



## OLYMPIC VALUES

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ORIGINAL TEXT IN ENGLISH

When speaking on the future of the Olympic Movement, to a certain extent we are asking ourselves how change, within our communities and regions, will affect today's values and those of future generations. Contemporary society's relationship with plurality, youth, education, culture, ethics and effort is constantly evolving. Through sport, we accompany such change and bring, as our contribution, a spirit of inclusiveness, joy and respect – among many other Olympic values – we aim to forge an example. This speech, therefore, will not list problems facing sport – as short as that list may be – but will present some concrete proposals or rather, at this stage, ideas which could offer a constructive approach.

Nonetheless, tackling the question is almost as daring as meeting the challenge. Take the concept of Universality for example. Do the Games sufficiently contribute to this value in a contemporary context? Is it enough to simply broaden worldwide reach by aiming to enable a high number of countries to practise sport and be progressively involved in top level competitions, once they have achieved an adequate technical standard? Is this target feasible or even relevant in an age where the cost of sport is perpetually on the increase? Perhaps universality and the notion of increasing universality could address economic as well as geographical boundaries.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which celebrates this important Congress, here in beautiful Copenhagen, has provided a lot of help in many areas related to sport. The IOC is directly involved in a premium event every two years: the Olympic Summer and Winter Games, and it must be stated at the outset that the possibility to intervene in the Programme or organisation of the Games is a point strictly related to the policy of the IOC. What we are about to offer here – as an idea – should of course be properly evaluated by the IOC bodies concerned.

Let us take the financial context of an Olympic bid, as it relates to the economics of universality.

It is a fact that it costs money to prepare a viable bid as an Applicant City, then as a Candidate City and finally to become the one which

receives the most votes and becomes the Host City of the Olympic Games. It is a fact that certain countries have more resources at hand and, therefore, stand at an advantage in the process.

Often, a candidate city includes, in its proposal, the cost of infrastructure, while a significant percentage of the budgeted expenditure is not directly linked to sport.

The question we could therefore ask ourselves is this: is it truly mandatory for the full Programme of the Olympic Games to be conducted in one city, regional area or even in just one country?

Experience has shown that important countries, including those having contributed at a high level to the development of sport, may never have the opportunity or the honour of organising the Games because they are unable to surmount the financial challenges, alone. More importantly, there are many small countries that are definitively excluded from the dream of being an Olympic Games organiser and other countries, which do not have the means to host a full programme.

These three aspects, the cost of sport, the cost of organising the Olympic Games, the limited number of countries having the money/territorial size/characteristics to act as Olympic hosts, would suggest that an alternative organisational model could be found, with the Programme of the Games split among two or three countries.

This could have the following obvious advantages:

1. If the Games were to be held in a territory where two or three countries are close to one another, it would be possible to satisfy the dream of more people and populations, from different language, cultural, community and ethnic backgrounds.
2. The cost could be absorbed more easily.
3. The so-called small countries or those lacking the characteristics to host a full programme would finally be in a position to participate directly in the organisation of the Games.

Let us now to move on to a different consideration, which is strictly related to universality as it has been traditionally understood.

Until now, the media have listed the results of the Games on the basis of the medals obtained by different countries, with the gold medal always having first priority.

One is aware that this is not an IOC initiative, but perhaps in order to improve the effect of universality and to give the so-called smaller countries a goal which could increase the scope of their motivation, the IOC could work out a scoring point system. They could, for example, award points to the first ten placed athletes/teams of the final result.

The principle is not an innovative one, since the IOC also already awards diplomas in addition to the medals.

However, if the above-mentioned criterion of awarding points were to be introduced, more countries would be able to achieve prominence. Or perhaps it would be more consistent to say that more countries would be stimulated to progress, since to achieve a good place on the list, it would no longer be necessary to have a medallist because athletes/teams up to the tenth position would be taken into account.



Of course, the relevant conditions and rules would have to be worked out by the IOC. If introduced, it would be the first time that countries participating in the IOC event – the Olympic Games – would be listed on the basis of points determined by the IOC.

To conclude, the above-mentioned proposals aim to adapt our premier event model to the global financial context so as to enhance the Olympic values. By working in this direction we seek essentially to protect Olympism and the universal ethical principles embraced in our Charter. Change, within our society is permanent – therefore proactive thinking safeguards the spirit of our Games.