



Think of your finest Olympic memories. Depending on your age, it might possibly be Usain Bolt's sprint double in Beijing in 2008, or it could be Jean-Claude Killy's three golds at the Winter Games in Grenoble in 1968. Either way, those memories will last you a lifetime and provide an inspiring legacy.

In a few days, the world's best winter sports athletes will be in Vancouver for 16 days performing on a global stage and writing a whole new chapter of achievement. But the success of the Games will not be measured solely by the events on the snow and ice of Vancouver and Whistler.

For all the attention that they receive, the Olympic Games were never intended to be purely an end in themselves. They are also a means to an end. The modern Games were created to encourage athletic activity, especially among young people, and to promote friendship, fair play, respect for others and other values. These goals continue to be the core mission of the International Olympic Committee.

But the IOC and its partner host cities around the world have also focused in recent years on the economic and environmental legacy of the Games. The increased attention to legacy planning is driven in part by economic and environmental realities. Our times demand the careful stewardship of our financial and environmental resources. It is also a moral imperative.

Legacy planning, in the broadest sense, is now an integral part of the planning for any Olympic Games. Cities bidding to host a Summer or Winter Games are required to provide a comprehensive legacy plan in their candidatures.

Our ever-expanding transfer-of-knowledge programme also allows host cities to draw from the lessons that previous cities have learnt and adapt them to their own specific context.

We can already see the results in Vancouver, this year's host city; in London, host of the 2012 Games; in Sochi, the 2014 host; and even in Rio de Janeiro, which is in the early stages of planning the 2016 Games. Delegations from London, Sochi and Rio de Janeiro will be in Vancouver to see what works and what doesn't.

Each host city is encouraged to find a strategy that serves local needs. The 2012 Games are already helping to revitalise an economically struggling section of East London. The 2014 Games are intended to develop Sochi into a world-class destination for winter sports while protecting the region's unique ecosystem. The 2016 Games will transform Rio's transport links and infrastructure, among others.

Vancouver is poised to set a new standard for legacy planning based broadly on a vision that aims to ensure that 16 days of competition this 12-28 February will continue to benefit the community 60 years into the future.



The Vancouver Olympic Village will transform an industrial wasteland into a showcase of sustainable living for about 3,000 people after the Games. The 1,100 units will anchor a mixed-income community that will include shopping, services and parks.

The sport venues in Vancouver and nearby Whistler were designed to meet the highest environmental standards, with energy-saving features that capture and reuse wasted heat and rainwater. They will remain in use long after the Games.

Vancouver is the first host city to set up a not-for-profit organisation specifically designed to develop community legacies — in sport, the arts, literacy, environment, accessibility and volunteerism — before, during and after the 2010 Games.

The planning includes a broad range of strategies aimed at improving everything from social issues to the awareness of Aboriginal people and Canada's cultural diversity.

There are dozens of programmes in place, each vital to the mission of building a better world through sport. Most occur behind the scenes, with little fanfare. Many involve strong collaboration with other sports organisations, governmental authorities, businesses, athletes, and non-governmental organisations.

The Games are not a panacea for all that ails a host city or country, but they can be a catalyst for profound and positive change. When Games legacy is prepared for early and properly, it can be leveraged to regenerate a community.

So, as the world watches some 2,500 athletes from around 80 National Olympic Committees compete in Canada, providing us, we hope, with some priceless moments, the IOC and Games organisers from Vancouver and other host cities will also have an eye to the future. If all goes well, the 16 days of competition will leave a positive legacy that lasts long after the Closing Ceremony.

Jacques Rogge,
International Olympic Committee President