

HOSTING ASSISTANCE

With one exception, the Commonwealth Games have always been held in either the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. The principal reason has been the cost of hosting.

In fact, in matters of hosting, the playing field is not level. Industrialized countries have built-in advantages, with highly developed sport programmes, major games facilities and government financing frequently in place even before a bid is launched internationally.

The problem facing many developing Commonwealth countries is how to break into the major games hosting circle. The establishment of sport development programmes brings with it facilities construction and then the hosting of local competitions. Hosting in turn fuels the growth of sport programmes and bigger and better competitions. Each sport activity supports and enriches the others. Developing Commonwealth countries are often at a disadvantage, with stunted sport infrastructures, few facilities, and infrequent opportunities to compete internationally and hold major games and sport events at home.

The circle must be broken if the Commonwealth Games are to embody the spirit and membership of the new Commonwealth.

Hosting can be an important aid to development. It can produce needed facilities and expertise in hosting-related disciplines as well as create a significant multiplier effect or legacy. Hosting can be used as the stimulus to get out of an undeveloped state (for example Rome, 1960; Tokyo, 1964; Mexico, 1968; and Seoul, 1988) and can be a focus for expenditures which may be made in any event, but could be accelerated to meet an "artificial" Games deadline. While the host country has to make some financial commitment, hosting can be used to create employment and attract foreign currency and increase trade and tourism.

Joe Clark argued forcefully in Canberra that it is imperative that something be done to encourage the developing nations to feel a stronger identification with the Games, and to "counter the notion that the Commonwealth Games are mainly for