction of the cost of the traditional medical approach.

The key message to our young people must be that of achieving a well-balanced life – well-balanced between education, work, sport, leisure, family and culture. Achieving such a balance is the principal message of the philosophy of Olympism, and our mission is to convince parents, teachers, young people and governments of all persuasions in all countries that the achievement of such a well-balanced life is absolutely essential for the full and proper development of all people.

This simple message of balance needs to be taken seriously and not treated as if it was some minor issue to be largely ignored. The IOC, National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs) should take a leading role in this mission and promote the Olympic values and Olympic principles in all their events, including World Championships, Regional and Olympic Games. Regular participation in sport and exercise should be seen as an absolutely essential component of a well-balanced, healthy, happy and sustainable life for all individuals throughout the world.

Recently, the Indonesian First Lady initiated an innovative programme of education and interaction with Indonesian children in many regions throughout the vast territory of Indonesia. The aim of the “Smart House” programme is that every house in Indonesia should have adequate learning and play facilities for children. The programme seeks to embrace all children throughout Indonesia, and innovative technologies such as “smart cars” and “smart boats” are used to interact, educate and bring much-needed resources to children in the most remote islands and villages. This programme can serve as an example to the Olympic Movement in spreading the message of Olympism throughout the world using innovative and diverse approaches, which have a natural appeal to young people.



THEME 2: IS COMPETITIVE SPORT STILL APPEALING?

Many of our Olympic sports are losing their appeal to the young. At the Asian Youth Games held earlier this year in Singapore, several of the throwing events had only two competitors. From the 45 countries in Asia, only two girls competed in the javelin and shot put events, a very disappointing result indeed. Furthermore, in many events the number of spectators was limited to close family and friends. The Olympic Movement needs to respond to this reduced interest, if it is to remain relevant to society. Youth Games need to be more like sporting festivals, encompassing sports and activities which are fun to participate in and watch, together with arts, music, dance, culture and entertainment. Children naturally gravitate towards team sports which they can play with their friends, such as football, basketball, volleyball and water polo, and these sports need to be promoted and included at regional and Olympic Games. It is a pity that the number of team events has been limited to only four team sports at next year's first Youth Olympic Games (YOG), and that only six teams in each of these four sports will be fortunate enough to play at the YOG. There are over 200 NOCs, and yet only six football teams will be playing at the YOG! We need to improve on this participation rate. The Olympic Movement needs to closely examine the popularity of competitive sports and respond to the changing interests of our current younger generation, if it is to maintain its relevance in society.

Last year, Indonesia hosted the first Asian Beach Games on the beautiful shores of Bali and included many popular fun sports enjoyed by young people, such as beach football and beach volleyball, as well as surfing and dragon boat racing. The Bali Beach Games included an interesting mix of culture, dance and sport on the lovely beaches of Bali and were truly a sporting/cultural festival for all to enjoy. Such an approach needs to be considered in the future hosting of sporting events, especially for young people.

The Olympic Movement needs to position itself more towards Sport for All, and away from being seen only through the prism of "competitive sports". The population at large sees the Olympic Movement principally as a four-yearly event called the Olympic Games, where approximately 11,000 of the world's best athletes compete over a two-week period. Soon this magnificent event will be joined by the YOG, which will see 3,600 of the world's best junior athletes competing on the world stage. However, the Olympic Movement is much more than this and we need to be placing far greater emphasis on a Sport for All approach for the nearly seven billion inhabitants of planet Earth.

A quick glance through the Olympic Charter readily conveys the fact that Sport for All is one of the main goals of the Olympic Movement. However, there needs to be much more emphasis on this objective. Of the USD 134 million budget available to Olympic Solidarity World Programmes for the 2009 to 2012 period, some USD 61 million (approximately 46%) is devoted to the preparation of the relatively small number of competitive athletes who will be competing in international competitions such as the Olympic Games. The budget for Sport for All programmes, developing activities for the earth's other seven billion inhabitants, is only USD 2.2 million (approximately 1.6%). My feeling is that these proportions should be far more equal, if the Olympic Movement is to contribute to a greater extent to society as a whole.

This year, Indonesia was fortunate enough to receive a USD 20,000 grant from Olympic Solidarity for a Sport for All programme to develop exercise videos and associated written materials to be used by

Indonesian primary school children. It is our hope that this one programme will aid the physical development of millions of Indonesian school children over many years. The exercise programmes and videos that were produced are available from the Indonesian Olympic Committee web site, www.olympic.or.id. The exercise programmes were developed to be performed with minimal equipment, so as to maximise the number of children who can benefit. The "Mass Volley" programme conducted by the International Volleyball Federation is another example of a programme designed to greatly increase youth sport participation at little cost.

Many more community and society-based programmes and initiatives of this kind need to be developed if the Olympic Movement is to touch the lives of many of the billions of people in the world in a meaningful way. Too many of us spend our scarce resources trying to identify the one-in-a-million athlete who will win a gold medal at the next Olympic Games, whereas the focus should be on enhancing the physical standards and activity levels of all our citizens, and from this universal elevation champions will naturally emerge.

THEME 3: YOUTH SPORTS EVENTS

The recent development of youth sports events, such as Continental Youth Games and the upcoming YOG, is an innovative and exciting development for the Olympic Movement. The IOC has been concerned about the ever-increasing cost of hosting such Games and, in an effort to reduce the costs and thereby increase the number of countries that can host the Games, has moved to limit the size of these Games. As a result, the YOG will involve approximately 3,600 athletes, well down on the 11,000 competing in Beijing. The number of events is greatly reduced and a quota system limits the number of athletes per country. Four "universality places" have been offered to each NOC which does not have four qualifying athletes, so that all NOCs can participate in these Games and, given the very competitive nature of qualifying events, most of the 205 NOCs from around the world, including Indonesia, will probably field teams of fewer than 10 athletes.

It is difficult to generate much enthusiasm for an event when so few participants are involved. The Olympic Movement should therefore examine ways of reducing the costs of hosting the Games, without reducing athlete numbers to such an extent that for many countries it becomes an event of little relevance. The Olympic Movement must find ways of hosting major multi-sport events so that large numbers of athletes from different countries can meet, compete, enjoy, share and learn from their interaction.

On a more positive note, the IOC should be congratulated for innovative modifications to sports events such as mixed-sex events, and events involving a mix of different NOCs competing on the same team. This will be a feature of the first YOG and should foster cooperation and interaction between athletes from various countries. However, we have only just made a beginning in this area of youth sports events. It is absolutely vital that there be more multi-event regional games at the elementary school level, and that these events have a sports festival appeal. Many young children aged 10 to 14 should be playing sports, interacting and learning from each other at sports festivals held throughout the various regions of the world. The United Nations Global Sports Fund Camps, which involve groups of young children playing a variety of sports and educational activities in various countries throughout the world, provide a good model that should be extended. At these sports camps, the children and officials are taught how to develop similar sports camp



programmes in their own countries, so from one such camp many programmes can be developed and touch the lives of many children throughout the world.

CONCLUSIONS

As this Congress considers the important question of “The Olympic Movement in Society”, there is no greater consideration than “Olympism and Youth”. Young people are our future! In recent years, the IOC has made bold moves in developing Youth Games throughout the world, and this initiative is indeed a step in the right direction. Much work needs to be done, and efforts to promote understanding of a balanced life for all participants should be a central aspect of the policy adopted by the Olympic Movement. This means greater emphasis on Sport for All activities, and an effort to enhance participation in those events and activities that young people find appealing. As all participants in this XIII IOC Congress move on to the breakout sessions, I would encourage them to use all of their collective abilities and intelligence to further the Olympic Movement in society and promote the spread of Olympism to all our young people, wherever they are located throughout the world.