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Culture and Education

Among the reforms adopted by the International Olympic Committee, the one focusing on culture and education was a subject of a forum and the Olympic Art and Sport Contest 2000, which was open to young fine arts students and athletes. The merger of the Commission for the International Olympic Academy and the Cultural Commission, to form the Commission for Culture and Olympic Education, consolidates the natural link between the two. Since its beginnings, the Olympic Movement has linked sport to culture and education, given that the goal of Olympism is to place sport everywhere at the service of the harmonious development of mankind.

The dearest wish of our founder Pierre de Coubertin was that Olympism should become a philosophy in which culture and sport were reconciled. "In the golden age of Olympism", wrote Coubertin, "the harmonious combination of arts and letters with sport ensured the greatness of the Olympic Games. It must be the same in the future."

There was a time when contests in architecture, literature, painting, music and sculpture were organized during the period of the Olympic Games. Now, a cultural programme is organized by the Olympic Games host city to cover almost an entire Olympiad, that is, four years. The opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games and the Olympic torch relay are a unique cultural event for the entire world.

The media coverage of the Olympic Games has considerably strengthened the cultural vocation of Olympism which is accessible to all.

Olympic education is not limited to an ideal, a philosophy or culture. It is a whole set of subjects defined in the first chapter of the Olympic Charter, including sports ethics; the fight against doping; drug abuse and all the scourges which endanger the health of athletes and young people in general; and the protection of the environment.

Olympic education should be undertaken at all levels of society and in all national languages. In order to do this, it is essential for each NOC to aspire to have an information centre, a museum and an academy, in order to preserve its cultural heritage and teach Olympism.

Furthermore, the organization of traditional games should be encouraged as a cultural element to be transmitted to the next generation.

The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, guardian of the cultural wealth of the Olympic Movement and equipped with modern technology, regularly organizes art, philately and numismatics exhibitions. Donations of works of art and memorabilia from International Federations, National Olympic Committees, athletes, Olympic Games Organizing Committees and philanthropists have greatly enriched the Olympic Museum.

Each people has its own culture and way of conserving art in all its forms. It is all this cultural wealth from all the countries which comprise the Olympic Movement that makes Olympism a universal culture.

