

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON SPORT AND TOURISM

On 22 and 23 February 2001, the Olympic city of Barcelona hosted the first World Conference on Sport and Tourism, organized jointly by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), with the cooperation of the Catalan government, the Barcelona City Council, the Spanish Government and the Spanish Olympic Committee. H.R.H. the Infanta Cristina, accompanied by the Duke of Palma de Mallorca, officially opened the Conference in the presence of the IOC President; the Secretary General of the WTO, Francesco Frangialli; the Secretary of State for Sport in Spain, Juan Antonio Gomez Angulo; the Mayor of Barcelona, Joan Clos; and the education adviser of the regional government of Catalonia, Carme Laura Gil.

For two days, experts in sport and tourism succeeded one another on the rostrum to address the 800 or so accredited participants from 105 countries on their ideas and experiences of sports event management and new trends in tourism, and the reuse of sports infrastructures for developing fitness holidays. Sport and tourism are two forces which are increasingly influencing our society's behaviour at the start of the new millennium and which have an important economic and social impact. This led to the decision to organize the first World Conference on the topic, in order to raise awareness of the mutual relation between sport and tourism and develop the advantages from which tourist regions benefit.

by Katia Mascagni Stivachtis



From the relation between sport and tourism in the economy, and the market they make up, the first day enabled key questions to be addressed, such as the sectors boosting development, the economic impact of the Olympic Games on tourism, and the fan clubs and memorabilia market. The second day was devoted to the various aspects of the promotion of human values through sport and tourism, notably sport as an element of leisure tourism, its relation with culture, the environment and human resources. The commercialization and promotion of these two sectors were also dealt with through the study of the impact of sports events on the image of tourism and its potential development, as was the case, for example, in Sydney after the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in 2000.

The Conference thus brought up a series of important points, which should be looked into by the sports and tourism communities in the future, in order to achieve greater complementarity and increase profits.

- The lack of formal collaboration between sports and tourism organi-

zations was underlined. This relationship should be developed on an international, national and local scale, in both the private and public sectors. Sport and tourism should increase significantly in the future.

- New consumer behaviour and new means of consumerism have a considerable influence on sport and tourism.
- A lack of information and statistical data, as well as insufficient evaluation and conceptualization in sport and tourism were noted. These require a more in-depth examination, a greater number of publications and a better communication of results.
- The Conference recognized the key role played by the media and new information technology in the promotion and patronage of sports and tourism activities.
- Government support is essential to the durable development of sport and tourism. In order to do this, governments are called to take into account the results of this Conference, consult all the parties concerned and cooperate with them.
- The need for an ethical approach to the development of sport and tourism was highlighted. Such an approach should take into account different lifestyles and cultures and apply existing codes of conduct.
- It was commented that, in the long term, education is still one of the most efficient instruments to ensure the lasting development of these two sectors of activities.
- Human resources constitute the basis of these two activities. More specific training courses are

needed to develop professional skills in these two sectors and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

- The Conference emphasized the need for greater cooperation between industrialized countries and developing countries in the domains of sport and tourism, provided by increased technical assistance.
- Sport, tourism and culture are complementary elements of our society as they share the same objectives and concern the same social groups, even when facing different situations. The Conference underlined the fact that these three elements play an essential role in the

endurable development of tourism and the success of major sports events such as the Olympic Games.

- Local communities should be encouraged to participate in the organization and durable development of sports and tourism events, thus reinforcing local culture and heritage as well as guaranteeing social and economic progress.
- The environment must be protected in the tourism and sports sectors through improved planning and good organization of demand and facilities, as well as through training and education.
- It was said during the Conference that because of the amount of investment needed, sports events

and related infrastructures should be planned according to the needs of local communities and visitors, so as to make their long term use cost-effective. Another important criterion was put forward: high-level sport and sport for all should be included in these new projects.

- Those participating in the Conference expressed their sincere thanks to the organizers and their partners, particularly the regional government of Catalonia, the Barcelona City Council, the Spanish government and other city organizations and firms, for having provided excellent services and facilities which contributed to the success of this Conference.



(from l. to r.) Julia García-Valdecasas Salgado, Francesco Frangiailli, the IOC President, H. R. H. the Infanta Cristina, the Duke of Palma de Majorca, Joan Clos, Juan Antonio Gomez Angulo and Carme Laura Gil.