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**INTERNATIONAL
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planning, design, building, management

Session: The Torino 2006 System: needs, intervention plan,
environmental assessment, accessibility

THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ACCESSIBILITY

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accessibility

The International Olympic Committee CIO candidature holder for all towns intending to host Olympic games contains a chapter expressly dedicated to organising the. It was a great satisfaction for me to have taken joint part with the Torino 2006 Agency in writing the programme that has been confirmed and improved today, nearly six years after its inception. Victory over the other candidate towns was also due to the special attention the Paralympic document had been written with. The reality of the Paralympic games has taken on an increasingly important role; the CIO in fact considers the two events are to be inseparable, with effect from the 2008 Peiping Olympic event.

The programme of the Torino 2006 IX Winter Paralympic competitions will start on March 10 2006 with an opening ceremony held at Turin and close on March 19 after completing quite a long competition list.

Five specialties are on the Agenda: Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, biathlon, sled hockey and carriage curling. Ice sports will be held at Turin and Pinerolo, Alpine skiing at Sestriere and cross-country skiing at Pragelato.

Sports are important for any disabled person; starting or continuing any sports specialty with commitment and competitive determination is one way to live a normal life together with everyone else and just like every else, which is why any persons practising a sport is first and foremost an athlete, even if disabled.

In a world where sport is an image and exalted technique, Paralympic games express the very best of these concepts, by upholding Olympic values and giving spectators new and different emotions. The Athens Paralympic games held last year were an unforgettable example of people's enthusiasm and warmth thanks to the sports performance offered by all athletes, particularly the Italian team that gave us 19 medals, 4 of which golden.

It is thanks to the Paralympic games message that Institutions and the sports world promoted and supported a campaign for removal of all architectural barriers whether or not on competition sites. The awareness that a disabled tourist deserves full respect as a person is also thanks to the Paralympic games, which have become the tool to make our territory accessible to everybody in towns and on

mountains, as shown by Public Body contributions and the interest of traders and Associations to make their activities available to an increasingly all-encompassing public.

Our Region's grandstands, lift equipment, transports, and cultural and tourist services have carefully prepared for the Olympic event and made the Region an example of accessibility. The Olympic games will be the first great international event hosting such a great number of disabled persons. Turin and its province will have to prove they did a good job, with sensitivity and professionalism, and the conviction they will leave all future citizens a great inheritance of a barrier-less territory.

I shall leave all technical details to Engineer Marsero, but we must remember that the Torino 2006 Paralympic games are just round the corner: let us all prepare to host them with the same warmth and enthusiasm and all be first actors of this splendid event!