Dear Singapore Friends,

Tonight, we open a new chapter in the history of the Olympic Movement. From this moment on, young people around the world have a chance to participate in a global forum that combines sport, education and culture.

We are indebted to the people of Singapore for your great hospitality and your remarkable efforts in staging these inaugural Youth Olympic Games.
I thank in particular the wonderful volunteers, without whom nothing would be possible. You are the true heroes of these games.

I also thank all our partners in the Olympic Movement who believed in the idea and supported it.

Dear athletes,
We are happy to welcome you to the first Youth Olympic Games, here in Singapore. You are our future, and we want to help you take that future into your own hands.

Dear athletes,
This evening marks your entry into the Olympic world. Over the next 12 days, you will compete with the world’s best athletes of
your generation. You will test the limits of your abilities and push past them. Many of you will compete at future Olympic Games. All of you will benefit from these Youth Games.

Your experiences here will help you prepare for life beyond the field of play. You will share the wonderful atmosphere of the Olympic Village. You will gain a deeper appreciation of Olympic values. You will acquire knowledge and life skills through our culture and education programme.

You will learn the difference between winning and being a champion. To win, you merely have to cross the finish line first. To be a champion, you have to inspire admiration for your character, as well as for your physical
talent. You have to compete in spirit of fair play, respecting your opponents and the rules — without doping or any other unfair advantage.

If you can reach that pinnacle, if you are ready to serve as role models for your generation, you will all be champions, irrespective of your rankings.

Thank you and have fun!

I now have the honour to ask His Excellency the President of the Republic of Singapore, Mr S.R. Nathan, to open the first Youth Olympic Games.