

BY JUAN ANTONIO SAMARANCH

A new horizon

Our organization has been the target of an unprecedented world-wide media campaign. Indirectly, this campaign has proved our organization's importance in contemporary society.

The acerbic criticism which we have been subjected to was centred mainly on the selection procedure for Olympic Games host cities, and did not undermine the great majority of IOC members.

I was personally deeply disappointed by the behaviour of some of our members, whom we were unfortunately obliged to judge for failing to observe the Olympic oath and the IOC's regulations. I am convinced that this is the first and last time we will have to deal with such cases.

A few trees cannot hide the forest. These setbacks do not weigh heavily against the contributions and improvements made in the framework of the Olympic Games and sport, nor can they overshadow the gigantic edifice built by our predecessors and ourselves over more than a century.

We have acknowledged the errors committed and agreed to assume our shared responsibilities, and to take the urgent measures that were required in the light of the decisions made by the extraordinary IOC Session that took place on 17 and 18 March.

Throughout its 105 years of existence, the International Olympic Committee has not hesitated to modernize, adapt and update its structures.

We must now, through the Ethics and the IOC 2000 Commissions, chart a new direction and explore other alternatives, without abdicating our convictions, which have the Olympic Charter as their source.

We must demonstrate our capacity for action with innovative and realistic ideas, with courageous, constructive and progressive proposals that respond to the aspirations of all the adherents of the Olympic Movement.

We must preserve progress, protect our institution and the Olympic Games, and sketch out a plan of action for the future.

We have an obligation to the athletes of the entire world, the International Federations, the National Olympic Committees, the Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games, our Olympic partners and the general public.

We will also create an anti-doping agency, with the cooperation of the International Federations, the National Olympic Committees and the athletes. Governments are welcome to join the efforts which the Olympic Movement is deploying to fight the scourge of doping.

Whilst preserving our unique specificity and identity, we must turn our efforts to an exercise of renewal before entering the third millennium.

