



## YOUTH SPORT EVENTS

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It is my great pleasure to be with all of you today, to exchange views on the topic of Youth and Olympism. On this topic, I have the following three points to share with you:

#### 1. THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF OLYMPISM

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.

The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.

Olympism not only takes physical education as a major task, but also attaches great importance to spiritual inspiration. The educational value of Olympism lies in its universality. Young people represent the world's future and as such are the target of Olympic education.

Youth is one's most active, innovative and energetic period; young people are always curious about new things. The Olympic spirit plays an indispensable role in the healthy development of young people, alongside other forms of education. Olympic education is not only helpful and important in building strong muscles and swift minds, but also in cultivating good mental qualities and civic virtue.

For the Olympic Movement, sports stars are the role models of Olympic education. Their images inspire young people all over the world; their legends carry significant educational value. Not only their great achievements and successful careers after retirement, but also their outstanding personalities can be a positive influence on young people.

That is why we believe young people need the Olympic spirit. At the same time, the Olympic Movement cannot develop without young people, because they are the ones who carry the Olympic flame.

#### 2. CHALLENGES FACED BY THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

However, we cannot ignore the fact that, for many reasons, the healthy development of young people is facing various challenges, such as drug abuse, violence and unhealthy content on the internet. Furthermore, as young people spend more and more time sitting in front of screens, problems such as weak physique, eye problems and obesity are causing us concern.

#### 3. OLYMPIC EDUCATION IN CHINA

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) attaches great importance to youth participation in the Olympic Movement. By inviting young people from all over the world to Olympic Youth Camps, International Olympic Academy seminars for young participants and other activities, the IOC seeks to inspire them with the Olympic spirit.

During the 118th IOC Session in Guatemala City, the IOC launched the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). This decision has injected vigour and vitality into the 100-year-old modern Olympic Movement, opening a new chapter in its history.

Now, I am very happy to give you a brief introduction on how China promotes sport for young people and conducts Olympic education:

#### CHINA YOUTH GAMES

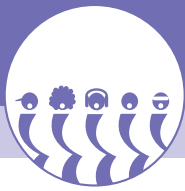
The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the educational function of sport. As responsible authorities, the General Administration of Sport and the Ministry of Education of China have respectively organised several editions of National Inter-City Games and National University and Middle School Games, with the aim of integrating sport into quality education. Taking this opportunity, I would like to talk specifically about the National Inter-City Games in China.

With the aim of encouraging young people to participate in sport, and identifying and training young sports talent, China launched its first National Youth Games in 1985. Thirty-one delegations from different provinces, cities and industrial unions participated in competitions in 17 sports. In order to provide a better platform for young people's sports competitions, the Chinese authorities combined the National Youth Games and the National City Games into one, making it the National Inter-City Games of China. All the participants are elite young athletes from the cities of China, and an age limit is applied to the athletes.

The new National Inter-City Games not only expanded participation, but also provided a more extensive communication platform for the young people. In 1988, the first National Inter-City Games were held in Jinan, the capital city of Shandong Province. Youngsters from 40 cities competed there in 12 sports.

With the rapid social and economic development in China, the scale of the National Inter-City Games has gradually increased. In 2007, the sixth National Inter-City Games were held in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei Province. More than 6,300 young athletes from 74 cities participated in 288 events comprising 24 different sports.

As the second-largest national multi-sports games featuring the Olympic disciplines after the China National Games, the National Inter-City Games have the following characteristics:



- **Extensive participation** – According to the rules, the capital cities of all provinces and other large cities are qualified to participate. From the first edition to the seventh, the participating cities increased from 40 to 74, the number of athletes from 2,332 to 6,352.
- **Age limits** – The National City Games are for young people. There are different age limits for different sports. Generally speaking, the athletes' ages range from 13 to 21.
- **No medal tally** – To avoid invidious competition, the organisers of the sixth National City Games in 2007 stopped the tradition of setting up a medal tally, so as to provide a more favourable competitive environment for the young athletes.
- **Introducing Olympic rules** – The management of the National Inter-City Games is basically in line with that of the Olympic Games, to give the athletes precious Olympic experience.

For the future development of the National Inter-City Games, the following points are important:

- **Games for young people** – As our President, Mr Rogge, has said, “The YOG are not just a mini-Olympic Games; there are competitions, but that’s not the main purpose. The main purpose is to educate young people in the Olympic values of friendship, fair play and to say NO to doping”. The Chinese sports authorities share this view. We are currently working to change the name of the National Inter-City Games to the China Youth Games, making this event a grand celebration of Chinese youth.
- **Emphasis on culture and education** – The purpose of initiating the National City Games was to identify and encourage young sporting talent. With the social and economic growth of China, the role of the National City Games is changing. In future, the Chinese Olympic Committee will play an increasingly important role by presenting Olympic cultural and educational activities, enabling every young participant to enjoy the sports and understand the Olympic values.

#### OLYMPIC EDUCATION IN CHINA

“To disseminate the Olympic values among 400 million youngsters in China. This number is tempting. It reflected the essence of the Olympic spirit, and also proved our choice in Moscow was right.” This was IOC President Jacques Rogge’s comment on the Olympic education programme in China. When Beijing was bidding for the Olympic Games in 2008, the city promised to extensively promote the Olympic spirit by launching a series of promotional and educational activities among the 400 million youngsters in China. In order to realise such a commitment, the Beijing Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) worked closely with the relevant authorities in China to implement various Olympic education programmes.

#### Olympic Education Model Schools

In 2005, the BOCOG and the Ministry of Education of China jointly launched the Beijing 2008 Olympic Education Action Plan, naming 556 elementary and secondary schools across the country as “Olympic Education Model Schools”. These schools integrated Olympic education into their academic curriculum. During dedicated training sessions, the teachers were educated in the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect, and shown how to incorporate Olympism into the classroom setting. In addition, a series of textbooks was created, introducing students to the history of the Olympic Games, the various Olympic sports and the rules of play, the Olympic symbols and the role of the Olympic

Movement as a contributor to international peace and friendship. Photography, painting, poetry, calligraphy and foreign-language speech contests are further means used to promote Olympism in Chinese schools.

#### Olympic “Heart to Heart” project

Another successful project was an initiative entitled “Heart-to-Heart”, through which over 210 Beijing schools “adopted” sister schools in countries represented by an NOC, to share ideas and forge international friendships. Before the Olympic Games, the sister schools conducted diversified cultural exchanges. During the Games, the city’s Heart-to-Heart schools greeted their partner NOC delegation at the Team Welcome Ceremony in the Olympic Village and supported its athletes at competition sessions. NOC delegations also visited their Beijing partner schools.

As I mentioned, young people are the hope and future of our world. It is the mission of the Olympic Movement and our common responsibility to attract and encourage young people to participate in sports so as to form a healthy lifestyle. We are very glad to see the first YOG will be held in Singapore in 2010. This is going to be a great festival and an opportunity for young people all over the world to experience the Olympic Movement and learn about the Olympic spirit. I am confident that the YOG will write a splendid page in the history of the Olympic Movement.