

Global integration through sport

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is a writer, journalist and federal deputy elected to represent São Paulo six times, each time by the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB). With over 30 years in politics, Aldo Rebelo served as the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and chaired the Parliamentary Enquiry Committee on the Brazilian Football Confederation/Nike issue, served as the Minister for Political Coordination and was the Leader of the Government and of the Communist Party of Brazil in the Chamber of Deputies. He became the Minister for Sport in October 2011.

In 2014 and 2016, Brazil will be hosting the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic and Paralympic Games within the space of two years. The Olympics will be a historic event as they will be taking place in South America for the very first time. As for the 2014 World Cup, it will be the seventh in the Americas and the second in Brazil, returning there after 64 years.

Football, currently the most popular sport in the world and a great passion of the Brazilian people, arrived in Brazil with Charles Miller, born in São Paulo of a Scottish father and a Brazilian mother (of British descent). It arrived with an English accent, using terms such as ‘corner’, ‘offside’ and ‘centre half’ that ended up becoming Brazilianised. The game itself also acquired a Brazilian style, swiftly producing great players who gained worldwide acclaim.

In 1950, Europe was still healing the wounds left by the Second World War, whilst Brazil took on the

responsibility of hosting the World Cup. Within two years we built the Maracanã Stadium, which was to remain the largest in the world for many years and an eternal temple of the sport in which the Brazilian and English national teams have already faced each other five times, with three victories for Brazil, one for England and one draw.

From the 1950s until the beginning of the 21st century, Brazil evolved a great deal. In football, our national team is the only one to have lifted the World Cup five times, while the FIFA Club World Cup has been won by a Brazilian team on seven occasions. Also, Brazil is the only country to have played in every World Cup finals, and in Ronaldo we have the record goal-scorer in the history of the tournament.

Dozens of Brazilian players can be seen in stadia all over the world – some representing major English teams – contributing decisively to football being the one truly planetary/worldwide sport, which moves a significant volume of resources within the clubs and industry, trade and related services.

Furthermore, Brazil has succeeded in achieving important social and economic development. We have moved out of the condition of an underdeveloped country to achieve the ranking of sixth-largest economy in the world. Over the past decade, 40 million Brazilians have risen out of poverty and become integrated into the average salary groups in our country. Brazil faces the challenge of hosting the World Cup and the Olympic Games by proudly showing to the world our capacity to organise large-scale sporting events and, above all, perceives these events as a major opportunity to further the development of Brazil, its economy, and its innovative science and technology.

From the moment Brazil was confirmed as the host of both the World Cup and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, investment in the modernisation of infrastructure, transport, communications, services, refurbishment and construction of stadia was scaled up. It is estimated that by 2019 the World Cup alone will have resulted in an annual increase of 0.4 per cent in the Gross Domestic Product.

Over 50 building works in the areas of urban mobility, port and airport refurbishment, extension of the road transport networks, expansion of the hotel network, and investments in telecommunications are preparing Brazil for the next stage of its development.



Pelé celebrates with Jairzinho after scoring the first goal of the 1970 World Cup final

By 2014, all 12 World Cup host cities will be equipped with 4G Internet.

The building works linked to the preparation of the World Cup have already generated over 300,000 jobs. The arenas alone already employ 20,000 workers. By 2014, another 300,000 temporary and permanent vacancies will have been created. During the period of the tournament it is estimated that the market will heat up with the presence of 600,000 foreign tourists along with the domestic travel of three million Brazilians.

These investments will directly reflect upon the growth of our businesses, from the smallest to the largest, thus having a strong positive impact on the lives of our people. Research carried out by the Brazilian Small and Micro Enterprises Support Service (SEBRAE) identified approximately one thousand business opportunities for small and medium enterprises in the cities that will be hosting the World Cup. It is indeed the small and medium enterprises that create the majority of the new jobs.

Beyond the efforts to organise our cities to welcome the World Cup and Olympic and Paralympic Games, we are working to ensure that both events bring positive outcomes not only to those particular cities but across the country as a whole. Dozens of cities are getting ready to welcome the Olympic delegations and the national football teams in their training and acclimatisation in Brazil, and a series of projects aimed at including the domestic innovators and producers in the building works for the large-scale events is already underway.

The performance of Brazilian athletes is another very important aspect that has been receiving due attention through major Federal Government investment, along with a comprehensive and detailed plan aimed at ensuring that Brazil will be well represented on the Olympic medal podiums in 2016, establishing the country as one of the great powers in world sport.

The expectation of the Government of Brazil is that the experience of the United Kingdom, which in 2012 hosts the Games for the third time, will help our country along the Olympic pathway. In May this year I visited London with a Brazilian delegation which was participating in the 2012 School Games and won a total of twenty medals. On that occasion, in a meeting with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Jeremy Hunt, I put forward a proposal for the creation of a technical mission to support Brazil in the organisation of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. We have always enjoyed support for this cooperation from both the Governments and Embassies of the United Kingdom in Brazil, as well as of Brazil in the United Kingdom.

This integration is important in terms of anticipating and preventing problems faced by the United Kingdom in order to take advantage of the solutions already

adopted by countries that have previously hosted the Games. In 2014 and in 2016, Brazil will offer two huge spectacles to the world, demonstrating that it is a great generator of opportunities for people and businesses and also a great source of sporting talent.

Sir Stanley Rous, president of FIFA from 1961 to 1974, made the following reference to the greatest footballer of all time: "Pelé is a magician in this game of magic. Football needs new Pelés. As long as players like him exist, football will survive." Pelé eventually hung up his boots and, since then, no one quite like him has ever come forth. We do, however, have thousands of football stars, many on pitches in the United Kingdom, who can do more than ensure the game's survival: they can guarantee its continued and successful development. The same applies to the Olympic Games.

Ademar Ferreira da Silva, the first Brazilian Olympic champion, winner of the gold medal in the triple jump in Helsinki (1952) and Melbourne (1956), offered the following explanation of his decision to dedicate himself to athletics, "I found the word athlete beautiful so I decided to become an athlete."

These days, an approach of this kind would hardly enable Ademar to reach the podium. Nevertheless, whilst the world is able to see beauty in competition, sports, more than a tool for economic development, will continue to be the tool for the integration of nations. ■

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Brazil's soccer players Neymar and Damiano compete for the ball during a training session ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games

