

## The candidates cities

by Juan Antonio Samaranch

Once upon a time, the organization of the Olympic Games was connected with a World Fair (as in 1900 and 1904). The Games then were in fact spread out over several months, for a variety of reasons. A change of host city after the initial choice, as was the case with Chicago and Saint Louis in 1904, for example, could not be totally ruled out. As early as 1901, the idea of electing the host city for the 1908 Games was put forward, seven years in advance. The city of Antwerp, host of the Games of the VII Olympiad in 1920, made its bid in 1914 before the outbreak of the First World War, as a result of which the 1916 Games did not take place. The four-yearly cycle of the Games was also disrupted during the Second World War. However, the determination, courage and far-sightedness of the IOC members made it possible to overcome the obstacles and pursue the road paved by our founder, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, starting in 1894.

History teaches us that each decade has been marked by developments of a political, social, scientific and technological nature which have had an impact on the Olympic Movement. On all these occasions, we have been able to react in time, finding solutions to our problems, making positive and necessary changes in our rules and introducing new concepts. Today, the organization of the Olympic Games and its many related activities benefit the host country and city, and yet avoid gigantism. Planning, tourism, improvements in the quality of life of the local community, the construction or renovation of sports fa-

cilities, environmental protection, use of state-of-the-art technology, etc., are just some of the advantages that may accrue to them, whence the growing number of cities bidding to host the Olympic Games.

On behalf of the Olympic Movement, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the eleven candidate cities, which are, in alphabetical order, Athens, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Istanbul, Lille, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, San Juan, Seville, Stockholm and St Petersburg, for the hard work and enthusiasm that have characterized their bids to host the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad in 2004. I would also like to congratulate them on their dedication to the Olympic Movement, for they will all remain winners through their contributions to the promotion of the Olympic ideal and the development of sport in their respective countries.

The selection college, chaired by my colleague Marc Hodler, IOC first Vice President, noted with satisfaction that all eleven candidate cities were capable of organizing Olympic Games, and expressed its congratulations and thanks to them publicly. In accordance with the guidelines established in advance, the college selected, by consensus, the following five finalists: Athens, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Rome and Stockholm. Although the host city for the year 2004 has yet to be chosen, several bids have been announced for the Olympic Games in the years 2006, 2008 and 2012. These initiatives are further proof of the important role sport will play in the third Millennium.