



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach
President

Awarding of the Doctor Honoris Causa

of the 'Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia' (UCAM)

Murcia, 20 March 2015

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It is a great pleasure to be today at the San Antonio Catholic University of Murcia, known as the University of Sport in Spain.

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and hospitality. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this great honour of bestowing on me the title Doctor Honoris Causa of your prestigious University.

Fellow athletes, thank you also for sharing some moment with us, at your University.

You enjoy here education which is going far beyond sport and physical activity. You learn the importance and values of sport before promoting them on the field of play, here and around the world.

The ancient Romans have understood this already more than 2000 years ago because they said: “mens sana in corpore sano” – a healthy mind in a healthy body.

At this University of Sport, you have placed these same values at the top of your teaching objectives. You have become the reference in university sport in Spain.

A reference strengthened by the alliance you created with the Spanish Olympic Committee several years ago. An alliance that is still focused on the athletes and their well-being, both on and off the field of play.

Through various initiatives such as sponsorship, you allow them to prepare in the best conditions while continuing university studies of the highest level. Over 200 athletes have been able to benefit from such scholarships and some have put on excellent performances in the international sporting arena.

Just like the Spanish Olympic Committee, its partner, the UCAM, does not limit itself to offering sponsorship and scholarships. Promoting the Olympic values, scientific research and training are just as fundamental for the UCAM.

A marvellous example is your new training programme, “Sports Higher Education”, aimed at young Iberoamerican athletes, with which the IOC, through Olympic Solidarity, is associated.

Let me also mention the new athlete assistance office launched by the University and the Spanish Olympic Committee which will support the athletes to overcome difficulties before and after their sports career.

As we have a great responsibility to the athletes which goes beyond competition, we must prepare them for life after sport and their post-competitive integration. For this, education is the key to a successful future.

In today’s world, athletes should be able to develop their athletic skills and at the same time develop their social and professional skills. There are many examples

of athletes who have shone on the international sporting scene while pursuing studies at the same time as winning medals.

With all these initiatives in support of the athletes, your University is definitively a University of and for sport. You offer to every athlete, every student, the appropriate means to take the best professional route possible and to fully succeed in his or her new life.

Dear friends,

The world of sport is entering a new era. It is more complex and more universal than ever before. As a result, it needs more than ever the expertise of talented, well-educated and dedicated individuals like all of you.

Today's world needs the positive power of sport more than ever. We are living in a fragile world, battered by crisis — political crisis, financial crisis, environmental catastrophes, pandemics, terrorism and war. Society is more fragmented and individualized than at any time in the past.

To play a positive role in such a world, sport has to demonstrate that it lives up to the values it promotes. That is the motivation behind Olympic Agenda 2020.

This strategic roadmap for the Olympic Movement provides a clear vision of where we are heading and how we can increase the positive impact of sport on society. It is based on the three pillars of sustainability, credibility and youth.

Sustainability means embracing a global concept of respect for the environment, feasibility and development, to leave a lasting legacy, specifically in the context of the Olympic Games with an entirely new approach to the bidding process.

Credibility means credibility of the sports organisations, as well as credibility of sports competitions.

So we are on the one hand committed to good governance and ethics and on the other hand to the protection of the clean athletes from doping, manipulation of any kind and corruption.

I appeal to all of you to join us in this commitment. Our actions must speak louder than our words. The future of sport depends on this.

Youth means we have to get the couch potatoes off the couch. We have to establish sport as an important part of education like you at your University do already.

The IOC works to include sport and its values in more schools, by working closely with organisations like UNESCO, educational institutions and governments. It is by working all together that we can train a new generation of students who can go out in the world and inspire young people with the gifts that sport has to offer.

Dear friends,

All of you can help shape that future. Your idealism combined with your knowledge, can help sport reach its full potential as a force for positive change throughout the world.

Thank you once again for awarding me the title of Doctor Honoris Causa. It is a great honour to receive it.