



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE
The President

**Speech
on the occasion
of the
Opening Ceremony
127th IOC Session
Monaco, 7 December 2014**

Monseigneur,

Son Excellence Monsieur le Président de la Confédération suisse,

Cher Président d'honneur du CIO,

Chers collègues et amis membres du CIO,

Chers Présidents des Fédérations Internationales et des Comités Nationaux Olympiques,

Monsieur le Ministre d'État,

Excellences,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

There could not be a more symbolic host for this Extraordinary Session of the International Olympic Committee than our dear colleague His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Monaco. Having participated in five Olympic Games as an athlete and being a Head of State now, he embodies the spirit of the Olympic Agenda 2020 which is about safeguarding the Olympic values and strengthening sport in society. Therefore I would very much like to thank Prince Albert for his invitation, and all his team in the Monegasque Olympic Committee for their efficient organisation and warm hospitality here in Monaco. Thank you, Monseigneur!

We are also very pleased to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, which has been extending its great hospitality to us for 99 years now. Welcome, Mr. President!

"Sport has the power to change the world"

These were the words of Nelson Mandela, the great humanist and leader. We should take this message as an inspiration to contribute to progress through change. First and foremost this refers to ourselves. **You can inspire others to change, only if you are ready to change yourself. We have all gathered here to lead this change in sport.**

Whenever you initiate change you have to answer three questions: Why? What? How?

Why should we make important and far-reaching **changes** in the Olympic Movement? We have had brilliant Olympic Games in 2012 and 2014. We enjoy financial stability. We redistribute more than 90 percent of our revenues to sport and to the athletes. **This means: The IOC invests more than three million dollars a day – every single day of the year to support world wide sport. Never before have so many people all around our globe followed the Olympic Games. So, we are successful. Success is the best reason for change.**

In our world - changing faster than ever - the success of yesterday means nothing for today. **The success of today gives you only the opportunity to drive the change for tomorrow.** Based on a solid foundation of 100 years of history we have together started to anticipate the upcoming challenges about one and a half years ago. The challenges we are already facing and more important the challenges we can already see on the horizon. **If we do not address these challenges here and now we will be hit by them very soon. If we do not drive these changes ourselves others will drive us to them. We want to be the leaders of change, not the object of change.**

If I would deliver this speech in a theater I would say with an ironic smile: **To change or to be changed, that is the question.**

But this is only part of the answer to the question why. Because it only tells us that now we have the great opportunity to change. It does not tell us about the need to change. **We need to change because sport today is too important in society to ignore the rest of society. We are not living on an island, we are living in the middle of a modern, diverse, digital society.** If we want to continue to put Olympic Sport at the service of society, which is part of our Olympic Principles, we must engage with this society, we must be in a respectful dialogue with this society. This society is changing faster than ever. This society will not wait for sport to change. **If we want our values of Olympism - the values of excellence, respect, friendship, dialogue, diversity, non-discrimination, tolerance, fair-play, solidarity, development and peace - if we want these values to remain relevant in society, the time for change is now.**

The British Philosopher Bertrand Russell once said, "...change is scientific, progress ethical". For a values-based organisation like the IOC it is not enough to change just for the sake of change. **For us change has to be more than a cosmetic effect or just a procedure, change has to have a goal. And this goal is progress. Progress for us means strengthening sport in society by virtue of our values.**

This leads us to the second question: **what to change** in order to make such progress? Before we can answer this question for ourselves we have to take a look at the world around us. **We are living in a world more fragile than ever.** We see political crisis, financial crisis, health crisis, terrorism, war and civil war. We are living in a society more fragmented, more individualized, you could even say more selfish than ever. We are living in a global society with more opportunities than ever. Opportunities for communication, for dialogue, for global solidarity, for social development, and for peace. We are living at a moment when we do not know which way the world will choose to go - or worse which way the world will let itself go.

What does all this mean for us? First of all it means that **our message of dialogue, of respect for rules, our message of tolerance, solidarity and peace – that this Olympic message is perhaps more relevant than ever.** If we want to strengthen the relevance of our Olympic Message, people have to hear our message, they have to believe in our message; they have to "get the message". But before people really get our message, in these times of uncertainty, they are asking different questions.

The less people believe in the future the more they want to know about the future. This means for us that they want to know more about the sustainability of Olympic Games and all our actions; that they want to know better about our governance and finances; that they want to know how we are living up to our values and our social responsibility. This modern world demands more transparency, more participation, higher standards of integrity. **This modern world takes less for granted, has no place for complacency, questions even those with the highest reputation. This world takes much less on faith.**

In the Olympic Agenda 2020 we are addressing these questions under the three overarching topics of sustainability, credibility, youth.

With a new philosophy in the bidding procedure we are encouraging potential candidate cities to present to us a **holistic concept of respect for the environment, feasibility and of development, to leave a lasting legacy.** With

these far reaching changes we respect that there is no "one size fits all solution" for the sustainability of Olympic Games. **Host city candidates strive for very different development goals and start from very different points of development. We embrace this diversity. In fact this diversity is part of the magic of the Olympic Games.** They are global; therefore the standards of one part of the world alone cannot be the benchmark. The Olympic Games encourage this dialogue of different cultures. Each edition has to be different. Each edition has to be an authentic reflection of the cultural, social, environmental, sports background of the host. With the Olympic Agenda 2020 we promote and support this diversity by creating more flexibility, more flexibility for the organisation and the programme of the Olympic Games. At the same time we safeguard the unity of the Olympic Movement by ensuring the respect of the host for our values and the respect for the athletes who are at the heart of the Olympic Games.

With the Olympic Agenda 2020 we are addressing the topic of credibility - credibility for competitions as well as for organisations. The IOC has already undertaken major steps fifteen years ago and therefore enjoys an excellent reputation in this regard. However, the world and its expectations for organisations such as ours have evolved.

Therefore **we will strengthen our good governance, transparency and ethics:**
The members of the Ethics Commission will be elected by the IOC Session, and not appointed by the IOC Executive Board any more.
The Ethics Commission will draft new rules in line with the Olympic Agenda 2020.
We will create the position of a compliance officer.

Our financial statements will be prepared and audited by the benchmark International Financial Reporting Standards IFRS, even if from the legal perspective much less transparent standards would be sufficient. We will provide an annual activity and financial report, including the allowance policy for IOC Members, which will give evidence for the fact that the IOC Members are genuine volunteers.

With regard to the credibility of sports competitions and of athletes we want to change the philosophy. **The Olympic Movement is all about the clean athletes. They are our best ambassadors, they are our role-models, they are our treasure. Therefore we have first and foremost to protect the clean athletes.** We have to protect them from doping, match-fixing, manipulation and corruption. We have to change our way of thinking. We have to consider every single cent in the fight against these evils not as an expense but as an investment in the future of Olympic Sport. We have to realize that catching the cheats is extremely important but only a means to an even more important end - the protection of the clean athletes. This will not be easy and will take a long time, because the old way of thinking is deeply rooted. Just to give you an example about the almost perverse wording we use: when we catch a cheat with a doping test we all speak about a "positive" test result, when the test shows that the athlete was clean we speak of a "negative" test result. With the Olympic Agenda 2020 we also demonstrate what effects this change of philosophy will have. We want to support innovative anti-doping research which leads to a better and less onerous protection of the clean athletes: We want to create robust education, awareness and prevention programmes against match-fixing, manipulation and corruption.

The Olympic Agenda 2020 clearly demonstrates our determination to live up to our values and principles. **The new wording of the 6th Fundamental Principle of Olympism, is derived from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.** In one point it will now be even more clear because it includes also sexual orientation. This strengthened wording will help us to ensure the respect for all these rights for all participants during the Olympic Games.

The proposed activities of "Olympism in Action" and "Olympism and Culture" will make the values of sport more accessible for everybody and foster our dialogue with society.

The Olympic Agenda 2020 addresses our communication with the youth. As a sports organisation we cannot be satisfied only with increasing numbers of young

people watching the Olympic Games. **We have an interest and a responsibility to get the couch potatoes off the couch. Only children playing sport can be future athletes. Only children playing sport can enjoy the educational and health values of sport.** We want to inspire these children by giving them better access to sport. We want to engage with them wherever they are. We want sport in more school-curricula world-wide.

The Olympic Agenda 2020 addresses the relevance of Olympic Sports and its values by the proposal for the creation of an **Olympic Channel**. We must give our athletes and sports the world-wide media exposure they deserve also between Olympic Games. We must give our many actions in the humanitarian, cultural and social field the attention they deserve. We must give the youth better access to athletes, sport, Olympic History, Olympic Culture and Olympic Values.

This Olympic Agenda 2020 is like a jig-saw puzzle. Every piece, every recommendation, has the same importance. Only when you put all these 40 pieces together you see the whole picture. You see progress in ensuring the success of the Olympic Games, progress in safeguarding the Olympic Values and progress in strengthening sport in society.

This leads us to the third and - please do not worry - last question. **How can we achieve this progress?** In this respect the management of the change was already a message and a tool in itself. This message is very clear: **Progress needs cooperation.** We had a very broad and transparent consultation not only among us, not only with our major stakeholders, the International Federations and the National Olympic Committees, but with people from all walks of life. We, the Olympic Movement, had an excellent discussion with more than 200 contributions from you, the IOC Members, during the IOC Session in Sochi. We had two Olympic Summit meetings with contributions from the leaders of IF's and NOC's: We had the participation of all stakeholders in the 14 Working groups, in the IOC Commissions and in hundreds of bilateral meetings. We had more than 40.000 contributions from the public producing more than 1200 ideas. **With the composition of the Working Groups we have opened up to society. We have**

opened our windows to let fresh air in. We have opened our minds to the advice of high-ranking representatives from other NGO's, from politics, from culture, from business. All their most welcome input is reflected in this Olympic Agenda 2020. We do not want, and we cannot afford to leave this as a one-off event. **If we want to turn these changes into progress we need to continue this dialogue.**

Therefore we do not only open our windows but also our doors for consultations with different NGO's, with political leaders, with the cultural community and with entrepreneurs. In the last ten months we have signed sponsorship and TV-contracts worth more than 10 billion US Dollars – money which is immediately redistributed to sport and to the athletes. In all these negotiations the Olympic Agenda 2020 played a crucial role. By committing themselves, for some up to 2032, all these partners demonstrated huge confidence in the future of The Olympic Movement and in the Olympic Agenda 2020. Since you elected me as your president in September 2013 I have met 95 Heads of State or Government. In most of these meetings the Olympic Agenda 2020 and our relations with the world of politics played a major role.

The culmination of this new sense of cooperation and partnership are our relations with the United Nations. I am indeed very grateful to the **Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon** for his great commitment to this joint endeavor. "**Olympic principles are United Nations principles**", he said. During this year 2014 we have already had several meetings to discuss how to foster our cooperation. We can be very proud and happy that we could conclude a Memorandum of Understanding between the IOC and the UN in April this year. We can be even more happy and proud that **the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution by consensus supporting the leadership position of the IOC, and the autonomy of sport.** This resolution recognizes the contribution of sport to foster dialogue, peace and development. It affirms the invaluable contribution of The Olympic Movement in establishing sport as a unique means for the promotion of peace and development. It asks for respect of the unifying and conciliative

nature of international sport events and encourages member states to give sport due consideration in the context of the sustainable development goals of the UN.

As Mr Ban Ki-Moon rightly put it:

“That team - the United Nations and the IOC - ... we are joining forces for our shared ideals. Sustainability. Universality. Solidarity. Non-discrimination. The fundamental equality for all people”.

The Olympic Agenda 2020 ensures that the Olympic Movement under the leadership of the IOC is a valuable player in this team with the UN.

Dear friends and colleagues, now this Olympic Agenda 2020 is in your hands. Now it is up to you to show that this is our vision for the future of the Olympic Movement. Our founder Pierre de Coubertin, I am sure, is following us closely these days and with great sympathy, because he was always a man of reforms. He said, “Courage ... and hope! charge boldly through the clouds and do not be afraid. The future belongs to you.”

You all have shown so much of this courage and hope from the last IOC Session until today. I would like to thank you very much for your constructive approach, for your great commitment and your outstanding dedication to the Olympic Agenda 2020. In many of these discussions we had diverse approaches and opinions. **This diversity is an enrichment. This diversity is an even greater enrichment, because at the same time you strengthened the unity with regard to our vision and our values. So let us together use this momentum for progress through change. Let us unite behind our Olympic Agenda 2020. Let us demonstrate the true meaning of Unity in Diversity. Let us together shape an even brighter future for this magnificent, truly global Olympic Movement.**

Thank you very much!