

Special address

Exploring Internationalism (Glasgow, 20 June 2005)ⁱ

Patricia Fergusonⁱⁱ

Thank you Adrienne for the welcome and introduction and thank you to the Centre for Cultural Policy Research for giving me this opportunity to address this seminar on the cultural benefits that a successful London bid to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will bring.

Firstly, as we are now within the last few weeks of the bidding process, I would like to take this opportunity to re-affirm the Scottish Executive's full support for London's bid.

It is a bid which enjoys the backing of the great majority of people in Scotland. And from our perspective, on the many potential benefits it can bring to Scotland and the United Kingdom as a whole: be they benefits to sport, business, tourism, culture or education, they are all there to be gained.

I should emphasise the importance of good communications, information

sharing and collaborative working if we are to maximise the benefits and the legacy effect for all parts of the UK.

Just imagine the lift it would give to the whole nation if, next month, London beats off the competition from cities such as Paris and New York and brings to the UK the biggest sporting festival in the world.

It is, of course, understandable that most of the excitement of the Olympics is focused upon sporting aspects of the Games. But the Olympics have never been concerned only with sport. From their inception, the Games have represented excellence, not only in the sporting arena, but also in a broad range of cultural endeavours.

The International Olympic Committee deserves praise for the importance it attaches to the educational and cultural dimension of the Olympiad. It is an essential aspect of any Olympics and the celebration of national art and culture creates a lasting cultural legacy.

The 2012 Games would be an opportunity to highlight the unique role and contribution of Scots and Scotland to the heritage and cultural life of the UK.

The attention of the world's media would be focussed on Britain for most of that Olympic year. And of course this would be a fantastic chance for Scotland to share its culture with the world.

So if this chance comes to us we have to make sure we are ready. Our international festivals in Edinburgh and in Glasgow already bring the cultures of the world to our doorstep. And in turn they show the best of our creativity to the world. The museums and art galleries of Scotland are home to collections that people are happy to travel many miles to see.

There is so much happening here. In art, literature and poetry; in cinema, dance, opera and theatre; and of course in every kind of music. But we mustn't be complacent. It's important that everyone involved in the Cultural sector in Scotland gets ready for the 2012 Games, if the London bid is successful.

The Scottish Executive can help with this. Through our cultural agencies we can lend support to the cultural activities which would be part of the staging of the Games.

These Agencies are currently developing a range of ideas. While it is too early to talk about specific events, everyone is geared up and ready to begin the planning process as soon as the result of the Olympic bidding process is announced. There is much enthusiasm around for ensuring that Scotland's culture is showcased to great effect and benefits from the fantastic opportunity that we hope is heading our way

Improving knowledge and understanding around the world of our culture is really important. And we should seize the opportunity to absorb other cultures - and to make new friends around the world.

Sport and Culture are both creative forces - both are an integral part of national identity. Both build and sustain communities, within and across national boundaries. Culture is the perfect vehicle for the Olympic message and Olympic values.

If the bid is won, there are plans for an Olympic FriendShip - a full-size ocean-going clipper which will sail round the world crewed by young sailors, students, artists, scientists, ecologists. It will carry a 'cargo of ideas', including ideas from the UK to trade with others, and bringing back ideas from other places.

The new Olympic Park in east London will contain a contemporary gallery and arts space which will hold exhibitions during the Games providing opportunities for Scottish artists. There will be carnivals and celebrations throughout the UK, offering further opportunities for musicians, performers, street theatre, artists and others.

There will be opportunities for Scotland's artists and creative people to contribute to the undoubtedly spectacular Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Games whether as directors, performers, events organisers, lighting and sound engineers or choreographers.

There will be making and selling opportunities for crafts makers in Scotland in the array of official Olympic merchandise which will be produced.

Generally an opportunity to promote the energy, talent and idealism of Scotland's youth and to promote international youth friendship and exchanges through areas of common interest, not only in sports, but in music, film, design, street dance and theatre, etc.

If London's bid is successful we will all have the opportunity and the challenge of staging a Games which will live in the memory of the participants and spectators from every part of the world and which people all over

Britain can talk about and look back on with pride for many years to come.

What an opportunity for everyone in the Olympic and Paralympic sports in Britain - athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators alike - to participate on home soil. For we are in no doubt that for Scots London is the closest to home that the Games are ever likely to take place; and 2012 is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the dream to become a reality.

The Games will need an army of volunteers for every aspect. We want to see a large number of Scots in that army, promoting a positive and friendly image of our country.

We all will recognise that changes in community, social and cultural involvement can be extremely difficult to achieve. Major sporting events can be an effective catalyst for change because they, and the infrastructure development they typically require, provide a focus, an excitement and a context for change.

Many of the community and cultural benefits which can be realised result from, or are reinforced by, wider 'legacy programmes' which run alongside but go well beyond the core activities that are a central part of the event itself. The impact and legacy opportunities

are therefore not achieved automatically by the staging of the event, but are dependent on effective legacy planning over and above the planning of the event itself.

EventScotland was created to deliver the Scottish Executive's Major Events Strategy and is working hard to bring such events to Scotland. Our strategy aims to make Scotland one of the world's foremost events destinations by 2015.

One such example is the thought we are currently giving to bidding to attract the 2014 Commonwealth Games to Glasgow. Last year I attended the Commonwealth Youth Games in Bendigo, Australia where the Scottish team gave a magnificent performance in finishing fourth in the medal table. While there I found out more about the benefits which Melbourne's Commonwealth Games bid has brought to the area.

Like the IOC, the Commonwealth Games Federation attaches great importance to the cultural, educational and legacy dimensions to the Games.

For the Commonwealth Games in 2002, Manchester implemented a series of community and cultural programmes. These involved 10,000 cast members for the opening and closing ceremonies both of which attracted 38,000

live spectators, a BBC TV audience of 20 million and a worldwide broadcast audience of 1 billion. The nationwide Spirit of Friendship Festival celebrated the Commonwealth and the Games with over 2000 separate sports and there was also a 'Passport Scheme' providing 13,500 young people with access to arts workshops and cultural activities.

In preparation for the 2006 Games, Melbourne has developed a 'Getting Involved' scheme to assist and encourage all Councils in the State of Victoria to develop and coordinate activities aimed at strengthening their communities through the Commonwealth Games. A range of community and cultural activities will take place.

The Victorian State and Australian Governments are also investing in a cultural programme during the Games to celebrate the diversity found across the Commonwealth. Events will either be low cost or free and will include music, dance, circus and exhibitions. Victorians will be encouraged to take an active role in the cultural programme with leading artists working with community groups to put together musical performances and public art programmes.

If Glasgow does bid for the 2014 Games, we will wish to build on, and learn from, the Manchester

and Melbourne Games as well as London's experience in bidding for, and hopefully staging, the 2012 Olympic Games.

Meanwhile, our aim here in Scotland is to ensure that we are as well placed as we can be to participate fully in the staging of a London-based Games and to maximise the benefits which I described earlier. At the end of last year, we published a booklet

setting out why Scotland backs the bid. A copy of the booklet is included in your conference pack.

I would like to wish the London 2012 Bid team every success in the next few weeks as they try to gain the support of the IOC members and hope the announcement in Singapore on 6 July is one we can all celebrate.

Thank you.

ⁱ Proceedings from the seminar: *Exploring Internationalism: Scotland responds to London's Olympic vision for culture in 2012*. Seminar organised by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research, University of Glasgow, in association with London 2012 Culture & Education.

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