

INVITATION TO SALT LAKE CITY 2002

The IOC officially invited the NOCs to participate in the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, at a ceremony organized on 1 February at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, attended by, among others, Ed Eynon, vice-president responsible for human resources of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC), Sharon Capeling-Alakija, chief coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers programme, and representatives of volunteers from the last three editions of the Olympic Winter Games in Albertville in 1992, Lillehammer in 1994 and Nagano in 1998. After symbolically signing the invita-



The IOC President signs the invitations to the NOCs alongside Françoise Zweifel.

tions addressed to the NOCs of South Africa, Australia, the United States of America, Japan, Norway and Switzerland, the IOC President declared: "The IOC invites the athletes of the world to assemble next

year in Salt Lake City to celebrate the XIX Olympic Winter Games." The IOC marked the fact that the year 2001 has been proclaimed the International Year of Volunteers by the United Nations General Assembly by paying tribute to its own volunteers. "The Olympic Movement depends on volunteers," noted the IOC President. "The members of the Olympic Family generously give up their time and means for the development of sport and our Movement. Indeed, the Olympic Games themselves could not take place without the help of thousands of volunteers. And the Salt Lake City Games will be no different. May I thank all these people in advance."

The Volunteer Olympics 2001

Taking place between the Summer and the Winter Games – Sydney 2000 and Salt Lake City 2002 – the International Year of Volunteers is an Olympics of a third kind. Just as it is true of the Olympic Movement, the United Nations International Year aims to encourage "a way of life based on the joy found in effort, on the powerful and educational value of good example and respect for fundamental universal principles".



The Year of Volunteers is like the Olympic Games, part of a permanent, ongoing effort. It is universal, covering all continents,

and while volunteers do not compete against each other, they do indeed face great challenges and perform against great odds.

On behalf of the United Nations Volunteers programme which was designated the focal point for this International Year by the UN General Assembly, I would like to invite all of you today to join in these 'Volunteer Olympics' 2001.

The world of sport and the world of volunteers are closely linked. What would the Olympic Games be without

the tens of thousands of volunteers? They not only provide a host of unvaluable services and organizational support, volunteers also create a bond between the Olympic Family and the host community and thus help install the spirit of international solidarity that is so evident at the Olympic Games.

But equally, at the community level, volunteerism and sports bring people together in this same spirit of solidarity. My own childhood memories as a volunteer are closely associated with sports: as a referee, a coach, a host of visiting teams as well as a campaigner to raise funds to build a bigger swimming pool at the local YMCA in my hometown on the Canadian prairies.

The almost 5,000 United Nations vol-

unteers who serve annually around the world for development and peace also understand the galvanizing power of sports. Just recently, a UN volunteer from Brazil joined the group of 700-plus currently working in East Timor. He will be the coach of the national soccer team. How important sports are for this young nation was demonstrated when their athletes participated in last year's Summer Games. I think none of us will forget the uplifting moment when they were cheered by the Sydney audience.

It has been said that the economic value of the time volunteered at the Olympics could be compared to the overall budget of the Games.

It is true: volunteers are cost effective, but they don't come for free.

Volunteerism needs inspired leader-

ship, strong coordination, good training, rigorous evaluation and a supportive infrastructure, as David Brettell reminded us in the context of the Sydney Olympics.

But above all, volunteers need recognition.

The International Year of Volunteers 2001 aims to highlight the efforts of the millions of people around the world who act in the spirit of solidarity.

Join us in fostering and in celebrating this spirit.

It is not only the very foundation of the United Nations.

It also lies at the heart of the Olympic Movement.

*Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers.

The importance of volunteers

In just 372 days – one year and one week from now – the people of Salt Lake City, the state of Utah and the United States of America, will be privileged to host the world's greatest athletes of winter sport.

We will also be pleased to warmly welcome many thousands of guests and several billion TV viewers.

The citizens of our city, state and country sense the increasing reality and prominence of these Games. Their excitement is palpable and contagious.

We are preparing diligently for your

by Ed Eynon*



arrival. Our venues are essentially complete. Every competition venue is being tested through 27 world class events – 11 of which have already

been held this winter season, with 16 more events scheduled for February and March of this year.

Other recent preparatory activities worth mentioning include:

- Olympic Village Open House – five days ago – media tour – 70 acre
- Unveiling of the volunteer uniforms three days ago.
- Announcement of two programmes – Adopt A Team and Olympic Village Mayor of the Day – both designed to continue SLOC's efforts to involve the entire state of Utah in staging the Games.