

# Realising Rio's Olympic dream

By **CARLOS NUZMAN**

PRESIDENT OF THE BRAZILIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE



**CARLOS NUZMAN** has been a member of the International Olympic Committee since 2000 and began his sports career as an athlete. He represented Brazil in the Tokyo Olympic Games. President of the Brazilian Volleyball Confederation from 1975-97, Carlos Nuzman chaired the candidature for the inclusion of beach volleyball in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games sports programme. He has been President of the Brazilian Olympic Committee since 1995. During his administration Brazil achieved the best results ever in the Olympic Games. Nuzman is a Law graduate and is also a member of IOC Marketing Commission and of the Coordination Commission for the Beijing Games.

I was a volleyball player in my youth and had the honour to participate in the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 at the launch of the sport as an Olympic event. Some years later I became president of the Brazilian Volleyball Federation. We were able to transform the sport, which became a passion of Brazilian supporters and from the 80s went on to enchant the world. Our men's team took silver medals in Los Angeles '84 and then gold in Barcelona '92. In Atlanta '96, the women's beach volleyball team stood on the top step of the Olympic podium. The two medallists came from Rio de Janeiro and made the famous Ipanema Beach the perfect backdrop for their talent. These medals were landmark victories for sport in my country, which encouraged our youth to take up volleyball, making it the second most popular sport in Brazil.

Since 1978 – with the staging of the first World Youth Volleyball Championships – we have been organising international sports events in Brazil and in Rio de Janeiro. There have been innumerable men's and women's volleyball world championships, seven editions of world beach volleyball, a portfolio that helped to produce the credibility for the sport to enter the Olympic programme, starting in Atlanta '96 – which popularised the Brazilian people's joyful and passionate style of support. In 2002, in Rio, we organised a successful edition of the South American Games.

The experience acquired with these events gave us the credibility to stage the Pan American Games, Rio 2007, a multi-sport event drawing nearly 6,000 athletes from 42 countries, which were a wonderful success. Rio 2007 was a public and unquestionable proof of our capability to stage large sporting events. We were aware that before the Olympic Games we had to deliver the Pan American Games which we undertook as a searching test. And we passed the test with honours. Today, more than a year after the closing ceremony, we still hear praise from athletes, directors of international federations, sports people and the population of Rio.

Now, I have been honoured with the presidency of the candidature of Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Olympic Games. Our project represents a long-term contribution to Brazilian sport and society. The Games will accelerate investment in sports structures guaranteeing important social and educational benefits for Brazil. Through sport we will be able to face up to the challenges of enormous

social inequality that makes up part of our reality. In Rio de Janeiro sport and sporting events are a precious tool for social inclusion.

Thanks to the Pan Am Games, Rio de Janeiro has today a set of state-of-the-art competition venues already in place, which would contribute to reducing the cost of the 2016 bid project. We learned a lot from the Games and also from the failed 2012 bid. We have to thank the International Olympic Committee and our partners in the Olympic Movement for that.

Regarding infrastructure for the Rio 2016 Games, we are putting forward a sound and highly efficient transport system. We will also benefit from investment planned for the 2014 FIFA World Cup to be staged in Brazil. Just two months ago, the federal administration announced an Urban Mobility Plan with investments of up to US\$22 billion targeting transportation for the 2014 World Cup, which will strongly benefit Rio de Janeiro and our bid.

Let us remember that the World Cup and the Olympic Games have already been held in the same country in the space of two years. Quite recently it happened in the US (WC '94 and Atlanta '96). It happened also in Germany (Munich '72 and WC '74) and in Mexico (Mexico '68 and WC '70). The 2014 World Cup in Brazil and 2016 Olympic Games in Rio are fully synergic projects. Some of the big investments our city needs in security and accommodation will already be in place two years before the Games.

The candidature of Rio de Janeiro will leave an important legacy for Brazil and South America. The Olympic Training Centre, which we will start building in 2009, represents a qualitative leap in the education of young sportspeople and in the preparation of top athletes. No less than 22 sports will be catered for at OTC. Our Olympic project will also present X Park to the world, a radical sports park that will attract youth to a location where they can also practice traditional Olympic sports, a unique integration and novel proposition.

The candidature of Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Games offers, therefore, a new platform for the Olympic Movement. In 2016 about 40 per cent of 400 million South Americans will be young people under the age of 25. We aim to enrich the Olympic Brand with the energy and the celebration of a young and vibrant city, contributing to the strengthening of the Olympic Movement's ideals of peace, friendship and solidarity. **F**