

“SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER”

Ing. W. Millerson, NAOC President

Minister of Sports, Omayra Leeflang, Commissioners of Sports, Olympic Boardmembers, Sportfederations, coaches, athletes, representatives of CUROIL and friends of the Olympic Family,

First of all I would like to thank Minister Omayra Leeflang and CUS, for asking our Olympic Committee to cooperate with the organization of this congress “Shaping our future” together. I would also like to welcome all representatives of Saba, Statia, Bonaire, St. Maarten & Curacao. And ofcourse a warm welcome to our international guests Mr. Devon Harris, Ab Huisman (Holland) and Liston Bochette (Puerto Rico, will arrive today).

We know that, at a time like this, development aid and investment is more important than ever, and it is therefore a vital moment to ask ourselves whether we are doing all that we can, drawing on every possible resource.

I believe we need to be even more assertive about the role of sport as an irreplaceable force in moving sports on the islands forward; about recognising, for example, that there is more that the Olympic Movement could be doing.

So this is a timely congress. But it will only be a significant one if we take it to a higher level, a roll-call of what different sport organisations are already achieving separately, and move towards defining our collective ambition.

We know that the Olympic charter commits the movement “to place, everywhere, sport at the service of the harmonious development of man”, and to “contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport, practiced without discrimination of any kind”.

But we have to constantly ask ourselves: Are we responding to the challenges of today by modifying and deepening the ambition of yesterday?

The IOC – as the heart of the Olympic Movement – has a vital role to play in coordinating and directing efforts in a way that can maximise the power of sport in the Netherlands Antilles.

I believe that we have reached the point to recognise:

- * That everyone in the Olympic Family has a role to play in promoting the use of sport for wider social development and supporting peace across the globe;

- * That the Olympic Movement must work with the different island governments to advocate the role of sport in improving young peoples' lives and helping to meet the different Goals per island;

- * That NAOC must play a leadership role in coordinating and directing this work

- * That focusing on top sport only is not enough to fulfill the potential of sport for development, and that there should be a cooperation between the islands to foster sporting activity at the grass-roots, to share expertise with partners and strengthening sport and education networks;

- * That we must go further to promote the importance of young people as future Olympians, future sports teachers and administrators;

- * That Olympic sponsors, in fulfilling their sponsorship objectives and their societal involvement, should have the opportunity to support partnerships on different levels;

Investment in sport is also an investment in: education; better health and wellbeing; stronger engagement in community and society; greater lifelong prospects. This is important for all our islands.

The focus here is on driving the power of sport for good, providing core skills to teachers, coaches and young leaders, and creating networks that can leverage further access to sport, physical education and play for children.

But how can programmes like this help point the way forward for the Olympic Movement on all the islands?

The answer is in the development of a strategic and systemic approach:

- * Working at grass roots level, building sporting communities in consultation with local leaders, teachers and parents;

- * Tackling barriers to participation from the bottom up rather than assuming that the trickle-down impacts of investing in elite sport will be enough to drive change;

- * Using what we learn to develop our national policies for investing in grassroots sport;

- * Better coordination and sharing of knowledge and a less scattered approach;

- * Seeking new ways of finding funding from industries like Curoil, which is with us today.

NAOC had effective partnerships over the year, and will continue these strategies.

Tomorrow I shall elaborate more detailed about our Olympic future.

Ladies and gentlemen, Let us make the most of this congress !

Thank you.