

**Speech by
H.E. Mr. Giani Zail Singh**

President of the Indian Republic



President of the International Olympic Committee, H. E. Mr. Samaranch, Members of the International Olympic Committee, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am happy to be with you all at this 88th Session of the International Olympic Committee. It is only befitting that New Delhi which was recently the venue of the IXth Asian Games and where about 5000 participants from Asian countries assembled in a spirit of healthy competition, should have the privilege of hosting the 88th Session of the International Olympic Committee. I understand that only on three previous occasions in 1958, 1964 and 1967 Sessions of International Olympic Committee were held in Asia. The holding of the present Session once again in Asia is, therefore, very welcome. I do hope that this country will have the opportunity of hosting many such Sessions of the IOC in future. You will be happy to know that we have had the privilege of hosting the 7th Non-Aligned Meet in this very hall earlier this month. The Heads of State/Government of over 100 countries endorsed the idea of promoting sports in their countries by a special mention.

It is a matter of gratification that the Olympic movement which was revived in modern times by Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1894 has been gathering momentum from year to year and an ever greater number of countries has been coming within its fold. The movement has a profound effect on the character of the youth of the world. It goes a long way in establishing peace and harmony in the world over. I have no doubt that under the able leadership and guidance of IOC President, Mr. Samaranch the movement will gain further momentum and your efforts in broadbasing the various activities of the IOC will be crowned with success.

H.E. Mr. Samaranch and some of the other members of the International Olympic Committee have already seen the infrastructure and facilities created by us in New Delhi which we used for holding the IXth Asian Games, 1982. I sincerely hope that during your stay in this country, all of you will be able to see these facilities for yourselves. A firm base has been created for encouraging sports in this country. I can assure you, in this context, that India will always remain an enthusiastic champion of the Olympic movement and an ardent believer in the Olympic spirit.

I have no doubt that in your deliberations you will pay special attention to the promotion of sports and the Olympic movement in developing countries. We would suggest that the various requirements for holding the different games should be such that they do not adversely affect the interests of sportsmen and women from the less affluent countries. The Olympic movement should not be allowed to become the preserve of the affluent. I also hope that the International Olympic Committee will make special efforts to promote research and development in the field of sports in various developing countries and would also help them in acquiring the advantages of the research already done in affluent countries.

The level of performance of our sportsmen and women like their counterparts in many other developing countries may need to be raised a great deal, but in the love of sports, sportsman-spirit, fair play, discipline and observance of rules and the Olympic spirit. they are second to none.

I do not wish to take more of your time. It gives me great pleasure to inaugurate the 86th Session of the International Olympic Committee at New Delhi.

Thank you.

G. Z. S.