

PRESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Three visits to Africa

In keeping with his promise to visit all members of the Olympic Family in their home country, the IOC President H.E. Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch finished his 1983 tour with a journey to Africa.

For his fourth official trip to the African continent, the President travelled to Libya, Sudan and Ethiopia from 12th to 18th December. He was accompanied by personalities who were either originally from, or very knowledgeable about those countries. Amongst his entourage were H.E. Mr. Louis Guirandou-N'Diaye, IOC First Vice-President, Mr. Anani Matthia, President of the Togolese NOC and of the Association of African NOCs (ACNOA), Mr. Mbogo Wa Kamau, President of the Kenya Olympic Association and ACNOA Vice-President, and Mr. Amadou Lamine Ba, ACNOA secretary general.

This short tour provided the opportunity of drawing the IOC and NOCs closer together. According to President Samaranch, it is only by travelling in this fashion that it is possible to establish a broad and concrete view of the desires of the greatest number of national sports directors, and to be a direct witness to the difficulties which appear in the field of sports development and, more specifically-as - the Olympic Games draw nearer - of top level sports training. At the same time, it is also a way of establishing close contacts with the heads of states.

It must be added that the highest governmental authorities of each of the three countries insisted on meeting the IOC President.

He was therefore able to speak with Colonel Kadhafi, Leader of the Socialist People's



During his travels in Africa, on 13th December 1983 in Tripoli, the IOC President, H. E. Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, was received by Colonel Muammar al-Kadhafi, President of the "Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya".

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, with the Ethiopian Prime Minister and with General Nimeyri, President of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan. The latter decorated Mr. Samaranch with the Order of the Republic of the Sudan. These interviews gave President Samaranch the opportunity of verifying the evergrowing interest which these statesmen take in sport and in the Olympic Games in particular.

The Ethiopian stopover was to assume a particularly symbolic character. Ethiopia was the 115th member of the Olympic Family to welcome the IOC President who was taking advantage of this first official visit to posthumously award Abebe Bikila - the twice times Olympic marathon champion in Rome and in - Tokyo, who died tragically in an accident in 1973 - with the Silver Olympic Order. Everyone will remember the bare-footed runner who became the first black African to make Olympic history.

After having paid his respects at the African Olympic champion's tombstone, H.E. Juan Antonio Samaranch awarded the insignia of the Order to Mrs. Bikila and her five children. The IOC will provide the financial backing for scholarships for two of the children.

At the end of his trip, President Samaranch declared that he was particularly satisfied with the productive dealings he had had with the various NOC officials and IOC members of the three countries: Messrs. Bashir and Attarabulsi for Libya, Mr. Zein El Abdeen Mohamed El Gadir for the Sudan, and Mr. Ydnekatchew Tessema for Ethiopia.

The President was also very pleased to notice the vitality with which all three countries were preparing themselves for the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad. He is quite prepared to return to the African continent as soon as possible. Two official journeys have already been planned for 1984 during which he will travel to those countries which he has not yet been able to visit.