

**WELCOME BY  
Mr NELSON PAILLOU,  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
FRENCH NATIONAL  
OLYMPIC AND SPORTS  
COMMITTEE**



**W**e are delighted to have this opportunity to tell the President, His Excellency Juan Antonio Samaranch, and the ladies and gentlemen of the IOC, how deeply the French Olympic Committee appreciates the honour and friendship they have shown us in choosing the candidature put forward by Albertville's bid committee, and entrusting us with the organization of the XVI Olympic Winter Games. It is thanks to this generous decision that we have the pleasure of hosting the 98th Session of the UC today.

More even than by the heartwarming confidence this represents, we are touched by the homage it pays to the Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin on the centenary of his declaration at the Sorbonne in favour of a revival of the Olympic Games. This brilliant admirer of the Ancient Greeks needed rare conviction and pugnacity to persuade a sceptical, even ironic, establishment that the best way to promote sport was to give it international status by breathing new life into the Games of antiquity, which after 12 centuries of glory, had spent a further 15 centuries consigned to oblivion, since 393 A.D., by Emperor Theodosius I.

Having watched the organization develop over the last six years, I am convinced that our COJO, conceived, motivated and directed by its presidents, Michel Barnier and Jean-Claude Killy, will give you satisfaction, as long as no unforeseeable problems arise from outside.

I should also like to tell you what a precious source of support our fraternal relationship with the Spanish Olympic Committee and COOB'92 has proved to be.

In the name of the French Olympic Committee, I extend a very warm welcome to you. We are constantly at your disposal, to ensure that your stay in France fulfills all expectations. We wish you all the best in your tasks, and through our total confidence and sincere acknowledgement of your tireless pursuit of a major undertaking, we assure you of our true friendship.



**SPEECH BY  
H.E. JUAN ANTONIO  
SAMARANCH, PRESIDENT  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE**

**I**t is always a great joy for my colleagues and me to find ourselves on French soil. Especially as it is your magnificent mountains that will be hosting the sixteenth Olympic Winter Games this year,

First and foremost, we are gathered here today to celebrate an anniversary and, the most fundamental thing for us, the birth of the modern Olympic idea. Exactly one century ago, in 1892, in the austere setting of the Sorbonne in Paris, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, aged twenty-nine, proposed the revival of the Olympic Games.

At a colloquy of a type frequent at the time, a tradition that has lived on, Coubertin was talking about physical exercise in the modern world.