

STATEMENT

from the

Tripartite Commission

of the

International Olympic Committee

20th March 1978



INTRODUCTION

Sport, which until the beginning of the present century was the prerogative of a well-to-do and favoured class, is practised today on the five continents, in many forms, by hundreds of millions of human beings. It has become a social and cultural phenomenon on a world scale.

Until quite recently, sport was governed exclusively by voluntary national and international organisations, apart from certain profit-making professional associations. Since the fifties, governmental and intergovernmental agencies have been intervening increasingly in the running of sport.

Over and above the sports activities and the large sports events organised throughout the world, the Olympic Games represent the bond of the mutual action of the INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC), the INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS (ISFs) and the NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES (NOCs). It was to put this tripartite cooperation into a concrete form and reinforce the work begun in 1894 by Baron de Coubertin that the 1973 Olympic Congress of Varna was organised. A Tripartite Commission composed of representatives of the IOC, the ISFs and NOCs was created for its preparation. The Congress decided to keep the Commission in existence in order to ensure better coordination between the three bodies.

THE MEMBERS OF THE TRIPARTITE COMMISSION consider that the time has now come to publish a statement of principle, in order to :

1. reaffirm the essential and universal role of non-governmental sports organisations ;
2. define the aims, duties and powers of these sports organisations ;
3. remind governments of their duties to provide education and social development for their people and above all for the youth of their country.

By this STATEMENT, the voluntary sports organisations mean to work for the harmonious development of sport at all levels and to improve their cooperation with governmental and intergovernmental agencies.

Competitive sport is the outcome of the free choice of each individual. It is up to the athlete whether or not to start on the path that leads—via the clubs and the federations—to local, national, international and finally world meetings and championships.

Sport is governed completely independently by the IOC, the ISFs, the NOCs and the national federations. It must preserve its full sovereignty, especially as this is based on individual liberty.

Parallel with competitive sport, there is sport for all, that is to say physical and sports education, as well as training, relaxation and leisure activities. It is the duty of governments of countries to promote sport for all, which will produce a strong and healthy population throughout the world.

THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

The OLYMPIC MOVEMENT has two foundations :

- its philosophy, which comes from the renovational idea of Pierre de Coubertin ;
- the quadrennial organisation of the Olympic Games and Winter Games.

The Olympic movement represents the revival of the ideals which shone brightly for over a thousand years, during the long climax of the quadrennial festivals of Olympia.

For nearly a century, the Olympic movement has been working to develop the moral and physical qualities that constitute the basis of true sport.

THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC)

Founded in 1894 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE is the supreme authority of the Olympic movement.

An independent organisation, it recruits new members by coopting them. They are the representatives of the IOC in their respective countries and not delegates of their country to the IOC.

The IOC recognises one National Olympic Committee for each country.

The “Olympic Charter” defines the fundamental principles of the Olympic movement, as well as the organisation and the powers of the IOC.

In order to implement the ideals of the Charter, the IOC ensures the assembling of the athletes of the world in two big quadrennial festivals : the Olympic Games and the Winter Games.

Since 1896, in spite of two world wars and all the political and racial antagonism, the Olympic movement and the Games have succeeded in establishing themselves on the five continents and rising continuously to prodigious heights.

The Olympic movement, a voluntary world movement, has always given its support and aid to the sporting youth of the world as well as to governments.

THE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS (ISFs)

Many of today's sports stem from very old historical roots. Some of the rules of modern games were laid down in the middle of the 19th century.

Once sports competitions expanded beyond their regional and national frame, it became necessary to standardise these rules and to create International Federations. This was the case in gymnastics in 1881, and rowing and skating in 1892.

The rapid growth of sport and the creation of new activities have considerably increased the number and the importance of the International Federations.

Today, in 1978, there are over 60 International Federations, 26 of which take part in the Olympic programme.

Their responsibilities cover the legislation, organisation and development of sport.

Legislation :

- promulgation of regulations governing the practice of the sport concerned, the installations and equipment, the length of events and the rules governing them ;
- classification of competitors into categories, according to sex, age, weight and performance ;
- definition of the competitor's status : amateur, professional... ;
- laying down of medical rules aimed at protecting the health of athletes while fighting against doping and other dangerous practices ;
- adoption of preventive measures against all unfair and unlawful dealings.

Organisation :

- organisation of big regional, continental and world competitions ;
- control of all international competitions ;
- training and accreditation of international referees ;
- coordination of the activity of their members.

For each of the sports included in the programme of the Olympic Games, the technical preparation and actual running of the competitions during the Games are the responsibility of the International Federation governing the sport in question.

Development of the sports movement

The International Federations make an essential contribution to the development of sport through the contributions and the cooperation of the national federations affiliated to them.

THE NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES (NOCs)

Like the International Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committees, the territorial representatives of the Olympic movement, were created in 1894.

Their number has risen from the original two (Greece and France) to 133 in 1978. While their fundamental objective has not varied, their responsibilities and their duties have grown considerably down through the years.

The main tasks of every NOC are as follows :

- to ensure the participation of the athletes of its country in the Olympic Games ;
- to find the essential and stable resources indispensable to its proper working in complete independence ;
- to spread the ideas of the Olympic movement and protect its heritage ;
- to serve as a link between the national federations affiliated to the International Federations recognised by the IOC ;
- to encourage and help the government of its country to organise a programme of physical education and sport for all its citizens and in particular for the young, with a view to developing the character and improving the health of the participants ;
- to combat all discrimination ;
- to celebrate an annual "Olympic day" ;
- to imbue all its activities with educational, ethical and aesthetic feeling.

When the IOC approves the statutes of an NOC, it recognises it as the sole official Olympic organisation in its country. The NOC is then admitted to the Olympic family.

THE NATIONAL CONFEDERATIONS

In certain countries, the national federations belong to a national confederation of sports. In such cases, the NOC consists only of the federations governing sports included in the Olympic programme.

The financial aid given by the public authorities, the responsibilities of the confederations and their methods of action vary considerably from one country to another.



It is thus clear that the IOC, the ISFs, the NOCs and the national sports confederations are interdependent and complementary to each other, with regard to both their responsibilities and their powers.

These organisations feel more than ever the need for close coordination and reinforced ties.

THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Either through indifference, or because they were too occupied with economic and social priorities, it is only recently that governments have begun to concern themselves with the phenomenon of sport. The number of countries whose governments have realised the scope, value and social role of sport and taken steps to promote it is becoming larger and larger.

Among these steps let us mention :

- the creation of ministerial departments responsible for physical education and sport ;
- the promulgation of laws and decrees giving sport an increasingly important status ;
- the development of sporting infrastructures ;
- support for top-level competitive sport ;
- the creation of sports institutes ;
- the promotion of sport for all.

The public authorities even now play an active part in many sectors of sports activity and contribute to the development of world sport.

The national and international organisations responsible for sport have become aware of the trends and decisions of governmental or intergovernmental agencies (like UNESCO). They welcome the beneficial aspects of the action of public authorities, but wish to warn the great mass of sportsmen against certain acts of interference that risk diverting sport from its true purpose.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding and to simplify full cooperation with the public authorities :

the INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE,
the INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS,
the NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES

- REAFFIRM their faith in the humanitarian principles of the sports movement as defined in the IOC Rule 1 ;
- EXPRESS their determination to continue to improve their structures and continually adapt themselves to the demands of modern sport ;
- REDOUBLE their vigilance in order to eliminate the present lowering of values threatening sport : exaggerated nationalism, discrimination of all kind, the manipulation and exploitation of athletes ;
- REITERATE their firm decision to coordinate their efforts in order to continue the progress of sport, whilst ceaselessly fighting against the abuses that are harmful to it ;
- DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER to ensure the survival of the Olympic Games and to enhance their value by protecting them against all excesses that might adversely affect their integrity and greatness ;
- ACT in the same spirit for world championships as well as for continental and national competitions ;
- CONTRIBUTE to the development of sport for all ;
- REINFORCE their educational efforts with a view to the development and fulfilment of youth.

To accomplish this,

the INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE,
the INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS,
the NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES

PROPOSE :

- the ADOPTION of measures designed to ensure a permanent and reciprocal exchange of information between the three organisations signing this declaration and the public authorities ;
- the ESTABLISHMENT of permanent contacts with the public authorities ;
- the PLANNING and COORDINATION of sports educational activities, in order to avoid duplication and divergence,;
- the DEFINITION of the major responsibilities in the field of physical education and sport, and the logical sharing of these responsibilities between the public authorities and the voluntary sports organisations.

CONSIDER :

that governmental and intergovernmental agencies should concentrate their efforts in those fields which, to the exclusion of all others, come within their jurisdiction. It is up to these agencies :

1. to ENSURE a permanent, complete education in which physical training and sport are given their proper place ;
2. to GIVE physical education and sport a larger place in school timetables, at all levels ;
3. to IMPROVE sports medical examinations and the supervision of nutrition in scholastic establishments ;
4. to ENSURE continuous, up-to-date training of teaching staff in the field of physical education and sport ;
5. to DEVELOP sports infrastructures and ensure their full use for all ;
6. to ENCOURAGE sport in all sectors of society ;
7. to COORDINATE scientific and technological research in sport ;
8. to PERSUADE the mass media to become more a means of education, an element in the bringing together of the peoples of the world, and an ally in the fight against violence and chauvinism ;
9. to RESPECT the independence and the prerogatives of voluntary sports organisations by giving strong support to the work of the voluntary staff who run and govern them.

RECOMMEND :

that the division of the responsibilities between the IOC, the ISFs, the NOCs and the Sports Confederations should be confirmed and implemented and that their unity of action and their solidarity should be strengthened, at the same time hoping that the study of the project for a supreme body representative of world sport as a whole should be continued.