

## Speech by Eishiro Saito\*

*“On behalf of the Organizing Committee, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano.*

*“We extend this hearty welcome to athletes and officials, to members of the world media, to spectators here in the stadium, and to the millions around the world who support the Olympic Movement and are watching us now.*

*“We give our heartfelt thanks to all those people whose advice and devotion over many years have turned our dream into reality.*

*“Especially, we offer our deepest thanks to the President of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch, as well as all the members of the International Olympic Committee, for conferring Nagano with the honour of hosting the Games.*

*“To celebrate the Nagano Games as a festival of sport and a link to the 21st century, we have set the concept of “Games form the Heart, Together with Love”. Love, for sport, for children, for the richness and beauty of our natural environment, and for humankind transcending national and ethnic boundaries: all these faces of love form the foundation upon which we have built these Games.*

*“The participation of many is vital to the success of the Nagano Games. Together, denotes the participation of the athletes and officials who take part in the events, the volunteers who support the organization, and the spectators who encourage the athletes.*

*“Participation of children”, “Respect for the beauty and bounty of nature”: “A festival of peace and friendship”. These three goals are the expression of our Games from the Heart. It is our fervent hope that the coming century will be an era of peace and friendship when children and all humankind will live in harmony with their natural surroundings.*

*“I sincerely hope that these Games from the Heart, Together with Love will achieve such splendid heights that they will leave a lasting impression to be talked of for generations to come.*

*“It is now my honour to invite the President of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch, to make an address.*

*“Thank you.”*

*\*President of the Organizing Committee for the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano.*