

The Olympic Winter Games in Nagano

by **Juan Antonio Samaranch**

After the ecologically sound white-green Games that the Norwegians so successfully organized in Lillehammer, we are entering, in 1997, the final phase of the preparations for the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan.

Like Lillehammer, Nagano has also focused on protection of the environment, on the enthusiasm of the local population and on the promotion of peace and the Olympic spirit, solidarity and brotherhood among peoples.

In Lillehammer, we called upon the entire world to observe the Olympic Truce, thinking especially of Sarajevo, the Olympic city which had hosted the Winter Games in 1984. After so many years of suffering, horror and massacre, peace has finally returned to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The reconstruction of the Zetra stadium, destroyed by this murderous war, is currently being conducted under the aegis of the IOC.

Armed conflict, human suffering and natural disasters are still in evidence in some regions. For this reason, in accordance with its decision taken in 1995, the United Nations General Assembly will be requested to consider at its next session a draft resolution on the Olympic Truce

with a view to the celebration of the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano.

The IOC has very good relations with the Organizing Committee of the Games in Nagano, better known by its acronym, NAOC. Several initiatives have been undertaken in order to better satisfy the needs of the Olympic family and the media. Large-scale constructions are nearly completed. The number of consultative meetings between the Olympic Movement and NAOC is increasing in order to ensure the Games' success. The Government, the Japanese Olympic Committee and the Japanese people all support NAOC. The different competitions that are being held this winter season are bringing to light new talents who will surely distinguish themselves in Nagano.

In the meantime, bids to organize the XX Olympic Winter Games in 2006 are beginning to appear on the horizon. This is both the proof and the guarantee (as if either were needed) of the Olympic Games' success, and of the development of sport in the long term. The fact that the television rights have already been granted up to 2008 is further proof yet. The Olympic Movement is a social force which, united for and through sport, will hold a position of major importance in the third millennium.