

From the World Youth Games 1998 in Moscow to the Youth Olympic Games

By Lev Kofman, Executive Director, Russia's Executive WYG Directorate

The flame is lit: more than 7500 young athletes from 131 countries and aged between eleven and eighteen took part in the first World Youth Games in Moscow. The Opening Ceremony was postponed by two days to give IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch and the other guests of honour the chance to watch the World Cup final in Paris. The scene was the Luzhniki Stadium, in which the 1980 Olympic Games had taken place. It had been reconstructed in 1997 for the 850th anniversary of the founding of the city of Moscow.

Photos: Olympic Review
September 1998



The 119th IOC Session, held in Guatemala in July of 2007, adopted a proposal to organize a Youth Olympic Games (YOG). IOC President Jacques Rogge told his membership that the YOG concept was not simply about sporting excellence but was also to embrace educational and cultural programs. Juan Antonio Samaranch, IOC Honorary President, declared the idea of youth sports games to be the most significant step in the latest development of the Olympic Movement, a step with a perspective on the future.¹

It is obvious that the idea didn't arise out of thin air. Back in 1969, a group of prominent sport figures, headed by Giulio Onesti, then President of the Italian NOC; and Raoul Mollet, then President of the Belgium NOC; proposed that an Olympic Youth Games be organized. The IOC turned down their proposal.²

But eleven years later, in 1980, when Juan Antonio Samaranch was elected IOC President, the Committee's attitude toward youth and teenage sport changed. It is true that almost a further decade passed before the IOC

Session adopted a resolution to organize the European Youth Olympic Days (EYOD). The Association of European NOC, presided over at the time by Jacques Rogge, had initiated the resolution. The first large-scale competition of its kind for young European athletes aged from 14 to 17 was held in Brussels in 1991. Some 2048 athletes and officials, representing 33 NOC, participated.

Since 2001, the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) has been held every two years. Since 1993 there has also been a winter version of the EYOF. The tenth EYOF, held in Finland in 2009, drew 2500 participants.

Meanwhile, in the nineties, two jubilee dates were fast approaching – the 100th Anniversary of the IOC (1994) and the 100th Anniversary of the first modern Olympic Games (1996)³. It became the unquestionable stimulus for developing teenage sport as part of the Olympic Movement. For example, in 1993, at the event for teenagers held in Moscow, there were discussions about how Russia's capital would celebrate the Olympic Movement's 100th Anniversary. As early as

September 1994, the Olympic Youth Games, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Olympic Movement, were held in Moscow. In the Moscow Games, representatives from 38 countries participated alongside young Russian competitors. The program of the Games included events in 14 sports involving 1855 teams.

In March 1995, the Moscow Winter Games of Olympic Hopes took place. The Games had competitions in a range of age groups for schoolchildren and students. Over 1.3 million participants competed for awards in 10 different sports. Young athletes from 32 Russian cities, as well as teenagers from the Ukraine, Belarus, Hungary, Poland and Sweden were among the participants who competed against Moscow teenagers.⁴

At the post competition debrief, a large scale international competition for young athletes was proposed in the Russian capital. In October 1995, Juan Antonio Samaranch received a deputation from Moscow at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne. At the meeting with Samaranch, the essence of the idea and a model program of large-scale competitions for young people, a first in the history of the International Sport and Olympic Movement, were presented. The IOC President gave his general approval and confirmed his support in a formal document. The letter runs as follows:

"Dear friends!

The International Olympic Committee was delighted to learn of your desire to organize international youth competitions in Moscow for the summer of 1998. We were also very pleased to meet with the Russian delegation in Lausanne, when the delegation leader Mr. Viktor Korobchenko, first deputy Premier of the Moscow government, personally explained the basic concept of these competitions.

After negotiations and careful study of the documents the Russian delegation brought to our headquarters in Lausanne, I am happy to inform you that the International Olympic Committee fully supports the idea of organizing large-scale international competitions for young people in Moscow in the summer of 1998, and we are ready to offer our patronage to these competitions. This means that in addition to everything else the Olympic flag can be raised at all locations where competitions are held in different sports. However the word "Olympic" should not be used in the name of the Moscow competitions.

The competitions must not extend for more than nine days, including

Marquis de Samaranch

January 8th 1996"⁶

The Executive WYG Directorate then suggested several versions: Youth Olympic Games, Games of Olympic Hopes, and World Youth Games etc. The IOC President chose *World Youth Games*. On March 15th 1996 in his letter to ROC President Vitaly Smirnov, the IOC President

confirmed the IOC's support of the Moscow Games and the name in English and in French.⁷

On April 15th of the same year, all preliminary arrangements were accepted with the signing of an agreement between the IOC, the city of Moscow and the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC).⁸ All the further work on staging the World Youth Games (WYG) and its structural units was based on this document and on the rules and regulations of the Olympic Charter.

The government of Moscow, the Executive Board of the ROC and the State Committee for Physical Culture and Tourism of the Russian Federation signed a joint statement to set up the Executive WYG Directorate for operative management and coordinated actions of all WYG units and services.

I was honored to head the Directorate. The thing was that the Executive WYG Directorate was set up on the base of the Moscow City Physical Culture and Sport organization. The Executive Directorate of the WYG was established on the same lines as the Moscow City Physical Culture and Sport Organization (MGPhSO). It was set up in 1988, and I have been its General Director since the start.

The Directorate began with detailed planning of the main sport, scientific and cultural programs which would be offered to participants and guests of the WYG. In preparation for the sporting program, a secretariat was established and judges and organizing secretaries were appointed. Individual sport directors were also appointed.

The WYG Executive Directorate maintained regular contact with IOC management and services. As a result of the link, the problem of using Olympic symbols was solved, the emblem and token of the Games approved. The programs and regulations of the Games, the timing, the age of the participants and other production moments were checked with the IOC. "The Olympic Solidarity" program occupied a special part in our relationship with the IOC. It allowed material help to 31 NOC of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Together with the Russian Sport Federations we constantly consulted with the International Federations, responsible for sports included in the WYG 98 program. In all there were 98 disciplines.

The International Federations offered considerable support and included the WYG in their calendars. There was also liaison with IFs on a range of matters including age limits, the disciplines and events to be included, competition regulations and appointment of technical delegates, judges etc. All IF Presidents and General Secretaries were invited to the Games as guests.

As already mentioned, the Olympic Charter became the legal grounds for the World Youth Games in Moscow. Based on the Charter, the main legal WYG act – "the Agreement on the World Youth Games-1988" – was signed on April 15th 1998.⁹



The flame of the World Youth Games was lit on 23rd June 1998 on the historic Hill of Pnyx in Athens and carried to Moscow by 5000 young runners who had qualified at the trials. On its way to the capital the baton traversed 13 regions of the Russian Federation.

Table 1
General number of the
NOC and participants

Continent	NOC	Athletes		
		Boys	Girls	Total
Europe	45	1585	1121	2706
Asia	35	622	335	957
Africa	27	260	202	462
America	20	301	228	529
Oceania	4	15	7	22
Total	131*	2783	1893	4676

*Six of the NOC delegations had only observers.

On advice of the IOC management, our Executive directorate worked closely with IFs to determine the main principles for selection of teams and participants based on world and regional rankings. In the selected kind of sport and the potential possibilities of the host-city – the WYG organizer – to receive a certain amount of participants for each exact kind of sport; as well as the wishes of each NOC. The maximum possible number of participants for each discipline and for each sport as a whole was fixed.

After composing a preliminary list of the countries, the maximum case scenario was established and as the competition drew nearer the list was revised based on more realistic figures from each NOC.

As a result sport delegations from 131 NOC participated in the sport program of the WYG-98. The characteristics of the WYG-98 sport program in figures run as follows in tables 1 and 2.¹⁰

A total of 7842 participants came to Moscow. Among the guests of the Games were 5200 athletes, 520 judges, over two thousand officials. There were 32 IOC Members with their President at the head, 15 heads of ISF, 43 NOC leaders, 15 ministers of sport and heads of state sport organizations. Athletes from 68 countries won 523 medals of different value!

The festival of 32 demonstration (non-Olympic) sports became an important event in the WYG's unofficial sport program. The festival was included in the program at the request of the corresponding ISF and national sport federations whose leaders were not only present at the Games, but also actually prepared and held competitions and demonstration shows in their kinds of sport at the same time.

47 top venues in Moscow were selection for competition and training. Competitions were held at 25 venues. More than 1.5 million spectators attended the sport events during the Games. The competitions took place at the fully reconstructed "Luzhniki" Stadium and at other leading venues in the city. A new Olympic Village was built in a very short time for the participants. About 6000 young athletes lived in the five houses of the Village. They had the best facilities for living, training and relaxation. It should be mentioned that the government of Moscow underwrote all the expenses connected with

construction and hosting. The IOC program of Olympic Solidarity paid part of the expenses dealing with return air fares based on the formula "2 plus 1".

While constructing the Olympic Village, the Organizing Committee took into consideration the rules and regulations of the Olympic Charter: optimum facilities for living, relaxation and preparation for the competitions. The route from the Village to the main sport center of the Games – the Luzhniki Sport Complex – took no more than 10-15 minutes by bus, which was a very important factor. The Olympic Village was constructed at minimum expense in record time – in only 16 months. It was taken into consideration that after the Games, the Olympic Village would be turned into a residential region of Moscow.

NOC projections on potential participation suggested that, including teams and officials, there would be over 7500 participants. It was far beyond the facilities of the Olympic Village. That's why the Organizing Committee made a decision not to limit the NOC's claims, but arrange a second village.

The hotel complex, Izmailovo, was used for this purpose. There were 1704 people – athletes and officials from the NOC delegations in wrestling, artistic gymnastics and swimming – housed there. The two Villages were connected by regular bus service. The participants had an opportunity of mixing and visiting any location.

The World Youth Games formally began on June 23, 1998. In a special ceremony on the Hill of Phnyx in Athens, a group of priestesses lit a flame from the bright beams of the Greek sun. After the Official Ceremony, this was placed in a special lamp and sent the same day by plane to Adler, a suburb of Sochi. From there it started on its way to Moscow. From Sochi to Moscow the flame of the Games passed through 18 Russian cities before reaching the Russian capital.

During the 3335 km route, about 5000 young Russians – winners of preliminary regional competitions, accompanied the torch. At each stage, five assistants, in accordance with the number of continents, accompanied the bearers of the torch.

To commemorate participation in the relay, each torchbearer received a pin, a medal and a diploma of certification that they had been relay participants. The mayor of each city on the route received a torch to be ever kept permanently in the city museum.

The flame of the World Youth Games was lit on July 13th by Teddy bear – the grandson of the mascot of the Olympic Games-80 (Misha). The Teddy bear personified continuity of the Olympic traditions at the Opening Ceremony.

World-renown Russian coaches, who had brought up several generations of Olympic champions, carried the flag of the WYG to the stadium. The Opening Ceremony consisted of the prologue – a sport dancing

suite, a cosmic gift, carnival procession, and parade of flags, sport suite, the rituals of opening and lighting the cauldron, clowns' sketch and a grand final. More than 5500 people took part in the ceremony.

The Opening Ceremony at the Olympic Stadium in Luzhniki was not the only innovative celebration. There were innovations at the closing of the Games, where the spectators watched a parade of champions and prizewinners of the Games, while champions from six countries, who had competed in track and field athletics, lowered the flag of the WYG. After the Closing Ceremony, all the participants and guests of the World Youth Games and the participants of the festival of demonstration program of the Games continued the celebration in the Moscow Kremlin, in the Red Square, in other squares and streets of Moscow.

There were also many innovations in the way the Games were publicized in the media; in the usage of the latest TV technologies; in the publicity the Games were given in our country, as well as in the countries of CIS and abroad. The TV reports from the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and sport competitions were broadcast in more than one hundred countries (BBC, Euro News, Eurosport, SNTV and others).

For the first time in the history of Russian TV there was a direct transmission through the Internet. During the period of the Games, from July 11th to 19th, about 1.3 million hits to the site were registered. A great number of emails came, among them many to the participants of the competitions from their parents and friends.

Besides the traditional press-center of the Games (similar to the one at the Olympic Games) there was also the very popular main children's press center. Some 2747 journalists were accredited, 653 of them were foreigners.

The World Youth Games, which were held under the motto "Moscow is an open world of childhood", became a bright event not only for sport, but also in the cultural life of the capital of Russia. They confirmed Moscow as having the reputation of boasting one of the largest cultural centers in the world. During the Games, festivals of national cultures and sports, World Youth Music Forum, competitions in children's drawings, national dance, contests of folklore and choral companies from regions of Russia and other countries of the world were held. With this aim, special cultural-sport centers were opened in all the regions of Moscow. Eighty-seven amateur companies, uniting 3000 children, took part in the final gala-concert of the festival, "Moscow Bouquet – for the guests and participants of the World Youth Days". More than 25,000 participated in the 19 central programs and other enterprises.

The culmination of the cultural program was an open-air concert in Red Square, given by a united symphony

Sports	NOC	Participants		
		Boys	Girls	Total
Basketball	25	190	191	381
Freestyle Wrestling	51	235		235
Greek-Roman Wrestling	46	227		227
Volleyball	22	191	190	381
Handball	13	112	98	210
Artistic Gymnastics	59	162	147	309
Rhythmic Gymnastics	48		184	184
Judo	70	281	174	455
Athletics	87	382	296	678
Swimming	62	255	173	428
Synchronized Swimming	23		137	137
Tennis	56	98	74	172
Table Tennis	55	162	111	273
Fencing	50	200	118	318
Football	16	288		288
Total	131*	2783	1893	4676

*Six of the NOC delegations had only observers.

Table 2
General number of the NOC and athletes by sports

orchestra of young musicians from nearly 90 countries. It was conducted by one of the great modern musicians, Maestro Valery Georgiev.

The International Forum "Youth – Science – Olympism", opened by the IOC President, was held from July 14th to 18th. The Forum was under the patronage of the International Council for Physical Education and Sport Science (CIEPSS). More than 250 scientists and practical workers from 41 countries representing five continents took part in discussions. At the request of the Forum's Organizing Committee the International Council for Physical Education and Sport Science granted its patronage to the Forum, and noted that the Forum's aims and its international nature clearly agreed with the CIEPSS aims.

The Forum had three conferences: "The Olympic Movement and social processes" (trends: philosophy, sociology, pedagogy, history, arrangement, economics, law); "Sport for young people in the XXI century" (social backgrounds, building the necessity of practicing sport, the psychological problems of sport for young people); "Practice of Olympic upbringing (organization and program providing of the Olympic upbringing, Fair Play and the Youth, sport-humane movement SpArt)"; and finally an open seminar for the Presidents of National Olympic Academies (the arrangement of their activities, promotion of Olympism, coordination of scientific research). 155 reports were presented to the Forum. In total 96 reports, which reflected the latest results of scientific research concerning the problems included in the theme of the Forum were delivered.

A greeting from space: two Russian cosmonauts who were circling the earth in a space station spoke to the participants and spectators in the Luzhniki Stadium.



The Moscow declaration "Youth Science Olympism" – adopted by all the participants has had an important impact. One of the issues of the document runs as follows:

"Studying the historic aspect of the Olympic Movement and the origin of the Olympic Winter Games is giving the first Games in Chamonix the official Olympic status after their having been held showed that in case of IOC's possible and favorable decision concerning regular conduct of the world youth multi-sport competitions with the name 'Olympic', the World Olympic community has all the grounds to recognize the World Youth Games in 1998 in Moscow to be the first of such competitions, with the corresponding change of the name".¹¹

Afterword

These first World Youth Games were considered a great success. Such was the unanimous decision of the participants, coaches, representatives and leaders of the teams, leaders and members of the IOC, ISF, NOC, representatives of sport science, multimillion army of TV audience, fans, – all the world sport public. When the Organizing Committee met the IOC for a debrief in December 1998 President Samaranch indicated that he would study what had taken place in great detail. He said: "... it was difficult to imagine that such a grand project could be implemented in less than three years. I have no doubt that among the participants of the World Olympic Games there are many future participants of the Olympiads. I hope Moscow will set an example for the organizers of large competitions in the XXI century".

The delegation of the Organizing Committee and the WYG Executive Directorate were confident that a second such Games would be staged in 2002 and that these would be styled "Youth Olympic Games" for the first time.

As a result of the success of the Games, the Mayor, his deputy and the author of this article were all awarded the Olympic Order. According to the Russian Federation President, about a thousand people working in the ROC, Moscow City Council, MCPHSO and some other organizations of the capital, as well as coaches, journalists, volunteers etc. were awarded with state orders, medals and other honorary awards and ranks of the Russian Federation.

The experience of our Games proved not only useful as a future model of organizing such competitions, but also as a hand to International and National Sport Federations, National Olympic Committees and other interested organizations in developing sport for children and the youth all over the world, within our Olympic Family, while the World Youth Games have become another Olympic tradition as well as a prototype for the first Youth Olympic Games.

To make this a reality, there were a number of pressing matters which concerned all parties.

First: a purely *sport aspect*. It was necessary to define the status of the World Youth Games and where it stood in the hierarchy of international sporting events in the calendar. The progression from WYG to Olympic Games on one hand and to world championships on the other would also have to be established. It was advisable to start organizing continental, regional youth games, such as the European Youth Olympic Days, which could be a step towards choosing national delegations for participation in the World Youth Games. It was also necessary to give the World Youth Games a certain *classification* so that the winners and prizewinners in their countries could officially have a *status of candidates to national Olympic teams*. In any case, the sport principle means the sport results achieved by the participants of the World Youth Games; the stability of the results should serve *as a criterion for selecting young athletes and a stimulation for growth of their sport craft* (as well as an inspiration to work with young athletes).

Second: economic aspect. With the assistance of the International Olympic Committee we had hoped, while preparing for the next games, to work out a competitive product that would be in demand as a commercial commodity in the international sport market, and would present economic and financial interest to the world's leading corporations on the one hand, and to the most important sponsors on the other. The provision of economic and financial support for sports schools for teenagers has always been a problem, particularly

in developing countries. It concerns not only financial support to national youth teams in different countries, but also the system of individual support to talented young athletes, and mainly to sport organizations for children and young people. With this aim in view it is advisable to set up an international association of sport organizations for children and young people, a special IOC Commission on the problem of sport in this age group.

Third: information and publicity. Working out a special public relations system and ways of disseminating widespread information through the media, Internet and other developing forms and types of communications. Our main strategy was to try and break into the international sports news agenda and making the experience of our Games the property of all the international sport public.

Another aspect of our work was directed at the consolidation of the world sport public forces in order to make the WYG a tradition. We thought of organizing the Games every four years in various cities across different countries and continents.

The idea was developed at the meeting of representatives from different countries during the Games in Moscow. As a result, an initiative working group consisting of 16 representatives from the five continents was set up. It was decided to set up a permanent International Coordinating Committee to organize the next World Youth Games. Its main task was to coordinate the work between the IOC, International Sport Federations, NOC, other international and national sport, youth, cultural, educational, governmental and non-governmental organizations on the one hand, and the Organizing Committees of the future World Youth Games on the other. The Coordinating Committee was also supposed to render the Organizing Committees practical assistance in organizing the World Youth Games. The experience of our past reports on the organization of our Games made by the management of the Executive Directorate of the Games and the International Coordinating Committee at the General Assemblies of AGFIS (Monaco, October 1998), Pan American Sport organizations (Mexico City, October 1999), European Olympic Committees (St. Petersburg, October 1999) showed that the work of the Coordinating Committee was moving in the right direction. The headquarters of the committee was in Moscow, and set up on the same lines as the Organising Committee of the 1998 WYG.

Before that, in March 1999, Nikolai Borovkov, General Director of the WYG Coordinating Committee (which was set up at the end of 1998), its Secretary-General Oleg Milshteyn and I visited Brussels. At the NOC of Belgium we were received by the President of the European Olympic Committees, a member of the IOC Executive Board, ANOC Vice-President, founder of the European

Youth Olympic days (festivals), the present IOC President Jacques Rogge. I informed Dr. Rogge about the first steps of our newly born committee; about its charter; about our discussions with the IOC President; about the possible meeting of the board members of the newly formed committee with the IOC President at the IOC Headquarters in Lausanne; about our plans and activities aimed at organizing the next games in 2002, and also about a possibility of the IOC recognizing the WYG Committee as well as some other issues.

Rogge was guarded in his response. He wanted to review the information he had received and compare it with the information he'd already received about our plans for a second Games in 2002. He did not sound particularly optimistic but stressed that if they were to be held, the National Olympic Committees should take the lead.

It was not the most positive outcome, but it became clear to me that Rogge was most likely to become IOC President at the forthcoming election in Moscow in 2001 (at the 112th IOC Session), was obvious to me.

The planned meeting of the members of the WYG board, with Juan Antonio Samaranch in Lausanne, was



The Games logo was depicted on the three Rouble stamp, the souvenir sheet showed Moscow architectural landscapes: on the left a street in the old quarter of Arbat, on the right the “skyscraper” of Lomonosov University.

more positive even though Samaranch diplomatically avoided the issue of IOC recognition. He also advised against finding another host city for the second Games. He felt that in the time which remained Moscow was the best choice to host the Games as any other country was unlikely to be able to stage the games in such a short time. “There in Moscow you have got the experience of organizing the 1998 Games.” The members of the WYG

"Misha Jr." – in 1998 it was the turn of the ursine offspring of the Olympic mascot of 1980.



International Coordinating Committee were delighted and inspired by the meeting with Samaranch.

My colleagues from the WYG Board and I were invited to meet with the President of Malaysian NOC, Prince Tunku Imran (at that time he was President of the International Badminton Federation, but wasn't yet an IOC member). After meeting with the sport leadership of his country, making acquaintances, being shown fantastic ultramodern sport constructions of the capital Kuala Lumpur, it was a disappointment to be told that financial constraints made them unable to organize the Games.

During the ANOC Session in Mexico City, the members of the WYG Board were received by Mario Vázquez Raña, who was then an IOC Member, ANOC President, President of the Mexican NOC and head of the Olympic Solidarity Foundation. He gave us hope that Mexican Guadalajara was likely to consider the possibility of organizing the WYG there, but it could hardly take place in 2002. However, it might happen later.

Hope appeared at the next ANOC meeting with the IOC Board, in May 2000 in Rio de Janeiro. At the Session of the ANOC Board, I was given the floor and informed the Board about the situation concerning the second WYG. The next speaker was Mario Pescante – the IOC Member from Italy, a member of the ANOC Board, Vice-President of European Olympic Committees and President of CONI. Mario Pescante sounded neutral: the Moscow Games showed that it was a necessary thing to do, but he was unsure as to the next step.

Another speaker, the ROC Vice-President Alexander Kozlovski was naturally more positive. His opinion was that the second WYG should be held in Moscow in 2002. Jacques Rogge said that the Games were certain to be held but the date and duration were still to be fixed. President Vázquez Raña concluded: "Let us discuss the problem tomorrow at the Session of the ANOC General Assembly together with the IOC Board." (The President kept his word. We had had already a long discussion with him and he had promised to do it). Alisia Masoni de Morea, Vice-President of the WYG Board, who had been leader of the Argentina delegation at the WYG in Moscow, spoke at the Session. After giving a brief overview of the first WYG in Moscow and sharing information concerning the activities of the newly formed WYG International Coordination Committee to the audience

of the ANOC General Assembly (which is composed of delegations presenting over 200 NOC Presidents, General Secretaries, etc.), she made a suggestion that ANOC (together with the IOC) should give its patronage to our Games; that ANOC should be "the WYG host" in concert with our Committee. Just as the IOC was the umbrella body for the Olympics, so the ANOC would fulfill the same function for these Games. We had suggested the idea to Mario Vázquez Raña earlier and he welcomed it. The audience of two thousand also welcomed the idea with a storm of applause. We considered the reaction of the audience as our success, though in some ways it went against the IOC and our own interests.

However it was a compromise that could help us to shift from a standstill to solving of our problem of organizing the second WYG.

During the Sydney Olympics, we had another meeting with Mario Vázquez Raña. He was more certain that the WYG should become a property of ANOC and the Olympic Solidarity, and he hoped that in the event that Guadalajara proved unable to organize the 2002 Games (our talk was in August 2000), it could be done later, but it should be organized in Latin America only.

The year of 2002 came to a close. We realized that we found ourselves inside a knot of contradictions, in other words, using the vocabulary of sociologists, we stepped "into a conflict of interests".

The Moscow government, together with its Mayor, was willing to take all the responsibility and organize the second WYG in Moscow, but the ANOC as well as the IOC kept silent.

Then it was decided to organize in the summer of 2002 sport games for the young people from the CIS countries, Baltic States and regions of Russia. The Games were supposed to be more modest, not so numerous and not worldwide, but modelled on the WYG. We received support from the leadership of Russia, from the Moscow government and the ROC. We were also given the IOC's patronage to the Games as well as the approval of the relevant International Federations and National Olympic Committees from participation nations, sport organisations at a national level in Russia and others.

The IOC Session held in Moscow in July 2001 was a positive prelude to the Games. It was at this Session that Rogge was elected IOC President and later he supported Moscow's initiative by attending the Games together with some other members of the IOC, leaders of the ISF, etc.

We tried to follow the experience of the WYG-98 to the maximum and organized the Games in the same format. The Games were a success. The children, teenagers, young girls and boys – participants of the Games, as well as their coaches, sport leaders, spectators and fans – all were happy.

Later, in February 2003, a delegation representing the Organizing Committee and the Executive Directorate of the Games presented our new report to the IOC Board. And our work was again highly praised.¹² We were able to personally ask the IOC President if Moscow were to be allowed to organize the next WYG or rather the first Youth Olympic Games in 2006. The answer was again non committal though nonetheless optimistic.

When we learned about the decision to establish the Youth Olympic Games and to organize the first of them in 2010, Moscow immediately became a candidate city. The IOC Members in the end gave a preference to Singapore. That was the will of history. Up until now the only World Youth Games were in 1998. But those Games are now inscribed upon the pages in this latest chapter of the history of the Olympic Movement.

Children are civilization's most important resource. This life-asserting principle of all nations and all peoples affirming our planet is especially bright and versatile as shown at the World Youth Games in Moscow – the forerunner of the Youth Olympic Games. ■

- 4 Kofman, L. Children and Youth Sport and Physical Education. Terra-Sport, Moscow, 1998, pp. 189.
- 5 Rodichenko, V., Olympic Idea for Russia (Repetition), Sovjetsky Sport, 2004, p. 248.
- 6 Report on the World Youth Games. Vol. 1, Golden Bee Publishers, Moscow 1998, p. 144.
- 7 World Youth Games, Moscow 1998, p. 1.
- 8 Ibid, pp. 151-152.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid. p. 41.
- 11 Ibid pp. 157, 159.
- 12 Kofman (Ed.), Report of the International Sport Youth Games of the CIS, Baltia and Regions of Russia, Golden Bee Publishers, Moscow 2002, p. 183.

-
- 1 Milshteyn, O., Olympic Saga: Olympionics, Priests, Pilgrims. (Essays on history and sociology). Vol. 1. Olympionics, Terra Sport, Olympia-Press, Moscow 2001, p. 668.
 - 2 Shteynbakh, V. (Ed.), The Big Olympic Encyclopedia. Olympia-Press, Moscow, 2006, p. 452.
 - 3 Milshteyn, Jubilee Olympiad: In the Eve of "Golden Games", Olympic Panorama, Moscow 1989, Vol. 2, pp. 44-48.