



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

SPEECH BY THE IOC PRESIDENT  
JACQUES ROGGE

Opening Ceremony  
11<sup>th</sup> WORLD SPORT FOR ALL CONGRESS

1 November 2006  
Havana, Cuba

Señor (government representative),  
Señor ( regional representative),  
Señor (City representative),  
Señor presidente del Comité Olímpico Cubano y del comité  
organizador del Congreso,  
Señores representantes de la Organización Mundial de la Salud,  
Señores representantes de la Asociación General de  
Federaciones Deportivas Internacionales (AGFIS),  
Miembros del Movimiento Olímpico,  
Colegas y amigos,  
Señoras y señores:

En primer lugar, quiero darles a todos la bienvenida a La Habana. Los organizadores de este 11 Congreso Mundial de Deporte para Todos no han escatimado esfuerzos para garantizar el éxito del mismo, y estoy seguro que su estancia en esta bella ciudad les resultará muy agradable gracias a su calurosa hospitalidad.

Quiero también dar las gracias a las autoridades nacionales, regionales y locales por su cooperación en la preparación de esta manifestación y, muy particularmente, al Comité Olímpico Cubano y a su presidente, José Fernández Álvarez.

The organisation of this Congress would not have been possible without the collaboration and partnership of the World Health

Organization and the General Association of International Sports Federations. Thank you for your renewed support.

This Congress, under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee, is bringing together experts from all over the world to deal with the theme “Physical activity: benefits and challenges”.

The rich programme will be an excellent opportunity to analyse this vast theme from different angles.

Physical activity benefits the individuals that are practising sport as much as it does the society that facilitates it. There are numerous studies that underline this double effect.

There are, however, numerous new statistics and studies that demonstrate that we are all extremely challenged in this field and for different reasons:

- The challenges concern above all grassroots sport (“Sport for all”). I am thinking particularly of
  - the aging population for which sport is extremely important, taking into account that two-thirds of the world’s population fail to do sufficient physical activity;
  - young people, who are drifting away from sport as they are attracted by the “tyranny of the screen” with videos,

DVDs, the Internet, TV and mobile phones. This phenomena does not affect only the developed world, but is becoming more and more of a worldwide challenge. According to a WHO study, less than a third of young people are sufficiently active to ensure a healthy lifestyle.

- this generational problem is even reinforced by the fact that in some parts of the world the age pyramid is being inverted due to low birthrates , which will affect sport clubs and the whole sports movement.
- In all these fields, “sport for all” can and has to react as these effects will influence our society strongly and not for the benefit of it.
  - We have to make sport more attractive in our sports clubs, for the young generation and to attract older people;
  - We have to ensure sport has an increased “fun” factor, relevant to each age group:
  - We must, in particular, attract the youngsters at the age of 16 and the senior citizens from the age of 60, when the former have the tendency to abandon their sports

activities and the latter have more time to spend on them.

- We can educate and inform directly and indirectly (young people through their parents) of the benefits of sport and the possibilities that are offered to practise sport;
- We have to address the public authorities and ask them to play an important role in underlining the benefit of sport to society, particularly as regards health issues and the integration of minorities.

All these themes, and many others, will be discussed during this Congress. I am sure that valuable recommendations will be issued at the end of your deliberations.

I encourage you to discuss and propose effective measures for the implementation of your recommendations and to communicate them efficiently in your personal and professional environments.

The IOC itself will promote the outcome of this Congress, namely through its Olympic Solidarity programmes, its international cooperation activities and through its Sport for All Commission, chaired by IOC member Walther Tröger. I take this opportunity to

congratulate the Commission on its work in this domain and on the preparation of this Congress.

Permítanme reiterar mi agradecimiento a las autoridades cubanas y al Comité Olímpico Nacional por haber organizado este Congreso, que nos dará la oportunidad de percibir, sobre el propio terreno, la situación del deporte en Cuba. Sabemos muy bien el importante papel que juega el deporte en este país.

La contribución de Cuba al Movimiento Olímpico ha sido extraordinariamente valiosa a lo largo de las últimas décadas, y la atribución de este Congreso a La Habana constituye sin duda una expresión del reconocimiento del COI a su labor y esfuerzos en este sentido. Todo ello se debe también al compromiso inquebrantable con el Movimiento Olímpico del miembro del COI, Reynaldo González López.

Les deseo a todos unos debates fructíferos y una agradable estancia en La Habana.

Muchas gracias