



AS DELIVERED

# PRIME MINISTER

WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH, 1981

## ADDRESS AT CONFEDERATION OF SPORT MELBOURNE

I would like to welcome you all here. Especially I would like to welcome His Royal Highness. We are always honoured when he visits Australia and it is a tribute to his significant contribution to the cause of sport that he is here on this occasion.

I understand that Australia has some cause to be especially grateful on this occasion because as I am advised, a European country that I will not name and Australia both offered to host this inaugural meeting. Part of the business of seeing that Australia was successful in that particular competition was the willingness of his Royal Highness to travel to Australia if the meeting were to be held here. If he was going to travel that distance to be here, how could anyone else refuse? So thank you very much indeed, sir, for being here and helping to make sure that Australia and this city had the opportunity to host this particular occasion.

I would like to welcome, for my wife and myself and for the Commonwealth Government, the delegates to Sport International 1981. More than 50 countries are represented here, representatives of a large number of international sporting bodies. I hope very much that your meeting will be productive, and that your stay in Australia and in this city will be a happy one, that you will not be worked too hard during your days with us.

Australia, and I think especially Melbourne, are delighted to be the venue for Sport International 1981.

This event, as you would all know of course, goes back to discussions which began in 1974. At the Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, informal discussions between representatives from a number of countries gave rise to the idea that an international conference of national sports confederations should indeed be established. As I understand, the purpose is to strengthen national sports confederations and to enable them to carry out their responsibilities to their many sports better and more effectively and independent of governments. In Australia there has never been any doubt that our sporting bodies are independent of government. They have demonstrated that on many occasions, and long may it last.

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Four years after Christchurch, at Edmonton, there were further informal meetings convened by His Royal Highness, to consider whether a world body along the lines of West European non-governmental sports organisations; as I am told, the NGO Club, was feasible and whether it was desirable. That led to a considerable degree of interest. That led to a meeting in London in March in 1979 under his Royal Highness' chairmanship where representatives from 17 nations and several international sporting bodies met. A working committee was established. A draft constitution was drawn. I do not know whether your actual constitution has any resemblance to the draft, but that is the way of constitutions, they change as time goes on. Also, of course that working committee was to recommend aims and objectives.

There was a further meeting in Amsterdam in the same year, and then an organising committee to establish this particular meeting. So there has been a long chain of events, a good deal of discussion and you have got to the launching point.

This event is the culmination of a long process, but hopefully, this is only the end of the beginning. For it is the inaugural or the formation meeting of the International Assembly of National Sports Confederations. I think that there is great potential in this assembly.

Sport is important to all of us. It is important to all nations. It is important in relationships between nations, and it is also important for sporting confederations and sporting bodies in particular countries to be able to conduct their own affairs with the maximum degree of freedom and conduct their own relationships with similar bodies in other countries. I hope very much that this assembly will advance that cause with strength.

There is great importance and great value in sport, in the growth of sports and in greater participation in sport, not only at the highest level where nations compete with nations but to try and achieve the maximum participation of people in various sports. The fact that this assembly represents, as I am told, over 100 sports instead of just a few is something of value. I hope it will add to international co-operation in sport.

I would like to wish you all the best of good fortune for Sport International 1981, for this assembly, for its launching and for its success in future years. I thank you all very much for coming to Melbourne and I hope that you will return, and I am sure that the Premier, Mr. Hamer, joins me very warmly in the welcome to this particular city.