

Paris, April 1976

## First International Conference of Sports Ministers

*For the first time, the Ministers and senior officials responsible for physical education and sport in the education of youth met from 5th to 10th April in Paris, under the mandate of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.*

*Below we publish extracts from the most important speeches.*

**Lord Killanin,**  
*President of the International  
Olympic Committee*



... At the African Games in Lagos in 1973, the late Mr. Maheu spoke to me about UNESCO and Sport. Mr. Maheu, as has been mentioned by Mr. Mazeaud, took a great interest as far as UNESCO and Sport are concerned. It was therefore with plea-

sure that when the present Director-General Mr. M'Bow renewed this contact, in the first instance in regard to the Fair Play Committee, that I told him that I would only be too happy to co-operate, in every way, for the benefit of all concerned, and welcomed this First International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sport in the Education of Youth. Later the invitation to speak to you was confirmed by Mr. M'Bow and I am pleased to have this occasion to address you and also meet all those responsible at the political and executive governmental level for the development of youth, sport and leisure in their countries.

Mr. M'Bow in his opening speech paid tribute to Baron de Coubertin. I would like to re-echo every single sentiment in that opening speech. The problems which he outlined and the positive things that he said regarding sport and recreation are in complete accord, I believe, with the Olympic views and my own views. And I would also like to say how pleased I was to hear my friend Mr. Mazeaud, who is the Minister responsible for Sport in France—which we must remember is very suitable that we are meeting here in the city of Paris where in 1894 Baron de Coubertin revived, or commenced the new Olympic movement. Mr. Mazeaud again makes very clear, and I am in complete agreement with him, the responsibility of governments and also the close collaboration necessary with the voluntary bodies. I am quite certain the example that is being set will be followed and may be of use to many of you here.

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Under the fundamental principles of the International Olympic Committee, the first rule reads: *"The aims of the Olympic Movement are to promote the development*

*of those fine physical and moral qualities which are the basis of amateur sport and bring together the athletes of the world in a great quadrennial festival of sports, thereby creating international respect and goodwill and thus helping to construct a better and more peaceful world."* The two subsequent rules deal with the actual Games, but the most important part of Rule 3 is the last line, which I believe everybody in this room will agree with: "No discrimination in them is allowed against any country or person on the grounds of race, religion or politics."

This year, 1976, everybody is talking or writing about the Olympic Games. Having started with the basic philosophy inspired by Baron Pierre de Coubertin here in Paris, I am personally convinced that we have a continuing duty towards the high-level, non-professional competition every four years. But since 1894 much has changed—new countries have emerged and are continuing to emerge. I myself come from a country which in 1896 competed as part of the United Kingdom, and it was not until after the freedom of Ireland in 1922 that we competed as our own country. So I speak with some knowledge and feeling which many of you in the room may have.

Travel time has been reduced and the social structure of the world has changed. Today all should have equal opportunity, as envisaged by Baron de Coubertin, to compete in sport for pleasure. Sport is no longer the preserve of a privileged few. I think at times, because of Baron de Coubertin being quoted for his interest in the English public school system, that it has been thought at many times that he was in favour of sport for the wealthier. But this is absolutely in contradiction to all his writings and all his work. In the same way that he had an open mind about amateurism, which is a continual subject of discussion in the Olympic and sporting world, he also wanted to use the examples in order that the facilities which were created in Britain could be available to all. He was thinking way ahead of his time.

The Olympic Games are primarily for the competitor. But with the enormous audiences they attract, especially with television, they enter the homes throughout the world. The individual competitor's success creates an interest in the development of the sport in the countries in which it is watched.

This high-level competition radiates down to the youngest school-child. The Olympic movement can claim credit for the ever-increasing demands for, and the interest in, the recreational sporting facilities in schools, colleges, villages and towns, and education is not complete without recreation and leisure. These, in your blue book, I notice, are subjects for your discussions and I would like to draw special attention to paragraph G 93, of which one of the objects is to discuss facilities, and also possibly to draw attention to paragraph 108, where there are technical scientific references, and point out that amongst other things the International Olympic Committee formed the first Medical Commission which dealt with certain scientific sides of sport. The one thing we do not want to do in the Olympic movement is to create the artificial man or woman.

Gone are the days when a concrete school-yard was sufficient for recreation. You, ladies and gentlemen, are closely associated with this. The ideal would be for no future schools to be built in either the public or private sector without adequate facilities for recreation. Nor should there be urban or rural developments without this in mind. The facilities will vary in different parts of the world depending on the climate, local sporting traditions, wealth and political conditions. It is from this base that the sportsman or woman of the future evolves. Only a few will reach the Olympic Games, but inspired by the high performance competitors they will endeavour to emulate them, provided those competitors set the right example. In paragraph 53 you will be discussing the Championship Competitor versus Mass Participation. To my mind these two are complimentary.

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The Olympic movement consists of three bodies—there is the International Olympic Committee, formed by Baron de Coubertin, which is the trustee of the Olympic movement, and over which I preside. We are frequently accused of being old, out of date, or very rich—which I am not—and also that we all have titles. I hope you will not, gentlemen, discriminate against me for the actions of my ancestors! The International Olympic Committee is today a hard-working

body. I have seen it grow from when it consisted of a President, a part-time secretary and a translator. We now have a very small staff, directed by Madame Berlioux who is with me today. Most of our members have been, like myself, Presidents of National Olympic Committees, or still are indeed Presidents, or closely associated with National Federations. No one is perfect, but we try to do our best in a not too perfect world. There are the 26 International Olympic Federations, which are on the programme of the Winter Games and the Olympic Games, which control the technical side of their sport in the Olympic Games, and naturally all their competitions in between the Games. They, too, vary very much from federation to federation, depending on traditions, the strength of their sport, the popularity of their sport, the cost of their sport.

There are also scores, probably 200, other federations controlling different sports—some professional, some amateur. And let me make it quite clear, that I as President of the International Olympic Committee have nothing against professional sport—some federations control the two. All we are endeavouring to do at the moment is endeavour to restrict, and its evolution under realistic rules, the Olympic Games to non-professionals. What will evolve towards the end of the century, I do not know. There are also federations anxious to be included in the programme.

There are over 130 National Olympic Committees which are the bodies in each country formed from the representative of the National Federations affiliated to the recognised International Federation. These again vary from National Olympic Committees who do very little—except every four years raise funds and rubber-stamp entries—to those that are richer, those that are more active who work all the time, those that are closely associated, indeed may be part of or connected with, National Sports Confederations, and working jointly throughout the time. It is our object all the time to encourage the National Olympic Committees to do all they can to promote the development of sport. The only thing is that in the National Olympic Committees, the sports on the Olympic programme have to have a majority of votes—but other sports can naturally be members of National Olympic Committees or Federations. And lastly, there are the

Organising Committees whose important duty it is to organise the Games.

It is with the National Olympic Committees that the Ministers and authorities have the closest contact. Our view is that we wish to see the greatest support and assistance from the government authorities for the development of sport. It is natural and correct that if governments give finance, they must insist that it is correctly spent. However, we do ask that sport should not be a shuttle-cock of internal or international politics and that all National Olympic Committees must have the freedom of action and not be dictated to by party political considerations or national political ambitions, which will endanger the freedom of the individual or the sport. We all aspire to promote this, whatever our different political philosophies. It is for this basic reason that I am here today to assure you of our closet co-operation and also to express our pleasure that UNESCO has again taken an initiative in assisting and developing sport.

Sport is above party politics, and again you will see in paragraph 17 of your blue book, UNESCO says that its programme has been far from sufficient. I hope after this successful Conference that this will be altered. In your Conference you are making special reference to the educational values and confirming that it is complimentary with education, besides its promotion for life-long interest and practice in the use of sports.

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The Games of the XXIst Olympiad open in Montreal on July 17th, and it is natural that the media of the world is concentrated on this event. I might say, for those of you who may be approached by your National Olympic Committees for support, I have no doubt whatsoever that they will open on July 17th as planned, and indeed Dr. Goldbloom, the Minister who is responsible for constructing the stadium, is holding an international press conference in Paris tomorrow to announce the progress.

However, due to the success of the Games, they have become very large. This success

is expensive and steps must be taken to control it. The whole programme of sports and events, besides the criteria for Olympic sports, is being reviewed. Last week I wrote to the members of the International Olympic Committee in those countries which have hosted the Games since 1948, asking for their views on the future, with special reference to our rules. The Games must not become the preserve of the rich or the powerful nations only. We must all have our opportunity of possibly hosting them or/and participating. The replies to these points, after the preliminary study by the International Olympic Committee's Executive, will be discussed with the International Federations when we meet in Barcelona in the autumn of this year. I might say, we meet every other year—one year with the National Olympic Committees and one year with the International Federations in assembly—although we do naturally have continual conversation with each of the Federations and National Olympic Committees individually.

In spring of next year at Abidjan on the Ivory Coast, we meet with the National Olympic Committees where this again will be discussed, and at the Session in Prague in 1977 I hope we will be able to formulate, if not a complete change, some modifications which will evolve so that the Olympic Games can be a practical proposition for the future decades.

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It must be recalled that in 1978 the Games of 1984 will be attributed. Besides the programme of sport we will consider the question of spreading the Olympic Games—either by extension of time, or an extension of area. We will endeavour to discuss the actual basic costs and requirements to ensure that there is no unnecessary waste or unrealistic demands by the International Olympic Committee, the International Federations, the National Olympic Committees and indeed all others concerned, including the media.

There has been much written and said about the infrastructure of the facilities required for the Games. It is very difficult to make comparisons. Some cities start with a large

number of facilities, others have few facilities of the standard required. At no time do we wish to encourage the construction of anything which will not have an ongoing use and we deplore extravagance built for national pride. It is very difficult to make comparisons between the costings due to this and to different methods of accounting. But I would like to say in regards to Montreal, about which there has been so much publicity throughout the world, that possibly the construction of the main stadium has eclipsed the very good things which have happened there. For instance, there are a large number of developments which are required both urban, collegiate and private which would not have otherwise taken place, and instead of building enormous halls which will be empty except for the finals, preliminaries are being held in these halls and the finals in the Forum Ice Stadium which already exists. This good positive side has been unfortunately eclipsed by the more negative side due to the controversy of the major stadium.

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You each play your own particular part in your own country and frequently conjointly in regional and area activities. I would say that we also patronise the Regional Games for this purpose.

In the Olympic movement we are endeavouring, in between the Games, to promote and encourage the development of sport. As some of you may be aware, we have a Solidarity Programme which endeavours with the co-operation of the International Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committees and the International Federations, to develop and assist sport through the National Olympic Committees. It is of necessity still restricted because of limited funds. I would like to say that everyone thinks that there is an immense amount of television money available—that is not the case—but with the limited funds we are doing our best. And the delegates from India—I think that General Mehrat is here at present from the National Olympic Committee—will be able to tell you of the most recent seminar/coaching course held in India. The progress is limited but it is something we will develop and

co-operate naturally with the governmental sources where necessary.

We are endeavouring to help and also to co-ordinate and co-operate to avoid duplication. Already courses and seminars have been held and coaches sent to many parts of the world. I would like to repeat that I believe in the closest co-operation by the National Olympic Committees with their governments, but I would reiterate the importance of endeavouring as far as possible to keep political interference out of sport. This, I know, is difficult at times, but far from impossible, as is shown in the vast majority of places in which we have National Olympic Committees. As Mr. M'Bow said, we have a common interest, also we have interests on the cultural side. We have, every eight years, Congresses where we all meet, and at the last Congress extra seats were allowed for official observers from governmental bodies. We had a common interest, I think, at the Varna Congress in Bulgaria, in what the Olympic movement stands for today "*Sport for a World of peace*".

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The interest of governments in sport is demonstrated by this gathering here today. Thirty years ago there was barely a country with government departments responsible for the development of sport, which is a basic part of the educational and social system. As President of the International Olympic Committee, I would ask UNESCO and its Director-General to continue the interest in and support for sport which is now being shown, and I can assure you the policy of the International Olympic Committee is one again of co-operation with all who have the same ultimate objects. At the same time I must stress that not only the IOC, but also the International Federations and National Olympic Committees request the support for their own autonomy and independence, besides an assurance throughout the world, which we are all agreed about, that there will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or politics...

L. K.