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ANOC and its 205 member National Olympic Committees express warm greetings and sincere gratitude to the National Olympic Committee, the Organizing Committee and the Government of Denmark for the extraordinary effort made towards the successful organization of the XIII Olympic Congress. We resolutely support the Congress and we see it as an exceptional opportunity to define the strategic lines that must guide the actions of the Olympic Movement over the next years.

The Olympic Family, the athletes, the partners of our Movement, the Governments' representatives, the members from various sectors of society and the massive presence of the media, are gathered in Copenhagen under the direction of the International Olympic Committee to exchange thoughts on the issues that are of highest concern to world Olympic sport.

We are aware this is a historic moment, in which it is absolutely necessary to cast new foundations for a new stage in which the Olympic Movement may promote and develop as fully as possible the values and principles of the Olympic Ideal – which is the leading strand uniting us in a common effort to impulse and develop Olympic sport in each country and in the whole world.

The preparatory stage for the Congress has provided evidence of the International Olympic Committee's capacity to mobilize, reflected by the strong participation of the most important and diverse sectors of society and the high number of contributions submitted, covering various aspects relating to the five main topics on the Agenda of the Congress.

The democratic, open and participative way in which the organizational stage of the Congress has developed is a very positive forerunner of the debates that are to take place over the next days; this allows to already state that the decisions of the Congress will be the result of a common effort, of the enthusiastic work and the active participation of all who feel committed towards the future of Olympism. This event, of extreme importance for sport and its development all over the world, is combining the objectives, interests and aspirations of both the Olympic and Sports Movement and the youth of the world.

The XIII Olympic Congress is taking place in very special circumstances : on the one hand, the strong leadership of the International Olympic Committee is recognized, and so is the high significance of the Olympic Games as the event of greatest universality and importance in the world; and on the other hand, the necessity to promote and preserve the values of the Olympic Ideal, making them coincide with the great educational and socio-cultural aspirations of contemporary society.

This objective reality emerging in an ever increasingly globalized world, characterized by the vertiginous development of science and technology, makes it compulsory for the Olympic Movement, and of course for our Congress, to analyse as deeply as possible the foundations on which the Olympic and Sports Movement's future strategy in the short, medium and long range must be based.

Everything is indicating that in the near future, the international financial situation will remain tense and will condition to a great extent the plans and programmes foreseen by many National Olympic Committees for the development of their sports, and possibly these new circumstances of exceptional character will have a significant influence on how our sports and Olympic organizations will be working in forthcoming Regional, Continental and Olympic Games.

In this period of unknown duration, it is advisable that within everyone' field of competence, we apply the measures that will ensure that, whatever the difficulties, sport and everything implied by its practice be consolidated as an activity essential to the physical, moral and ethical education and training of children and youth. There may be an economic or financial crisis; but it would be quite lamentable, and it should be avoided, that due to negligence, lack of vision or indifference, a crisis of values should emerge, with its serious social consequences. Sport may significantly contribute to prevent such serious risks.

The Association of the National Olympic Committees reaffirms its firm will to work together with the Members of the Olympic Family and the Governments so that the National Olympic Committees may successfully take up the great challenge they have to face up to at present.

The athletes, the Olympic Games, the structure of the Olympic Movement, Olympism and the youth, as well as the Digital Revolution, are the major topics on which the debates of the Olympic Congress will be concentrating. The athletes, who are the main reason for our existence, their training and development, their health and social life, their professional education and later occupation, must be at the centre of the analysis by the Congress, because beyond their personal values and merits, they are the future, strength, stamina and example to be followed by the children and youth who will be our future athletes.

It must be clear for everyone that the athletes are the original source for the work carried out at all levels by the organizations that are part of the Olympic structure at world level. Amongst them, it belongs to the National Olympic Committees to play a key function with the aim of educating the athletes to Olympic values, as well as for their selection, care, development and participation in competitions consisting in multidisciplinary events, at regional, continental and world level.

The topics relating to sports activities and top level athletes' lives have been included in the Agenda of the Congress: support to the development of their sports activities; attendance on the part of those who invite them or represent them; access to educational and professional programmes; fair play; application of eligibility rules; commitment towards the country that trained them; their duties and responsibilities during the Olympic Games; their role in the fight against doping; their ethical and moral conduct which must set an example for children and youth; and the obligations of competent authorities in order that the athletes may benefit at the end of their sports career from a dignified social activity corresponding to their personal records and merits – these are all topics of the highest relevance to which we must give priority attention.

The future success of Olympic sport and of the Olympic Games in particular will be closely linked to the Olympic and sports organizations' capacity to examine in depth and with strictness everything relating to the life of the athletes, coordinating with sports and governmental authorities an efficient and concrete answer to the athletes' needs, wishes and motivations.

It is well known that sport, and especially the Olympic Games, have become a mass phenomenon attracting the attention of millions of people and generating important commercial actions. Sport has ceased to be the small world of a limited, very specific social sector, and has become a universal phenomenon of a very wide scope and increasing complexity. The people dealing with sport are many and diverse, and the interests linked to its development are becoming ever increasingly high.

The Olympic Games are a unique celebration; it is a Movement through which sport and its actors are becoming the centre of attention for the world. Their renewed importance, together with the decision to accept professionalism and commercialization as valid and necessary practices have led to a significant increase of their income through the sale of television rights; it has signalled a new and irreversible stage in which important conceptual changes have taken place in the technical and logistical fields, making it possible for the corresponding financial resources to be reinvested for the development of sport itself, bringing support to the NOCs and their athletes, fundamentally through Olympic Solidarity's International and Continental Programmes.

The Olympic Games offer the sponsors a unique opportunity to share imperishable values and to implement them, both for their particular brand and for their commercial objectives. Preserving the Olympic values and, based on a rational and measured form of commercialization, bringing the basic financing that will enable the Olympic Movement to grow and develop, in current conditions and certainly in the future, means a huge challenge for the Olympic Movement. Associating Olympic principles and values with the commercial interests that are partners to the modern Olympic philosophy is a great responsibility that all Olympic leaders must assume, especially in these difficult and highly complex moments.

In relation with the future of the Olympic Games, considered with good reason to be the epitome of success in sports, the XIII Olympic Congress will have to give its view on topics of the highest importance, such as : the rationality of the sports programme, bolstering the National Olympic Committees' role, the fight against doping, the control by the International Olympic Committee of excesses in professionalism and commercialization, the leading role to be played by the athletes, the Olympic Games' international legacy and audience.

Starting from next year, and bearing a connection with the Summer and Winter Olympic Games which are their logical antecedents, the First Youth Olympic Games will be organized for the first time, with an eminently cultural and educational outlook. ANOC and the National Olympic Committees are an important part to the general consensus reached over the benefits to be drawn by children and youth from this type of competition; however, we have expressed our justified preoccupation in this regard, and we reiterate our call concerning the necessity to be extremely attentive to the whole organizational process for these Youth Games in order to meet their objectives, especially those relating to education and training, culture, the Olympic values, the development of capacities in children and young people, avoiding at all cost that the wish of achieving a high sporting performance or of winning a medal should bring about physical or psychological damages for young participants.

It is very clear that the image of top outstanding athletes has a great influence on the whole of society, especially the youth, who are particularly attentive to what their icons are doing, trying to imitate them; it is therefore very important that the behaviour of outstanding sports figures should serve as examples, becoming a role model for the children and youth. The driving force of an example has incalculable social and ethical value.

Education is indispensable in order to develop and preserve the citizens' moral and ethical values; and it could be said that it is the greatest quality a human being may have. In today's world, where conflicts and violence tend to be on the increase, educating to universal values through sport is acquiring top importance. Promoting peace, tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and human understanding is an obligation on us all who are part of this great Movement.

The structure of the Olympic Movement, in each stage of its development, has constantly adapted itself to the needs and circumstances of the moment. For over a hundred years, it has given evidence of its outstanding capacity for adaptation, its strong will to renew itself and its deep-rooted feeling of social commitment, which has enabled the Movement to survive, develop and go on progressing up to the levels of quality and universal expansion it can be so proud of today.

Sports activities are sources of convergence for sectors such as education, health, high-level sport, physical activity in other social sectors, the media and the sponsors. This complexity of Olympic sport raises new questions as to the structure to be proposed by the Olympic and Sports Movement, making it

possible at various executive levels to carry out a common action involving all its components, while being dynamic and flexible, rationalizing human and financial resources and making sport a field of action with sufficient capacity to respond as immediately as possible to the great challenges it must take up.

The increasing promotion of sport through educational and general basic training programmes; the Governments' renewed interest in sports activities; the solidity and high relevance of the Olympic Games, and, in connection with them, the ever increasing importance of the role of the International Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations, the athletes, the partners of the Olympic Movement, the media and the Organizing Committees – all these factors, among others, are making up a new and complex framework of relations which must necessarily go through an analysis at our XIII Olympic Congress.

A key aspect concerning the structure of the Olympic and Sports Movement, and of capital importance for the future, relates to the Autonomy of Olympic and sports organizations. In this regard, we should like to emphasize that the National Olympic Committees are in favour of the following :

- Recognize and reaffirm that the Autonomy of the Olympic and Sports Movement is an essential condition for the development of sport and for the promotion of its values all over the world.
- Reaffirm that the Olympic Movement is exclusively for those who, freely and voluntarily, express their desire to be part of it. This condition implies that whoever is part of our Movement has an inescapable obligation, within the territory under his jurisdiction and within his field of competence, to observe, comply with and respect the Olympic Charter.
- Reaffirm the National Olympic Committees' will to collaborate with the Governments and other similar Institutions, based on mutual respect, so that Olympic sport, at both national and international levels, becomes in a real and concrete manner the focus of our common action.
- Consider as a fundamental aspect, within the concept of the NOCs' Autonomy as defined under the Olympic Charter, the unique and sole competence assigned to them to decide and determine the clothing, uniforms and equipment to be used by the members of their delegations at the Olympic Games and in all competitions and events connected with the Games.

- Study the eventual creation of an Olympic and Sports Network between all members of the Olympic Movement that will allow it to have access to all the information necessary on the issue of Autonomy, be informed of all cases of violations that may occur, exchange experiences and facilitate a global analysis on the exercise of the Olympic and Sports Movement's Autonomy everywhere in the world.
- Analyze possible modifications to the Olympic Charter that may contribute to greater clarity and precision in the rules that govern the Autonomy of the NOCs and their relations with other Members of the Olympic and Sports Movement.
- Preserve the NOCs' autonomy and stand against any type of political, religious or economic pressure, this being one of its fundamental functions, and furthermore an essential prerequisite for achieving the objectives the Olympic and Sports Movement has set itself.
- Define with great clarity the procedure to be applied in cases of conflict in which there is a violation of, or any form of infringement upon the Autonomy and Independence of any Member of the Olympic and Sports Movement.
- Emphasize that Good Governance and transparency are essential elements to ensure respect of the Olympic and Sports Organizations' Autonomy.

The National Olympic Committees recognize the importance of promoting, within their jurisdictional field, the Olympic Ideal and its values, as laid down by the fundamental principles contained in the Olympic Charter, and are in favour of intensifying their efforts to build up Olympic education and culture in which peace, ethics, fair play and solidarity form the basis in reaffirming our values and principles.

Besides favouring physical development and the fight for human dignity, sport has also become a valuable help in the tasks of pacification and restoration of social conviviality. Medals are important; but it is even as important, and perhaps even more important, that sport should develop and produce values, bolster solidarity and friendship, contribute to cohesion between different groups, and reinforce peace between all peoples of the world.

Sport, and above all top-level sport, is constantly confronted to high demands, due to external interests and expectations, which, generally speaking, are difficult to satisfy without going beyond the limits of the sports ethics. These influences and pressures make it increasingly difficult to abide by the principle of

equal opportunities and keep the respect due to the dignity of the persons practicing sport. The grave problem we are faced with today is that if sport ceases to be up to the principle of equality and dignity for the participants, it comes to lose its essence and credibility, which means irreparable social damage. This is why preserving the purest and soundest values of sport and of Olympism is a sacred duty for all of us.

Olympism and its philosophy have been preserving their relevance for over a hundred years; they have been developing in quantity and quality, and due to their great expansion, have now become the universal phenomenon that is most valued and recognized by the whole of society. Its principles, its social, humanistic, educational, ethical and solidarity values, are the basis of its historical development, justifying its full relevance and supporting the conviction of a solid and firm audience in the future.

Olympic sport as we can imagine it for the future will be promoting and developing a truly Olympic education; it will contribute to the education of a youth sound in mind and body; it will act as a true antidote against vices, distortions and negative social trends; it will favour a higher quality of life for the population; it will contribute to equal chances for all; it has an increasingly important role in the protection of the environment, producing development and being a catalyst for solidarity all over the world.

Sport does not admit fraud or cheating, it rejects and condemns the use of prohibited substances; it imposes coexistence between individuals and favours brotherhood and peace. The National Olympic Committees, supporting this philosophy and being aware of their obligations, reiterate their firm position of fighting energetically and resolutely any form of doping in sport.

The fight against doping is today – and will continue to be in the future – a strategic task involving all Members of the Olympic and Sports Movement who are directly or indirectly in positions of responsibility in sport. The creation of the World Anti-Doping Agency and the adoption of the World Anti-Doping Code are key elements in order to face up, in a decisive and firm way, to this severe plague that goes against Olympic principles and values, annihilates the credibility of sport, is very damaging for health, and erodes the foundations of society.

Doping in sport reaches its highest profile during the Olympic Games; nevertheless, this phenomenon is not affecting only sport and the Games, but the whole of society. It acquires such a dimension in sport because sport carries the highest social values, because it forms a social and educational framework which, according to the judgment of the immense majority of society, must constantly offer and exemplary image, a mirror to take model from, which must not admit any blot.

The fight against doping is of decisive importance for the future of sport and Olympism. Coordinated, systematic and effective work between the NOCs and the Governments in the implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code; the implementation of preventive and educational programmes; sustained vigilance; strictness in anti-doping controls in and out of competitions; information campaigns through the media, in which emphasis is put on the serious dangers implied by any use of doping in sport - all these are actions to which we must dedicate our time, efforts, and the resources that may be necessary.

With this in focus, and considering that it is necessary to convey a very clear, firm and educational message, we must team up with the common objective of achieving that present and future generations be motivated to systematically participate in the practice of sport and in physical activities. The Scientific and Technical Revolution, new technologies and the globalization of knowledge, among other factors, are pointing out to an increasing tendency for sedentariness and the absence of physical activity. Today more than ever, it is fully relevant as well as an unavoidable social necessity to work for the development of a society in which the citizens will embody the motto: **“a sound mind in a sound body”**.

We perfectly understand this is a phenomenon alien to our will, brought about by development, and which has to be assimilated positively. Excessive use of the new technologies and media lead to increased sedentariness. Investigations are providing evidence that today, a citizen spends on average around four hours a day in front of a TV set; to which should be added the time dedicated to video games and Internet uses. Undoubtedly, physical activity and sport are in essence the tools that can curb the negative effects due to the implementation of new technologies and the adoption of new life styles and habits.

Technological progress has changed the world of sport, creating new and more efficient forms of work and communication networks that have a very great incidence on both the organization and management of sport, as well as on the dissemination of the values of sport and Olympism. The Digital

Revolution is a factor of outstanding importance for the development of modern sport, impacting the implementation of the Olympic Movement's programmes, plans and other activities; this is why it is urgent to determine what actions should be undertaken to have the new technologies taken on board as a necessary ally of Olympic sport, to produce a stronger development, to contribute towards reducing the gaps between the countries and regions, and to place Olympic sport in a foremost position as regards the utilization of progress in sciences and techniques.

To sum up, I must point out that we are aware there still remains a long and difficult way to go; the challenges are high, and so are the expectations of society - and those of the young in particular - concerning Olympic sport. They have confidence in our Movement and in its capacity to identify and solve the problems as soon as possible. We are also quite aware of our capacity, of our leadership and of our invincible strength if we keep united, to face up to the obstacles and overwhelm them.

Only joint action, close coordination and the widest general agreement on the actions to be taken by the International Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations, the partners of the Olympic Movement and the Governments will make it possible to discharge our the duties and obligations towards Olympic sport and the youth of the world. We shall not disappoint them !