

Keynote Address

1999 Sports Summit

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Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for having me here today. And thank you, Craig, for your kind introduction. These are difficult times for the International Olympic Committee and indeed the entire Olympic Movement. So I truly appreciate your warm welcome.

Let me begin my remarks today by telling you very directly that the IOC is profoundly disappointed about the events revealed in the last few weeks. And even before we announce the findings of our inquiry, we'd like to express our sincere apologies for the actions of certain IOC members. Their conduct has been completely contrary to everything the Olympic Movement has worked so hard to represent.

These actions are also an affront to the Olympic athletes who have inspired us through the years and whose lives so poignantly embody the Olympic ideals. Not to mention the millions of volunteers who contribute hundreds of millions of hours of service to promote the Olympic values in their communities.

Moreover, the IOC would like to express its deepest regrets to the people and community of Salt Lake City. It is unfortunate that a community that is so well prepared to host an Olympic Winter Games should have its overall integrity called into question.

To our colleagues in Sydney, who are busy preparing for the Olympic Summer Games in September of next year, I would like to assure you of the IOC's resolve to do whatever is necessary to ensure that you are not distracted from your preparations for the Games. I would add that the Sydney Organizing Committee is doing a tremendous job so far – in fact, we believe they are setting a new standard for a Summer Games organizing committee.

With all that is going on right now, it makes me wish that the Sydney Games were taking place tomorrow rather than next year. I say that because I know that the Sydney Games will be one of the greatest ever. The facilities are world class – second to none. And, if you've ever been to Sydney, I am sure you would agree that there is no more beautiful city in which to host a Summer Games. We also would like to offer our gratitude to the people of Australia for their commitment to host the world at the Millennium Olympic Games.

Each of the communities involved—Salt Lake and the Olympic committees—has taken action to deal with the causes of this problem. Each of us will deal with our own constituencies, and we will not get involved in any self-serving finger-pointing. Each of us has a responsibility in this matter, and none of us should avoid that responsibility.

Before I go on, let me tell you right up front what I can and cannot tell you today about our investigation:

I cannot announce the names of the IOC members currently under investigation and cannot comment on names that have appeared in the media.

- I cannot refer to the specific charges against any members.
- And I am not going to speculate about what the Executive Board of the IOC may decide when it gets the recommendations of our commission of inquiry.

What I can tell you is this:

- The IOC is relentlessly pursuing allegations against certain IOC members relating to inappropriate actions in the selection of Salt Lake City as host of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and in any other circumstances which come to light as a result of this process.
- The IOC is committed to using this difficult time as an opportunity to develop reforms which will prevent this from happening again. We will not shirk from our responsibilities in this matter.
- When this is all over, the IOC will emerge as a much stronger and more effective organization, leading the Olympic Movement as it has for more than a century.

I do have more to say about the IOC inquiry, but before I get into that I'd like to make a few comments about the Olympic Movement—and put things into a larger perspective.

Throughout our long history, Olympism has faced many extraordinary challenges. Just since 1976, for instance, the Games were boycotted four times.

The point is: the Games have survived.

And today? I say to you, despite our troubles, despite the fact that we to some degree have brought this on ourselves, the Games will survive. Not only that: we will seize this opportunity for change and emerge stronger and truer to our ideals than before.

The Olympic Movement is founded on ideals such as Hope, Unity, Friendship and Fair Play. These enduring ideals have sustained Olympism for more than 3000 years, and they have brought us to where we are today. Two hundred nations now compete in the Games. More than 10,000 athletes participate in the Summer Games. And because of this size and scope, we have the opportunity to communicate the values and the ideals of the Olympics to more people in more countries than ever before.

By any measure, the Olympic Movement is one of the most successful international organizations of the 20th century.

But we know that the public often focuses solely on the Games themselves, without perhaps fully understanding our Movement and its goals or the role of the International Olympic Committee.

A lot of people ask me, "What is the IOC? What does it do?" Well, the first thing I tell them is that the IOC has overall responsibility for the governance of the Olympic Movement. It enacts the *Olympic Charter*, which is the governing document of the Olympic Movement. It determines which sports will be on the Olympic programme. And in the present context, it decides where the Games will be celebrated.

But most importantly, the IOC is here to help the dreams of athletes come true—to help them compete at the highest levels, in an environment of openness, fair play and friendship.

As for the members themselves, they are unpaid volunteers who spend a great deal of time each year on IOC and world sport matters.

I should also point out that many IOC members—30 to be exact—are former Olympians. We also work closely with the IOC Athletes Commission to ensure that we have the athlete's input in the daily management of the Olympic Movement. So I submit to you the IOC and its members do understand what it means to be an Olympic athlete and to compete at the highest levels of sport.

The IOC is quite different from most organizations, especially international organizations. Unlike the United Nations, for example, where delegates are representatives of their countries and do the bidding of the national political authorities, the IOC members are completely independent and serve the IOC in their individual capacities.

This is not an accident; the IOC intentionally provides its members with the opportunities—and the obligations—to decide all Olympic-related matters unencumbered by political or other influences. The members are representatives of the IOC in their countries, rather than representatives of their countries on the IOC.

At the moment, world tensions are relatively low. But we have lived through some tough times and there may well be some ahead. Had there been national accountability in the past, the Olympic Movement most certainly would have been held captive to national politics—and quite possibly not survived. This independence, this structure, has saved the Olympic Games time after time.

This is also one reason why the IOC is best-equipped to deal with standards of conduct. If IOC members breach ethical standards, they breach the standards upon which all members have agreed.

The IOC can administer the appropriate discipline. The proof of the pudding is that the IOC, and indeed the entire Olympic Movement, have the most to lose if we fail to deliver a comprehensive and unimpeachable result.

The Olympic Charter makes adherence to these standards quite clear and provides for the removal of IOC members in case they do not properly discharge that responsibility. This is not unlike the self-governing professions, such as medicine and law. Many of the so-called "accountability" complaints, if you examine their sources, tend to come from those who are outside the tent and wish to be inside, not because the IOC is doing a bad job. If you look at the record of the Olympic Movement over the past 104 years, the IOC has clearly done an excellent job.

Let me turn for a moment to the matter of choosing host cities for the Olympic Games. We acknowledge that at times it can be an inefficient process—as are all democratic processes. But I submit to you that we have not made a mistake in selecting our host cities. People may disagree as to whether we have always chosen the absolute best host city in every circumstance. And frankly, that's often a matter of personal opinion. But the important thing is not to make a mistake, and we never have.

Now let me talk about the choice that has given rise to all the current furor: Salt Lake City.

There are a number of observations worth making:

- Salt Lake City was the best candidate city in the race for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.
- The IOC Evaluation Commission clearly indicated that Salt Lake City was the leading candidate.
- Salt Lake City had an overwhelming “win” on the first round of balloting, something that almost never happens in IOC selections.
- The IOC almost never awards Games to the same host country for successive Olympiads. That's one reason Nagano, not Salt Lake City, was chosen to host the Olympic Winter Games in 1998.
- The result is that we have had three fantastic host cities for the Olympic Winter Games in a row: Lillehammer, Nagano and Salt Lake City.

The IOC should be proud of its host city selection record, and it is. So let me reiterate: Salt Lake City deserves to host the 2002 Winter Games. Salt Lake produced the best, most comprehensive bid. End of story.

They are as well-prepared as a city can be, and they will, without a doubt in my mind, produce the greatest Winter Games we have seen to date.

I would also add that of all the Host City communities I've been involved in — and there have been many, including a couple in my own country —the Salt Lake City community is as respected, ethical and honorable a group as I have ever known.

Which brings me to the crux of the issue.

There were two sets of guidelines—one for the Salt Lake bid committee and one for the IOC. Clearly, certain individuals in both groups failed to follow these guidelines.

However, the Games were awarded to Salt Lake City on the merits of its candidacy, and the award is governed by the terms of the agreement we signed with Salt Lake City and the United States Olympic Committee. And the IOC will continue to honor this agreement.

I think most of you know that I have been designated as the Chairman of the IOC's Commission to investigate the conduct of certain IOC members as it relates to the Salt Lake City bid. The Commission was established within hours after Salt Lake City delivered the summaries of accounting records to us suggesting that some IOC members may have received personal benefits or payments from the Salt Lake bidding committee.

I can assure you that no member feels good about serving on this Commission. But each of us recognizes that the work must be done and that doing the job properly is of the utmost importance to the IOC. The solutions may be painful, but they are necessary and they must be implemented. On a personal note, I can say that this has been one of the most difficult experiences of my Olympic life. Perhaps *the* most difficult.

But I will tell you that we will do whatever is necessary to ensure that IOC members are held to the highest standards. After we act, there will be no question as to whether we accept inappropriate conduct on the part of IOC members in relation to candidate cities. The IOC Executive Board is firm on this point and the President of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, is even more firm.

But let me stress that we see our report and recommendations as a beginning—not an end to this issue. What we recommend this weekend in Lausanne, Switzerland will be predicated on the facts as we know them at that time. This investigation has opened the door, providing us with an opportunity for ongoing review of our internal policies and structure.

Our commission has acted with tremendous speed to address this problem. We had to, not only because it was the right thing to do, but because the Winter Games in Salt Lake City and the Olympic Movement in general cannot afford to have this lingering on for months.

The investigation has been an unflinching exercise in pursuing the truth and will be unflinching in its recommendations—for both the individuals involved and the IOC itself.

To those who may doubt our resolve and sincerity, I look forward to your comments after our commission presents its recommendations in Lausanne. As I said, I cannot discuss details now. But I can tell you, as I've already suggested, that we have found evidence of very disappointing conduct by a number of IOC members.

Before I go on I should make it clear that we are not accusing anyone of criminal behavior. Nor are we suggesting that there may have been criminal conduct in these circumstances. These individuals are being called to account for breaking the oath they took when they were inducted as members of the IOC and for bringing the reputation of the IOC into disrepute.

Let me also say that this is not an issue of geography, culture or race and should not be perceived that way. It is a matter of individual conduct in an organization that places the highest importance on its members' personal integrity.

This is why this whole issue is so critical to the IOC. But we should also not lose perspective. With all due respect, some of the commentaries I've read recently have concentrated on the sensational few, rather than the overwhelming majority. IOC members who take their roles very seriously are even more offended by this breach of ethical standards than anyone in the media or public could ever be.

We have tried for years to get something "hard" so that we could act on all the rumors, innuendo and unsupported allegations that float around out there. We have never been able to do so. As you may know, we have no powers to compel witnesses or documents.

We have tried to debrief candidate cities, winners and losers, not just to find general ways to improve our overall process, but also to determine whether there has been inappropriate conduct on the part of any IOC member. None of the bid cities have ever come forward with any evidence.

The fact is, the size and scope of the Olympic Games have increased both the risks and the rewards for all involved. Unfortunately, this includes people who push the envelope too far and those weak enough to be tempted. Our Commission will recommend definitive measures to manage this issue in the bid city process.

We are also looking into the issue of the so-called "agents" who prey on the vulnerabilities and naivete of bidding cities. By the time we are through with so-called Olympic "agents," I doubt that it will be a profitable business—if it ever was.

However, we know that agents cannot work without clients, and in the short term the IOC is more worried about their clients, since the clients are our responsibility. If we get hard

data on the agents, however, we will make sure that it becomes known where it needs to be known.

Let me be absolutely clear about our goals here. We will undertake the reforms recommended by the commission. We will do what's necessary to put our house in order and restore your confidence in the IOC and our confidence in ourselves.

Now some people are saying that to do this, we need to not just put our house in order, we need to tear it down and rebuild it. Some people are even calling for the resignation of President Samaranch. I'd like to address that issue directly.

I've been a member of the IOC since before Juan Antonio Samaranch was elected president, and I can tell you that he has been a great leader.

Twenty years ago the Olympic Movement was in trouble. The IOC had little financing, unity within the Movement was shaky at best, and the Games were becoming a Cold War battleground.

Since his election in 1980, the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement have been transformed. The Movement is now financially secure, politically stable and enjoys the full participation of 200 countries around the world. Moreover, its status as an international organization also allows it to be a force for positive change beyond sport. All of this is the result of President Samaranch's extraordinary vision and leadership.

This organization has thrived on the stability of its leadership. That leadership has guided a very disparate and far-flung membership through numerous crises. President Samaranch has an enormous amount of experience in managing the IOC through both good and bad times. And right now, we need that stability more than ever. No one is more determined to correct this situation than he is. And no one is in a better position to manage the organization now. Our membership will stand behind him in this endeavour.

Now let's turn to the question of money. Who pays for all this? Well, the IOC receives no public or governmental funding. Not a cent. IOC finances are raised mainly through sponsorship and television rights.

The IOC distributes its marketing revenues to almost two hundred National Olympic Committees, to the Summer and Winter Games Organizing committees, the International Sport Federations and various programs targeting youth and sport around the world. The IOC retains only about 7% of these revenues for its own administration. Think about that for a moment: the IOC distributes 93% of the revenue it raises to various entities around the world dedicated to youth and sport.

Of course, the issue of financing is a double-edged sword. On one hand, our growth has brought the Olympic ideals to more people around the world than ever before. On the other hand, we are now faced with a new challenge: managing these messages in a more commercial, information-driven society. That's why last year we conducted the largest

research project we have ever undertaken on the image of the Movement—the Olympic "brand."

Now I'm not here today to describe this project in detail. But I do want to tell you that we're learning to do a better job of communicating our commercial agenda to the public and the media by putting commercialism within the Olympic Movement in its proper context.

The culmination of this work is a strategic marketing plan that will help us build and enhance the Olympic brand—while protecting the Olympic ideals at the same time.

Now let me turn to another of our top priorities: Doping in sport.

Doping threatens one of the core ideals of Olympism—the concept of fair play. Perhaps more importantly, it threatens the health and well-being of athletes and young people in general.

The IOC recognizes its responsibility as *the* leader in global sport and has taken a giant step to meet this challenge. We will host the World Conference on Doping in Sport February second through fourth in Lausanne.

The goal of this conference is to establish and adopt effective measures against doping in sport to be implemented by the entire Olympic Movement.

And we will collaborate closely with governmental organizations to ensure the sanctions we adopt are legal and enforceable.

To illustrate our commitment to this crucial issue, the IOC will commit \$25 million to help set up an independent Anti-Doping Agency under the auspices of not only the IOC, but also the independent federations, national Olympic committees, athletes, international government organizations and the business community.

The Olympic Movement is united in its desire to have firm, uniform measures to combat doping in sport before the Sydney Games next year. We are going to war against this menace. And I want to take this opportunity invite any and all sports organizations to join us.

As we all know, challenges provide opportunities. In fact, they are two sides of the same coin. I have no doubt that the current crisis in our organization and the corrective measures we take will make us stronger.

So, let me close by simply thanking all of you here for your tremendous support, and for your extraordinary patience during this difficult episode.

I read a quote the other day from one of the great Olympians, American marathoner Frank Shorter. Frank said, "The IOC is entrusted to put the Olympics on a level playing

field. There is something about the Olympics where it is the last place where that can really happen. As human beings, we need that ... at least one place."

I believe we are capable of making a new commitment to those ideals—and of demonstrating them through action and deed.

I believe we are capable of honoring the Olympic ideals, and helping to provide that "one, last place."

We will survive this, as we have survived so many other challenges. And I assure you, we will be stronger and better for it.

Thank you very much.