



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

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of the Human Rights Defenders**

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Sent by fax

Lausanne, 19 July 2007

Dear Mr Belhassen, Dear Mr Sottas,

In response to your letter dated 12 July, I am delighted to learn that the Observatory agrees 'wholeheartedly' with the opinion of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that the Olympic Games are a force for good. Indeed, human rights organisations with whom the IOC has met also believe that bringing the Games to Beijing is providing a positive opportunity.

I am concerned, however, to see that other points of your letter are based solely on a report from Agence France Presse (AFP) on my address to the IOC Session in Guatemala City. This report was inaccurate. At no point in my remarks did I say that agendas must be 'negated'. I have attached the script of my speech, which has been double-checked against the audio recording to be sure it was delivered verbatim, for your reference on this important point. The IOC has written to AFP for a correction. In addition, I ask that you kindly corroborate statements for accuracy directly with the IOC so as to avoid making false accusations in the future.

I would like to clarify that the IOC believes strongly that the Olympic Games are above all a force for good, which can have a positive impact on the social development of a country. This does not mean the Games are a panacea for all ills. The Games can and do shine a spotlight on areas which fall outside the remit of the IOC, and we welcome the debate this engenders on important issues.

The IOC's role is to engage through sport as a way to help bring positive developments from within Olympic Games host countries. We work with a patient and quiet approach based on our Olympic values, in partnership with Olympic Games Organising Committees. We are proud of what this achieves, knowing from our past experiences that this approach brings results. Any expectations that the IOC should apply pressure on the government of any of our future host cities are misplaced, especially when they concern sovereign matters outside our mandate.

We respect that you would like to see further progress in China more quickly. However, we disagree with your assertion that 'real progress has not been made'. In terms of the changes you expect to see as a result of the Beijing Games, we encourage you to judge the impact over the course of the year to come – during the Games next August and in the



years to come. We believe that history will view the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games as having played an important role in creating a greater understanding between China and the rest of the world.

The International Olympic Committee will ensure that the Beijing Games set a positive example. This is our hope for every Olympic Games. If the benefits go beyond sport, then all of us will have succeeded in our work.

Yours sincerely,

Hein Verbruggen

Chairman of the Beijing 2008 Coordination Commission