THE ENVIRONMENT: AN INTEGRAL DIMENSION OF OLYMPISM

Recognising its responsibility towards the promotion of sustainable development, the IOC considers the environment as an integral dimension of Olympism, alongside sport and culture. The IOC thus ensures that the Olympic Games take place in conditions that take into account, in a responsible way, the environment, and collaborates with the relevant public or private authorities, with the aim of placing sport at the service of humanity.

THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE OLYMPIC CHARTER

Following the Centennial Olympic Congress, Congress of Unity, organised in 1994 in Paris, the IOC recognised the importance of the environment and sustainable development, and, in 1996, added a paragraph on environmental protection to the Olympic Charter. “[The IOC’s role with respect to environment is:] to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly.” Chapter 1, Rule 2, Paragraph 13 of the Olympic Charter, in force from 7 July 2007.

MISSION OF THE SPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

Created in December 1995, the main goal of the Sport and Environment Commission, chaired by Mr Pál Schmitt, member of the IOC since 1986, is to advise the IOC Executive Board on the policy to be adopted by the IOC and the Olympic Movement on matters related to environmental protection and support for sustainable development in relation to sport.

AGENDA 21 OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

Taking into consideration the decisions adopted in 1992 by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro regarding Agenda 21, the Olympic Movement decided to establish its own Agenda 21. Adopted by the IOC Session in 1999, the aim of this Agenda is to encourage its members to participate actively in sustainable development. It presents fundamental concepts and the general actions to be undertaken to attain this objective.

IOC GUIDE TO SPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This Guide was developed by the IOC in collaboration with all 35 International Olympic Federations to help the different members of the Olympic family transform the Agenda 21 recommendations into concrete actions and programmes. The Guide offers methodological and practical tools to the sports community, based on the major principles of sustainable development. It provides an easy way to move from theory and concepts to practical initiatives and behavioural changes; an easy way to understand the global challenges and needs for environmental protection while considering local specificities coming from diverse geographical, socio-economic, cultural and sports contexts.

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The IOC and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) signed a Cooperative Agreement in 1994 to conduct various activities to raise awareness and educate people on environmental matters in sport.

Amongst others, UNEP has participated in the IOC World Conferences on Sport and Environment, IOC regional seminars and in the production of information materials on sport and
environment such as the Agenda 21 for the Olympic Movement. UNEP has also developed working relationships with Organising Committees for the Olympic Games in Athens (2004), Turin (2006) and Beijing (2008) to promote environmental issues in the Games.

The biennial World Conference on Sport and Environment brings together representatives and partners of the Olympic Movement, as well as representatives of other entities involved in this field, like governments, international and non-governmental organisations, industry and business sectors, research institutes and media. The aim of the conferences is to regularly assess the progress made in the field of sustainable development by the Olympic Movement, give an opportunity to provide new knowledge on these issues by sharing experiences and expertise from different sectors of society, and to encourage cooperation in, and further development of, environmental policies in sport.

Regional seminars are organised in cooperation with Olympic Solidarity whose mission is to plan, organise and control support programmes for National Olympic Committees (NOCs). The seminars are adapted to local conditions and designed to raise awareness of NOCs and advocate the need to use sport as a tool for sustainable development in their countries. They also provide an opportunity to share experiences on initiatives implemented by NOCs and their Sport and Environment Commissions, to identify major issues to be resolved and to obtain their commitment on relevant measures and actions to implement at a national level.

Available on olympic.org the July-September issue of the Olympic Review entitled “Going Green” was dedicated to communicating how the Olympic movement positions sport as a vital contributor to environment protection and sustainability.

GAMES THAT RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT
The IOC works to ensure that the Olympic Games are held in conditions that demonstrate responsible concern for the environment.

To this end, it works with the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) and the competent public or private authorities and organisations responsible for organising the Games.

Within the Applicant and Candidate City procedure and questionnaire documentation, environmental and sustainable development guiding principles and requirements are included across many areas.

Statements provided by Candidate Cities are verified by an Evaluation Commission, which includes an environmental advisor appointed by the International Olympic Committee.

Once elected, the Host City is provided assistance and guidance in its preparations by the IOC Coordination Commission, which also includes an environmental advisor.

The IOC’s objective is that during the staging of the Games the environmental risks are avoided and reduced where possible and that the positive impacts and opportunities of the event are maximised. The ultimate objective is to bequeath a positive Olympic Games legacy to the Host City, its region and country, in which the positive impacts outweigh the negative ones.

The Olympic Games Impact study: OGI

The hosting of an Olympic Games has a significant impact on the Host City and its community. From tangible infrastructure construction such as competition venues and transport improvements, through to the evolution of the image of a Host City, the event acts as a vehicle and catalyst which leaves a lasting mark on the city, host country and its people thought its economic, urban, social or historic influence. To what extent, with what results, and with what benefits, has been a long-lasting debate.

To answer to these questions and to assist the needs of the Olympic Games Organising Committee (OCOG) in this area, the IOC
created the Olympic Games Impact (OGI) study. The principal objectives of OGI are: to measure the overall impact of the Olympic Games; to assist bidding cities and future Olympic Games Organisers through the transfer of strategic directions obtained from past and present Olympic Games, and to identify potential legacies thereby maximising the benefits of their Olympic Games.

In order to measure the impact of the Olympic Games, concrete measurement tools were needed. More than 100 research “indicators” were created and grouped into the three internationally recognized spheres of sustainable development: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. The OGI indicators cover a vast range of activities; from those that are a direct result of the staging of the Olympic Games, such as the construction of competition venues or the Olympic Village, to others that are a more indirect consequence, such as the evolution of transport and accommodation infrastructure. Other indicators facilitate the monitoring of contextual data within a Host City and its region such as crime rates, sports participation and water quality.

Since the realisation of the OGI study, in 2003, the IOC has asked all OCOGs to conduct the study. Future Olympic Organisers are informed of the OGI study during the Applicant and Candidate City phases through IOC candidature documentation. At present four OCOGs are conducting the study: the Beijing Olympic Organising Committee, the Vancouver Olympic Organising Committee, the London Organising Committee and the Sochi Organising Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL GAMES-TIME INITIATIVES

Sydney 2000
The key environmental achievements included public transport access, solar power applications, good building material selection, recycling of construction waste, energy and water conservation and wetland restoration.

Between 1998 and 2000, four million trees were planted in sites throughout the Australian continent. The Organising Committee and the Olympic Coordination Agency won the 2001 UNEP Global 500 Roll of Honour Award for their environmental efforts.

Salt Lake City 2002
In the framework of planting programmes at the venues and “Plant it Green: The Global Trees Race”, over 100,000 trees were planted in Utah, and more than two million throughout the world. The energy recycled from the curling hall’s air conditioning unit heated the showers and the bathrooms at the venue. This system used ammonia, which does not destroy the ozone layer.

Athens 2004
By the end of the Games, over a million large bushes, 290,000 trees and 11 million small trees had been planted throughout the Greek capital. Environmentally-friendly building materials and new energy technology were used, and the global protection of natural resources was taken into account. Athens 2004 set up a series of initiatives and programmes for the environment, including the following:

- conception of a recreational eco-excursions programme in cooperation with the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature
- use of environmentally-friendly vehicles that conform to ecological requirements
- creation of the Olympic Environmental Alliance, with the aim of establishing effective cooperation and dialogue between all the bodies concerned, and the parties actively involved, and to establish a conclusive decision-making procedure (Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, or the National Meteorological Service).

Turin 2006
Environment was a key element of the Turin Olympic Winter Games. The Turin Organising Committee (TOROC) was the first OCOG to obtain both an ISO 14001 international environment standard certification and an EMAS certification for its environmental systems and programmes (the European equivalent).
TOROC also developed the HECTOR (HEritage Climate TORino) programme, aimed at raising awareness on climate change issues and offsetting the amount of greenhouse gases produced during the 2006 Winter Games through financial investments in reforestation, energy efficiency and renewable energy source projects.

In addition to this, TOROC’s environmental programmes included environmental audits of venue building sites and eco-compatibility of temporary venues. A Strategic Environmental Assessment system for the planning and monitoring of Games activities was also conducted, and guidelines for the application of EMAS to all sports events as well as green procurement criteria for suppliers and a system of recognition for sponsors demonstrating environmental commitments were developed.

**Vancouver 2010**

During the Vancouver Bid for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games the not-for-profit society “2010 Legacies Now” was created. The aim of the society was to create more than a “bricks and mortar” legacy for the host communities. The society’s mission is “to work in partnership with community organizations, non-government organizations, the private sector and all levels of government to develop sustainable legacies in sport and recreation, arts, literacy and volunteerism. To actively assist communities discover and create unique and inclusive social and economic opportunities leading up to, and beyond the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.”

**THE VI WORLD CONFERENCE ON SPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

After Lausanne in 1995, Kuwait City in 1997, Nagano in 1999, Rio de Janeiro in 2001, Turin in 2003, Nairobi in 2005, the 7th World Conference on Sport and Environment was organised by the IOC with the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) in Beijing in October 2007.

The assembled delegates representing the International Olympic Committee National Olympic Committees, International Sports Federations, the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations entities, non-governmental organisations, research institutions, Organising Committees for the Olympic Games, Applicant Cities, Olympians, the International Olympic Committee, International Paralympic Committee, partners and other members of the Olympic Movement, sports and recreation event organisers and sporting goods manufacturers adopted the following declaration:

- recognising the interdependence between a clean, healthy environment and the proper conducting of sport and recreation activities and events of all scales, as a healthy environment is vital for sport and athletes, and the world sports community should conduct its activities in a socially responsible manner including environmentally sustainable practices,
- acknowledging the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) Technical Report “BEIJING 2008; Environmental protection, Innovation and Improvement”, which details the range and magnitude of the environmental and sustainability actions and legacies in regard to the Games and the improvements made in policy and practice of environmental protection,
- also acknowledging the United Nations Environment Programme report “Beijing 2008: An Environmental Review”, a detailed, independent assessment – the first review of its kind - which states that the hosting of the Beijing Games is proving to be a catalyst for accelerating environmental improvements across the city,
- recognising the example set by the IOC in working to reduce the environmental footprint of major sporting events, including through the organising of regional seminars, with the support of Olympic Solidarity, to encourage sustainable development practices by NOCs and IFs,
- applauding the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games for creating a new benchmark for promoting environmental sustainability through sport.
welcoming the introduction by the IOC of the biennial Sport and Environment Award to recognise excellence in the promotion and development of environmentally sustainable practices at all levels,

noting the need for sustainability policies and measures to be as affordable and accessible as possible to maximise their application and long-term environmental benefits,

supporting the formation of collaborative practical partnerships between stakeholders of the Olympic Movement and beyond to increase the positive impact of environmental actions in regard to the sustainability of sports activities and events,

understanding that, in particular, global warming is a major challenge requiring immediate action by governments, communities and individuals,

acknowledging the trend of cities bidding and hosting major sports events to factor in greenhouse gas emission reductions and offsetting as an important element of their action plans and commitments,

noting with appreciation that Beijing 2008 is minimising and offsetting greenhouse gas emissions through optimising energy efficiency, increased use of renewable energy, adoption of green commuting policies and practices and the extensive afforestation and greening of the city,

thanking BOCOG for hosting the conference and its invaluable contribution to its success,

we, the participants of the 7th World Conference on Sport and the Environment,

encourage all Olympic Games applicant and bid cities to demonstrate the ability to hold a carbon neutral Olympic Games, and host cities to implement policies and actions which achieve this objective,

also encourage sports federations to develop technical rules which balance their sports requirements with environmental considerations, taking into account local conditions and the need to have durable customised legacies from sports events,

urge sports organisations at every level to use and distribute existing expertise and tools - including case studies, IOC guides and technical manuals – in order to maximise the sustainability and positive environmental effects of the actions,

call for the policies and actions adopted, and lessons learnt, through the organisation of sports events to be replicated wherever possible, providing a catalyst for sustainability and reversal of environmental degradation and to maximise lasting legacies for the wider community,

also call on all members of international and national sports communities to transform concepts, ideas and opportunities into real, practical actions to ensure sustainable and ecologically responsible sports events and activities.

The 8th World Conference on Sport and Environment will be held in Vancouver in 2009.

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