

Olympic Games and the Environment

October 2003

To the B.I.O. President:

With great interest, I have been witnessing an increased awareness of your proposal for a ceasefire during the Olympic games, as well as an overall maturing of your initiative to enrich the Olympics with environmental values. I always admired the efforts you launched in 1992 in order to mobilise UN officials, members of the IOC, civic leaders and decision-makers world-wide to endorse your proposal for a cease-fire.

As I recall, your proposal for a ceasefire was also adopted as a resolution by 75 countries at the UN General Assembly in 1993. Personally, I was inspired by your initiative and vision and urged the organisers of the 1994 Lillehammer winter Olympics to include the ideals of bios and the environment in the opening ceremony.

As an advisor to the Sydney Olympics, I am also aware that environmental considerations were a crucial element in their bid. Your ideas and ideals were, once again, a source of inspiration and had a significant impact in rendering the Sydney Olympics the first .green Olympics. of the century. Since you have made such a major contribution in this field and have raised global awareness of the need for the Olympics to become a very significant vehicle for the expansion of the concept of peaceful sustainable development, I believe that the upcoming games in Athens will be an excellent opportunity to help catalize the implementation of your vision for environmentally sound Olympics that will transcend the days of the actual Olympic events.

Your ideas were a source of inspiration for the 1994 Lillehammer winter Olympics and had a significant impact in rendering the Sydney Olympics the first .green Olympics. of the century.

If the environmentally sound dimensions are also integrated with the emphasis upon an integrated cease-fire, that concept and the actuality thereof, will also go far beyond the few days of the Olympics. If so, then we will make real progress toward the goal of truly sustainable societies. I hope that the organisers of the games in Athens will seriously consider your suggestions and chose to follow your proposals, which I am sure will guarantee the success of the games in the short-run and hopefully will have much further and long-lasting impacts beyond the Olympic games. After all, holding the games in the cradle region of democracy and of the original Olympic games is a beautiful challenge and opportunity to integrate them while promoting the concept of sustainable societies in which economics, bios and ecology as well as trans-generational equity are ensured.

As a consequence, future generations will look back and say, yes, there was a fundamental turning point when the Greeks hosted the Olympics in Athens in 2004. For this we are delighted and for this we thank visionaries such as Agni Vlavianos Arvanitis for her tireless dedication to helping us to envision and to implement sustainable societies.

Sincerely,

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