HOW TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE SPORTS AUDIENCE?

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My good friend Dick Ebersol had to leave earlier today, so I will be initiating what I expect to be an engaging discussion with a select group of Olympic friends, representing different branches of the Olympic Movement.

The topic at hand: How to increase the size of the sports audience?

Allow me to introduce our distinguished panel:

- International Olympic Committee (IOC)
  representative Juan Antonio Samaranch Junior (Spain)
- National Olympic Committee (NOC)
  representative Norman D. Bellingham (USA), sitting in for Larry Probst, who could not attend today's session
- International Federation (IF) representative Göran Petersson (Sweden)
- Stakeholder representative Nancy Lee (Canada)

Beijing's record audience has raised the bar as it was an extraordinary production. I am sure London will build on its success and, thanks to digital technology, time is on their side.

The speed at which technology evolves is astonishing, and production companies and advertising agencies will waste little time in making use of new technology when it comes to an event of this magnitude.

There is a popular statistical comparison showing the number of years that radio, television and the internet took to reach a market audience of 50 million. What radio did in 38 years, television did in 13 years, and what television did in 13, the internet did it in four.

We are all well aware of the power of the Digital Revolution. Yet, we need to recognise the target audiences of the Olympic Movement:

- First, we have the spectators at the sporting event: how we can improve the in-stadium experience?

- Second, the audience of the host city and country: how can we expand the local reach? and

- Third, and the largest of all, the audience at home or streaming online: how can we enhance our present engagement with the audience out there?

There is also a difference between increasing the size of the audience during Games time and increasing it at other times.

We face a number of challenges during Games time, in particular maximising our audience reach and limiting piracy. We are looking at live transmission of every moment of the Games broadcast; I am sure our panellists will have thoughts on this.

Streaming videos is incredibly convenient, yet data allows you to understand it more, which increases your interest.

We need to reach the audience where they are, whether on television, online, or via any new medium that emerges in the future. To achieve the objective of maximum reach, it is essential that synergies be developed between our broadcast partners, other stakeholders and digital media.

How we achieve these synergies is a question to ponder. Integration with partners is extremely important in helping the audience to navigate what seems an unlimited number of options. We have to facilitate the flow of information.

Outside Games time, we need to exploit the mammoth resource of archives. As I mentioned earlier, the IOC has available, in digital format, more than forty thousand hours of video, seven hundred thousand still images, and data going back to 1896. It is a very long tail of Olympic content that we want to exploit and make available to the public.

Good partnerships also help us in drawing in the non-sports fan. The values of the Olympic Movement, such as commitment and dedication, are not just for athletes and spectators, but for everyone.