

January 1978 Welcome to Tunis



The President of the Tunisian Republic in conversation with Mr. Mohamed Mzali (right).

An African land wonderfully situated at the heart of the Mediterranean, an ancient country full of history and civilisation but a young nation devoting itself to reviving its secular heritage with spirit and soul, to taking on modernness, to mastering the present and preparing the future, Tunisia is proud and honoured to welcome the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee which is meeting for the first time in Tunis, its capital. The presence among us of Lord Killanin, President of the IOC, and all my colleagues on the Executive Board, not only flatters our country's legendary hospitality but also, and in particular, its indestructible attachment to the great Olympic principles as set forth and redefined by Pierre de Coubertin, the renovator of the Olympic Games of the modern era.

The distinguished Olympic leaders, the members of the Tripartite Commission-worthy representatives of all the National Olympic Committees and International Sports Federations-the members of the Commission for the International Olympic Academy, who all devote themselves fully and efficiently to make the noble cause of Olympism triumph and who never cease to increase their efforts with a view to consolidating the highly educational and formative role of sport, cannot fail to be alive to the untiring action that Tunisia has undertaken, in the wake of its accession to independence, in order to promote physical and sports education, to popularise the Olympic ideals and to make sport an effective element of the culture of men and the promotion of rising generations.

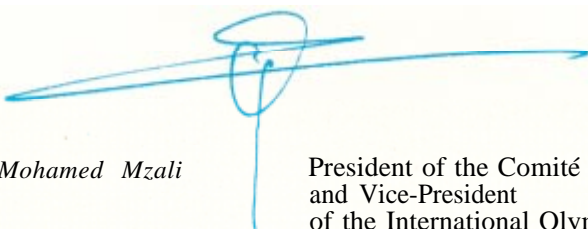
In an historic speech on 30th September 1960 President Habib Bourguiba launched this educational policy which gives a new

dimension to amateur sport. Addressing educationists as well as leaders of the federations and sports clubs, voluntary leaders and pioneers devoted to their noble ideal, President Bourguiba in particular said : “The effort which I invite you to undertake is part of our great struggle against underdevelopment... The Government will spare no effort to back you up or make your task easier... Step by step we are approaching our aim of raising the level of the nation, for in the field of underdevelopment everything is related-intellectual backwardness, physical decay, degradation of moral values. It should be called to the attention of the people. They must be aware of it.”

Since then a sports infrastructure has been created and has not ceased to develop. Sport in primary and secondary education has become compulsory and the number of hours devoted to it increases continually as physical education teachers and technicians are trained and follow refresher courses in the various institutes and schools created for this purpose. The number of sports associations is increasing daily. A “sportsman’s charter” has been drawn up hallowing the values of fair play, friendship and loyalty...

An educational commission within the Ministry of National Education—to within 30% of the national budget is devoted—has for some months been busy including texts emphasising the Olympic ethic in every suitable discipline ; for Tunisia, a land of hospitality and brotherhood, believes in the numerous outstanding qualities of sport which “recruits from every class and every nation and mixes them together in a fraternal spirit across the globe.”

I should like to welcome the President of the IOC and Lady Killanin, who are visiting Tunisia for the first time, as well as all my colleagues and friends on the Executive Board, the Tripartite Commission and the Commission for the International Olympic Academy, to this country which is investing so much for its youth and hopes to become one of the strongest pillars of Olympism. This Tunis Olympic meeting is unquestionably a great tribute and a valuable encouragement to the Comité Olympique Tunisien and the whole family of Tunisian sport.



Mohamed Mzali

President of the Comité Olympique Tunisien
and Vice-President
of the International Olympic Committee