It is imperative for Olympism to move from the stage of messages and declarations to that of concrete actions. This process is, in fact, taking shape through the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). Declarations about the ethical values of sport and the role of fair play are too often compromised by the serious incidents that occur during competitions. These dismal acts end up becoming the enemies of sport. Our hollow rhetoric consequently provokes negative reactions among young people.

The new generations need to hear the voice of the major sports events and, primarily, that of the Olympic Games. That said, they also want to play an active part in these global events and, to do so, they must know the true and profound history of the Olympic Games, their meaning in human and moral terms, and how far they have contributed to the progress of civilisation.

If we continue to convey messages without vigour, if we do not succeed in giving substance to the social and cultural values of the Games, all our communications efforts will be in vain and remain ineffective.

We need to provide powerful stimuli, which result in concrete involvement, to give convincing reasons which will push people into practising a sporting activity as a philosophy or practical life-choice, and to raise awareness in the community of the problems of the environment in which we live. In the absence of more consistent behaviour, young people will still not be challenged to think more deeply and in more concrete terms about sport as a phenomenon, and, above all, about the place of the Olympic Ideal in building a more mature and aware civilisation.

Beyond the purely technical and entertainment aspects that we attribute to and recognise in sport, it is these absolute values that give us the opportunity to share an extraordinary experience with young people – values that justify all our efforts to win victory, or at least to take part in competition, the Olympic Games, and now the YOG. The value of sport lies not only in winning, but in experiencing these anthropological values, rich in ethical teachings, which make participation in sport an act of civilisation.