



"Passing the baton of friendship", by Jean-Claude Bacle (FRA), bronze medallist in "Fotosport'86".

TOWARDS COORDINATION OF SPORTS AID

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The IOC, at the recommendation of the Olympic Movement, has decided to organize a discussion meeting on the subject of sports aid to developing countries. Invitations to participate in this meeting, to be held from 20th to 22nd April 1988, will be issued to representatives of organisations having programmes of sports aid to developing countries. This initiative is a response to a need which has been felt for some time, namely the need to coordinate the aid given or, at the very least, to establish a dialogue between the organisations concerned.

In reality, as a result of the absence of such coordination, the practice of high-performance and popular sport in developing countries has not benefited to the desired extent from the numerous aid programmes carried out by governmental and intergovernmental institutions as well as by non-governmental organisations, both national and international.

It is true that local conditions, economic difficulties, inadequate infrastructures and a lack of qualified personnel, continue to exercise a negative influence on the development of sport, but it is also true that we could have expected better results from the aid programmes. It is becoming increasingly apparent that one of the main reasons for this lack of effectiveness in relation to these programmes must be put down to a lack of coordination or dialogue between the aid-giving organisations. At present, the programmes are decided upon, designed and conducted by each organisation separately without consultation and without any overall plan, even in the limited form of a few principles agreed upon by all those involved in these actions.

The consequences are manifold : scattering of resources, redundancy and duplication of aid given, programmes ill adapted to local conditions, poor geographical distribution and timing and discrepancies in the quality and nature, sometimes unilateral, of the aid.

Of course, there are also problems which result from a lack of communication between donors and beneficiaries, for instance failure to define the real needs and to recognise priorities in the satisfaction of those needs, and discrepancies in the execution of the programmes due to local circumstances, human resources and infrastructure.

Just as the needs differ greatly from country to country depending on geographical, material and social conditions and local traditions, there is an equally wide range of donors — intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations — having differing possibilities and resources and dissimilar conceptions of the methods and objectives of the aid they give.

The programmes take various forms, such as provision of bursaries, sending of specialists, organisation of courses, construction of sports facilities and infrastructures and assistance towards participation in various international competitions.

All these considerations call for an in-depth and multilateral analysis of the needs and the best ways to fulfil them, in particular by working out the most appropriate forms of aid.

In order to make possible an improvement in the efficacy and usefulness of the aid efforts made by the various organisations, it is necessary to establish first of all a clear awareness of the present situation in the area of sports cooperation.

The IOC's intention is to proceed in stages towards an overall picture of aid programmes. The first step will be to draw up a list of the programmes and achievements of the entire Olympic Movement. This picture will be completed by the information made available to the meeting by States and governmental and non-governmental international organisations which are not part of the Olympic Movement.

The data received will be compiled and studied with a view to diagnosing the weak points of the existing aid system and outlining a methodology which would make it possible to rationalize and coordinate efforts made in this area so that, at the discussion forum to be held in April 1988, the conclusions of the study and the resulting proposals may be presented to the participants as a basis for discussion.

The IOC is conscious of the limits which apply to the possibility of achieving overall coordination on a global scale. The necessary data are not always easy to obtain, the problems to be

Mr. Elabe presents the consignment of sporting goods.



resolved are extremely complex, the decision criteria and the forms of aid given differ from organization to organization.

Nevertheless, the identification of weak points in relation to aid programmes taken as a whole, the pooling of experiences, successes and failures, the adoption of certain basic guidelines in order to remedy the weaknesses and the highlighting of particular areas which should benefit from greater attention by donors, can only

be beneficial and cannot help but contribute towards an improvement in the efficacy of aid to developing countries in the area of sport.

In order to make possible a continuous process of information exchange and mutual consultation, a plan for the creation of an information exchange centre, which could also serve as a discussion forum, will be put to the participants at the meeting for their evaluation.

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