

## Press Release

Paris, July 18<sup>th</sup> 2008

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### **Abdou Diouf brings the francophone community together in Beijing in the presence of Jacques Rogge**

The International Organisation of La Francophonie is organising a third event to promote the French language at the Beijing Olympic Games in August 2008. Unlike the two previous ones held in Athens and Turin this is a large-scale public event. It will be hosted by Abdou Diouf, Secretary General of La Francophonie, together with Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Liu Qi, President of the Beijing Olympic Games Organising Committee (BOCOG), on August 9<sup>th</sup> at the Sofitel Wanda in Beijing.

Jean-Pierre Raffarin, who serves as the *Grand Témoin de la Francophonie* for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing (August 8<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 2008), will be present alongside Abdou Diouf who appointed him to this position to observe the use of the French language in various places and departments both in the build up to and during the Games.

Abdou Diouf's objective at this event held the day after the opening ceremony is to unite French-speaking heads of state, sports ministers, IOC members, international federation and national Olympic committee presidents, representatives from the Olympic host cities of Vancouver, London and Sochi, and representatives from the candidate cities for the 2016 Games, as well as French-speaking athletes and artists. This celebration will promote the French language, an official Olympic language, and the values shared by the francophone community and the Olympic movement.

The Secretary General of La Francophonie will travel to Beijing from August 8th to 11th. On August 8th he will be present at the opening ceremony. On August 9th, he will chair the official program for the Francophone Event. Lastly on August 10<sup>th</sup>, he will visit the Olympic village and the international press centre, and will hold a series of meetings with the heads of the Organizing Committees of the forthcoming Olympic Games.

**The IOF's members include 55 member states and governments and 13 observers.**

**Please visit our website for further information about La Francophonie and to download the press kit entitled "French, an Olympic language": [www.francophonie.org](http://www.francophonie.org)**

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