



## Japan and Nagano

by Juan Antonio Samaranch

The XVIII Olympic Winter Games took place in Nagano, Japan, to the satisfaction of all concerned. We all admired the beauty of the Games and the values they represent for youth, and appreciated the talent and efforts of all the athletes, and the cultural traditions of Japan. Nagano and Japan have truly presented to the world the best organization in the history of the Olympic Winter Games, which also highlighted the commitment of the Olympic Movement to the wellbeing of our children, the promotion of women, the protection of the environment and humanitarian concerns.

It is therefore our hope that the appeal of the 185 Member States of the United Nations to observe the Olympic Truce during the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano has served the purpose of searching for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the conflicts we are facing today, in an effort to bring human tragedies to an end.

In this year in which we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we must also strive to promote Olympic ethics, tolerance, generosity and the notion of fair play. Olympism is a school of justice, fraternity and friendship. In conformity with the basic principles of the *Olympic Charter*, “the goal of Olympism is to place everywhere sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society concerned with the

preservation of human dignity”; moreover, “the practice of sport is a human right, every individual must have the possibility of practising sport in accordance with his or her needs”. Preserving the universality of the Olympic Games by encouraging the participation of all the National Olympic Committees through the concrete actions of Olympic Solidarity is of vital importance. Let us therefore pursue together our efforts to provide an education in which sport and the Olympic ideal also play an essential role, based on the values of respect, dignity, tolerance and solidarity. We must all strive for sport for all, education for all, health for all and peace for all. The year 1998 is also that of this century’s last World Fair, which will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, on the theme of “the oceans - heritage for the future”. The International Olympic Committee will have a pavilion there. Protecting our planet and its environment is also our duty.

We must therefore endeavour continuously to uphold the Olympic ideal and develop a spirit of cooperation with all the inter- and non-governmental organizations in order to serve the community at local and international level.

Our dedication to Olympism will be rewarded by the moral satisfaction we derive from it. Volunteerism must be considered a privilege for those who can afford to practise it. And the Olympic Movement illustrates perfectly the pyramid of this movement of volunteers who are active throughout the world.