

SPEECH BY GIUSEPPE SALA

Mr. President, delegates, dear friends, thank you for your warm welcome and engagement.

Today, we begin to feel the enthusiasm and the energy of big global sporting events, most of all of the Olympic Games.

It is great to sense the magic that springs from the lighting of the Olympic torch. The same kind of creativity and drive has always been the distinctive marks of my city - Milano - making it the ideal host for the 2019 IOC Session.

Milano firmly believes in the key potential of such global sport gathering. It did so from the very beginning. This is why we actively took up the challenge to be a candidate city.

We worked hard and with dedication to enhance the appeal of Milano: to make it safer, easier to reach and enjoy; overall to make it a better city to live. In addition, we put great effort in promoting sport among all generations.

The video just shown portrays the main strengths of Milano: a great organizational capacity, a world-renowned cultural season, an artistic heritage attracting 8 million visitors every year. Fashion, design and arts are inscribed in the city's DNA. La Scala Theatre, the Pinacoteca di Brera, the Sforzesco Castle, the Galleria are global icons, along with the many other key attractions around the city and the whole Region. And then there is our experience in managing global events: chiefly, the World Expo in 2015, which attracted 21 million visitors over 6 months and gave a momentum to the life of the city that lasts to this day.

But well beyond the Expo, over the years Milano has hosted numerous international events: some involving high numbers of delegates and participants - like the 2014 ASEM Meeting and its 55 Heads of State or the hundreds of conferences and conventions from all disciplines. And others hosting a restricted number of people, but involving mass attendance, like last spring visit of His Holiness Pope

Francesco, or the first visit of Barack Obama outside of the US after his Presidential term.

In addition, Fashion and Design Week increasingly attract an unprecedented number of visitors from all corners of the globe and of all cultures and traditions at various times of the year. In terms of sport competitions, in 2018 Milano will host both the figure ice skating and the male volleyball world championship.

All past events proved to be great successes. The sound experience of the city, its efficiency and expertise give us the confidence to aptly organize high-profile events, knowing that we can rely on our citizens, institutions, tourism and hospitality infrastructures.

We want to put our abilities and the joint commitment of our city to the service of the IOC both for the 2019 Session and for any other event that International Federations will organise in the future. We want the 2019 Session to be the starting point of a lasting and fruitful collaboration with the IOC.

I would like to highlight the fact that the key ingredient of the city's achievements is the enthusiasm of my fellow citizens for international events. They do not just accept these initiatives, but do fall in love with them. And as sport lovers themselves, I know they will warmly welcome IOC delegates as carriers of the world sport values, as well as contribute to instil a feeling of excitement.

Mr. President, dear IOC members, I am here to thank you for the appreciation you have shown towards Milano. It is a great honour. I am here to present the city's firm commitment to do our best to ensure the success of the 2019 IOC Session.

I know your expectations are high. Milano will meet them.

The city awaits you with joy and dedication.

Thank you.