

# Olympic Solidarity

## Athletics course in Nigeria

by Abraham A. Ordia,

President of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa,  
Secretary General of the Nigerian NOC

*During the Olympic Solidarity/IAAF advanced coaching course in athletics which took place from 16th to 25th January in Lagos (NGR), Mr. Abraham A. Ordia, member of the IOC Commission for Olympic Solidarity, spoke to the participants on the aims and activities of the Olympic Solidarity movement.*

*Below we print large extracts from his speech.*

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"... One of the greatest achievements of the International Olympic Committee in recent times has been the creation of the Olympic Solidarity movement. This brings the National Olympic Committees closer to the International Olympic Committee and in fact to the Olympic movement, for which purpose it exists. NOCs no longer limit their activities to the four-yearly organisation and presentation of teams for the Olympic Games. Thanks to the International Olympic Committee, most NOCs, if not all, now have a sense of belonging through the activities of the Commission for Olympic Solidarity. NOCs now concern themselves with a variety of activities throughout the year, be it the sports needs of their countries, coaching of athletes, training of officials, sports medicine, or giving assistance or advice in matters of sports installations and infrastructure, etc.

All the NOCs of the world come together to form what is known as the General Assembly of National Olympic Committees with Mr. Giulio Onesti as President. This body meets once every two years to discuss matters of common interest and to submit suggestions and recommendations, where necessary, to the International Olympic Committee. Membership of the General Assembly does not prevent any NOC from dealing directly with the IOC on any subject.

In the interval between General Assemblies of the National Olympic Committees, participation in Olympic Solidarity management and the supervision of its activity are assigned by the IOC to a Joint Commission on which the NOCs are represented by 15 elected members of the Council of their General Assembly, on a continental quota basis. Africa is represented by three members.

In order to confer a permanent nature to the NOCs' representatives and to their participation in the activity and management of Olympic Solidarity, the President of the IOC created an Olympic Solidarity Board comprising the Chairman of the Solidarity Commission, the Coordinator and two other members...

...Olympic Solidarity represents a programme of sports technical assistance for the benefit of NOCs and, through them, for the benefit of the development of sport and of the Olympic ideal in all countries asking to be helped. It is organised by the IOC in close collaboration with the NOCs and in coordination with the International Sports Federations and other organisations concerned.

The Olympic Solidarity assistance programme covers the following basic fields in which effective assistance may be provided :

- a) General organisation and development of sport,
- b) Training of administrators, organisers, coaches and officials,
- c) Sports technical documentation,
- d) Sports medicine,
- e) Sports infrastructures.

Olympic Solidarity assistance is granted exclusively in the form of services and not by financial subsidies. A general priority is attributed to assistance operations meeting the needs indicated by the developing countries. All Olympic Solidarity assistance, whether intended for the NOC alone or for other sports organisations of a country, may



January 1978 - Lagos: the author of this report, Mr. Abraham Ordia (on the extreme left), in the company of the IAAF President, Mr. Adriaan Paulen (on the right), with Brigadier Adefope, Dr. Jozsef Sir, course director, and Major-General Olufemi Olutoye, President of the Nigerian NOC.

only be granted and carried out through the NOC of the country concerned.

Clinics and courses of instruction are organised in different countries and scholarships are awarded for training at suitable institutions where they exist.

### Financial conditions

Olympic Solidarity assistance is in no case completely free of charge. It is always accompanied by an active material participation and collaboration of the country assisted, for example :

- a) The cost of scholarship holders' round trip from their home to the venue of the course is met by the NOC or by the sports authorities of their country of origin or else by themselves. The same principle applies to any loss of earning power or wages.
- b) The living expenses of scholarship holders during the period of the course and under the conditions defined by the IOC are payable by Olympic Solidarity which will also offer scholarship holders the necessary documents considered useful.
- c) Insurance coverage against illness or accidents for scholarship holders for the

duration of the course is payable by Olympic Solidarity.

- d) In the case of special scholarships of long duration (8 months to 4 years), particular conditions will be applied and will be notified to the NOCs and to the candidates concerned...

... Apart from IOC Olympic Solidarity courses, International Sports Federations and other organisations organise similar courses of brief duration and sometimes in the same countries at short intervals. This appears to us—the African members of Olympic Solidarity—as a dissipation of funds, energy and talent. We have always wondered whether it could not be possible to harmonise these coaching courses. We made our feelings known at meetings of the Solidarity Commission both in Abidjan and in Lausanne and I am glad to say that our suggestions did not fall on deaf ears. On the contrary they were very well taken.

In his report to the 79th IOC Session in Prague, last June, the Coordinator of Olympic Solidarity said :

*"During the Olympic meetings at Abidjan various innovations were introduced with regard to Olympic Solidarity..."*

*... It has been decided to collaborate more fully with the IFs on technical questions.*

*When Olympic Solidarity takes a hand in the advanced training of athletes, trainers and judges, it cannot do without the know-how of the IFs. On the other hand, the Federations themselves immediately came out in favour of this type of collaboration. I am glad to say that this is already under way and-promises-well. General agreements have been reached with Mr. Paulen, President of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, and with Mr. Ercegan, President of the International Wrestling Federation.“...*

...I sincerely hope that other Federations and organisations will cooperate with the IOC Olympic Solidarity Commission in this meaningful venture for the ultimate benefit of our sportsmen and women.

It has been affirmed that Olympic Solidarity should be the practical expression of the friendly mutual aid and brotherly collabo-

ration of all NOCs, both those requesting help and those capable of making their contribution towards the material implementation of the aid envisaged. Each Olympic Solidarity assistance project should comprise not only the initiative, organisation and material contribution of Olympic Solidarity, but also an active material participation of both the NOCs assisted and—as far as possible—one or more NOCs contributing to the assistance...

...I hope that the lessons gained here will be taken back to your respective countries and shared among your fellow men. Only in this way can courses of this nature be meaningful. Only by so doing can we justify the huge sums of money, time and material spent on organising these courses...

A. O.