

Address by H.I.H. Prince Gholam Reza Pahlavi, President of the Iranian National Olympic Committee

On behalf of the Iranian National Olympic Committee I have the pleasure of welcoming the members of the International Olympic Committee and other distinguished guests who have come to Iran from far or near distances to attend these meetings.

It is a great honour for us that His Majesty, Shahansha Aryamehr, who is the Patron of National Olympic Committee and has always been a staunch supporter of the glorious objectives of the Olympic Movement, as well as Her Majesty the Shahbanoo, opened the 65th session of the International Olympic Committee.

On behalf of Iranian young people, athletes and sportsmen I would like to thank the International Olympic Committee for giving Tehran the privilege of being the site of this session.

In our ancient land, from the glorious era of Darius the Great until today, special attention has always been paid to physical and moral health of the young people.

Ancient inscriptions on stone and living rock which are found in all parts of the country, all bespeak of the gallantry, chivalry, bravery and honorable conduct of young Iranians.

We are faithful to all the lofty objectives of Olympic Games and this great world movement. We are fully aware of these humane objectives that coincide with our own ancient traditions handed down to us by our forebearers ; and with great zeal and vigilance we are keeping this precious heritage alive in our hearts.

The Iranian people are convinced that only a peaceful, friendly attitude among nations can preserve human dignity and honor and prevent the pillars of civilization from crumbling.

The people in our rural regions, living in high mountains and the remotest corners of the country delight in ancient tales of heroism and gallantry, love and compassion. They spend the night reciting or listening to stories from *Shahnameh*, the *Book of Kings* by Ferdowsi, Iran's great epic poet. Even the rhythmic movements of our athletes in the Zoorkhaneh, or house of strength, are accompanied by the recitation of the verses from the *Book of Kings*.

This is the first time that Iran is given the pleasure of hosting such distinguished personalities who have gathered to promote friendship, unity and strength among world youth.

Iranian athletes, for the first time in history, participated in the 1948 Olympics in London, with His Majesty providing all facilities. Although we started late, we were quick to grasp the lofty ideals of the Olympics. Our sons and daughters today fully realize the importance of those ideals and are true sons and daughters of Baron Pierre de Coubertin. What that great man set out to achieve, our young people are pursuing most diligently.

We pride ourselves on the fact that in our country we have no " professional " sports ; no Iranian athlete makes his living on his proficiency in athletics. In 1956, when Mr. Avery Brundage,



President of the International Olympic Committee, visited Iran at a time when we were celebrating the Olympic Week, he may have noted to what extent the National Olympic Committee of Iran adheres to the principles and aims of the Olympic Games.

The two world wars transformed the face of the earth but the white flag of the Olympics remained spotless, and today young people carry the torch from country to country and from continent to continent.

Once again let me express my gratitude for the privilege that has been given to the National Olympic Committee of Iran to hold this 65th session of the International Olympic Committee in Tehran. I wish you every success in your deliberations and sincerely hope that your most valuable efforts will further enhance the glorious ideals of the Olympic Games.

