



SPEECH OF H.E. JUAN ANTONIO SAMARANCH, IOC PRESIDENT

We are gathered here in Lillehammer, Norway, the home of skiing, to celebrate our games, the XVII Olympic Winter Games, the "White-Green" Games.

These Games are the main event in 1994, Centennial Year of the International Olympic Committee founded by Pierre de Coubertin, proclaimed by the United Nations "International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal".

Ten years ago, we were in Sarajevo for the Olympic Games. A city then dedicated to sport, understanding, friendship and peace. Sarajevo, whose people for over two years have suffered so much. I invite everyone not only all of you here in the stadium, but everywhere around the world, maybe even in your own homes, to stand up for a moment's silence in memory of Sarajevo.

Thank you. Our message is stronger than ever. Please stop the fighting. Stop the killing. Drop your guns.

The Olympic Movement would like to pay a special tribute to the Norwegian Royal Family for its great interest in Olympism and sport. We all remember that His Majesty King Olaf V was himself a great Olympian. Today the support of Their Majesties, King Harald himself an Olympic athlete - and Queen Sonja has been very important in promoting the Olympic tradition which combines sport and culture, as well as respect for the environment.

The greatest world youth sports gathering is going to begin. On behalf of the International Olympic Committee, the International Federations and the National Olympic Committees, I welcome the athletes of world.

Our warmest thanks go to the Government and to the people of Norway for their enthusiasm and support. Our very special thanks go to:

- the Lillehammer Organizing Committee*
- its President, Gerhard Heiberg*
- all his staff*

- and the thousands of volunteers for their friendship, efficiency and dedication, creating the very best sporting atmosphere.

And now, let the Games begin.

I have the great honour to invite His Majesty the King to declare open the XVII Olympic Winter Games.