



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach  
President

**Opening Ceremony of the IOC Session  
Lima, 12 September 2017**

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¡Bienvenidos a Lima!

Es un gran placer darles la bienvenida a la Sesión del COI en Lima. Este es un momento y un lugar muy especial. Por primera vez, celebramos una Sesión en Perú, este hermoso país con una gran historia, una amplia diversidad cultural y una gente muchísimo amable.

También quisiera resaltar la gran capacidad de recuperación de los peruanos. No debemos olvidar que, hace tan solo unos meses, Perú sufrió unas terribles inundaciones. El hecho de que nos encontremos hoy aquí reunidos es una clara muestra del espíritu de determinación del pueblo peruano. Estamos muy agradecidos al Gobierno del Perú y a su presidente, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, por haber mantenido firme su compromiso de celebrar la Sesión. Esta Sesión va enviar un mensaje a la comunidad internacional: Perú está superando con éxito esa difícil situación. Felicitaciones a Perú. Nuestra gratitud también se dirige a la comunidad olímpica peruana, liderada por nuestro compañero y amigo Iván Dibós, y por el presidente del Comité Olímpico Peruano, Pedro Luis del Rosario. Gracias por hacer que nos sintamos como en casa.

La respuesta del pueblo peruano debe ser una fuente de inspiración para nuestras labores. Ante desastres naturales como los que afectaron al Perú y que desde hace unos días asolan otras partes del continente americano, no debemos olvidar la fragilidad del mundo.

Cette année 2017 marque la moitié du chemin parcouru depuis l'adoption des réformes de l'Agenda olympique 2020. Cette Session est donc le moment idéal pour dresser le bilan de ce que nous avons accompli jusqu'ici grâce à l'Agenda.

Plus important encore, c'est pour nous l'occasion de nous tourner vers l'avenir afin de nous interroger sur ce qu'il reste encore à faire et sur les nouveaux défis qui se présenteront à nous. C'est la raison pour laquelle ces prochains jours seront consacrés en grande partie à cet examen à mi-parcours de l'Agenda olympique 2020. Je me réjouis d'ores et déjà des



échanges importants que nous aurons sur la manière dont nous pouvons continuer à insuffler le changement et projeter le Mouvement olympique dans l'avenir.

Lorsque nous avons adopté l'Agenda en 2014, nous l'avons fait dans le but de renforcer notre Mouvement dans un monde qui évolue plus rapidement que jamais. Aujourd'hui, nous voyons clairement combien cette décision a été importante pour nous. Cette Session du CIO nous donne l'occasion d'examiner le rôle du Mouvement olympique dans un monde qui n'a jamais été plus interdépendant, mais aussi plus fragmenté et en quête de solutions communes.

We are living in a world of crises, and in some countries, in a world of mistrust and uncertainty. Studies like the Edelman Trust Barometer confirm that in a number of countries, public trust in governments, business, NGOs and the media is at an all-time low. With such mistrust and scepticism, there is less readiness for real dialogue. There is less willingness to listen, less incentive to engage with the other side.

It is quite a paradox, that in our digital age when there are more opportunities for communication than ever before, there is also a growing tendency to think in silos and to shut yourself off from any real exchange of views.

In these countries, we are seeing a worrying trend towards isolationism on many levels. It seems that there the answer to every problem is more isolation, and less dialogue. More separation, and less talking. Those who still want dialogue, who want to find common ground with others, are even under suspicion. They are under suspicion for sharing the opinion of the other side, simply because they are speaking with them. In such an atmosphere, a real dialogue is extremely difficult.

This is worrying because it leads these people to believe that their way of thinking is the only truth. This is worrying because we must always recognise that the world is diverse. And what better country than Peru to demonstrate this. At the end of the day, we all depend on each other. There is not only one singular truth.

These trends in these countries should give us reason for concern. After all, our Olympic Movement stands in stark contrast to this Zeitgeist. We stand for dialogue and



understanding. We stand for peace, diversity, tolerance and respect. In sport, everyone is equal, regardless of background, belief or nationality.

These trends are a call to action for us. More than ever, the world needs our Olympic Values of peace, respect and understanding. This gives all of us even more motivation to strengthen our Olympic Movement. In our fragile world, the relevance and need for our Olympic Values have never been greater.

We are convinced that our values of a shared humanity are stronger than all the forces that want to divide us.

Our world needs such symbols of hope. At this moment in time, no other event brings the entire world together, like the Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games are the best expression of our values in action. With the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 just a few months away, it is an important moment to send our Olympic message to the world. As we all know, these Olympic Winter Games are taking place under difficult political circumstances. We are following the situation very closely. We are in contact with governments and the NOCs concerned. In all the conversations we had, the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 were never put in doubt. On the contrary, we could feel support for our position.

This position is very clear: the Olympic Games must be beyond all the political tensions; the Olympic Games must not be a tool for political manoeuvring; the Olympic Games must be seen as a stage for dialogue; the Olympic Games are a symbol of hope and for peace.

This is the message we promote. One effort in this direction is the Olympic Truce resolution which is currently being prepared by the Member States of the United Nations for adoption by the UN General Assembly in November. This resolution can and will be an important symbol for the commitment to peace of the international community.

This is why we are not speaking about a Plan B. Speaking now about different scenarios for the Olympic Winter Games would also send the wrong message. It would be a message



against our own belief in peace and diplomacy. It would undermine the efforts of those who are working towards a diplomatic solution so that peace will prevail on the Korean Peninsula.

We know how volatile this situation continues to be. So we will follow the developments closely and will keep promoting our position.

Based on our principle of political neutrality, we are keeping the door open for a participation of athletes from the National Olympic Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We have offered support to North Korean athletes for their qualification. Even if they should miss qualification, the IOC, together with the International Federations, is always ready to find a solution for such a participation, should the NOC of the DPRK so wish.

For all these reasons, we are working together in a great way with the PyeongChang 2018 Organising Committee. We look forward to excellent Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

In this context, we are very happy about the close exchange between the three Organising Committees of the next three Olympic Games in Asia: PyeongChang 2018, Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022. With active encouragement from the IOC, the sports ministers from the three countries recently signed a cooperation agreement. In this way, the Olympic Games can play an important part to promote friendship, peace and solidarity through sport in this region.

This growing relevance of sport in society is a key motivation for Olympic Agenda 2020. The social mission of the IOC has been acknowledged by the United Nations, in particular through a Memorandum of Understanding with the IOC. This created a formal framework for collaboration in many important areas where sport can promote integration and social development. In another historic moment, sport was highlighted by the UN as an "important enabler" to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The mission of the IOC to promote the peaceful development of humankind is appreciated throughout the world. Pope Francis showed his appreciation for the commitment of the IOC to promote human values by initiating, together with the then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the IOC, the first Global Conference on Faith and Sport last year. At the Vatican, leaders of faiths, sport, business and society discussed the Olympic Values.



Another recent example of our values in action was the participation of the first-ever Refugee Olympic Team at the Olympic Games Rio 2016. By creating this team, the IOC sent a message of hope and inclusion to all refugees in our world. The refugee athletes showed the world that we are all part of the same humanity. Their participation was a clear signal that refugees are our fellow human beings – that they are an enrichment to society just as they are an enrichment to our Olympic family.

This expression of solidarity did not end after the Olympic Games Rio 2016. We are of course continuing to support these ten athletes in their sporting and professional careers, allowing them to pursue their dreams and build their lives.

With no end in sight for the global refugee crisis, we see it as our responsibility to continue to play our part, to lend our support. Here in Lima we will present to the IOC Session another very important project which will bring our support for refugees to a new level.

As the role and relevance of sport in society continues to grow, so do the expectations of the public vis-à-vis the integrity of sports organisations. We know that our ability to make a difference in the world rests on our credibility and integrity. This is why one of the pillars of Olympic Agenda 2020 is credibility, together with sustainability and youth.

With Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC is showing a sceptical world that we are making the Olympic Movement stronger, that we are living up to our values and responsibilities.

For this reason, good governance is a central feature of Olympic Agenda 2020. The IOC has already implemented all good governance measures called for under Olympic Agenda 2020. We have reformed and we have changed.

With our robust system, we now have stronger rules in place to prevent misconduct as well as to swiftly sanction such behaviour. We know on the other hand that these new rules do not make us immune. No organisation in this world is immune in this respect. At the same time, these reforms allow us also to better handle wrongdoing from before the reforms. Whenever such cases arise, we will take action and the necessary measures. It is in our own highest interest to protect the integrity of sport. In this way, we move to the future.



Placing a strong emphasis on ethics goes hand in hand with strengthening our good governance. Among many other measures, we have appointed a Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer. We have a well-respected Ethics Commission, whose members are elected by the IOC Session. The fact that the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has accepted to be proposed as the new chair for this Ethics Commission, shows the trust and standing this Commission enjoys also outside the world of sport.

Protecting the clean athletes is another key commitment. In this respect, we have already made many proposals on how to strengthen and reform the worldwide anti-doping system, led by WADA. The changes are focused on strengthening the role of WADA and making it more efficient.

As far as the responsibility of sports organisations is concerned, we want to make this system equally independent from sports organisations and national interests.

We are taking a major step in this direction with the creation of the Independent Testing Agency, with the aim to create an international level playing field for all athletes. Also in this respect, we are cooperating closely with WADA. Starting in PyeongChang, the anti-doping system will be independent from the IOC. This will include testing and results management as well as sanctioning, as it already was the case during the Olympic Games Rio 2016.

With regards to the follow-up to the McLaren report, we have two Commissions who are working closely on this. The Commission led by IOC Member Denis Oswald is examining the evidence against individual Russian athletes and their entourage during the Olympic Winter Games Sochi 2014. The Commission under the chairmanship of the former Swiss President Samuel Schmid is examining the systematic manipulation of the anti-doping system in Russia. Both Commissions will present their interim reports during this IOC Session.

We must always remember that the success of the Olympic Movement depends on the success of the Olympic Games. With Olympic Agenda 2020, we are on the right track to keep the Olympic Games attractive and relevant.



Half of the world's population followed the coverage of the Olympic Games Rio 2016. This shows the continued global appeal of the Olympic Games and our Olympic Values. An international survey found that the association of the Olympic Games with terms, including the Olympic values of “excellence”, “friendship”, “respect”, as well as “diversity”, “inspirational”, “unity”, “universal” and “youthful”, has increased since London 2012.

Everything we do ultimately depends on this global appeal of the Games. This is why we are undertaking the most comprehensive reform of the Olympic programme in our recent history. The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be more youthful, more urban, and more female. We will have the highest-ever representation of female athletes in Olympic history. Already for the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018, we will have the first sports programme with complete gender equality, a 50-50 balance, with the same number of girls and boys competing in the same number of sports and events.

With the sustainability pillar of Olympic Agenda 2020, we are also addressing the organisation of the Olympic Games, making them more feasible and sustainable. Paris and Los Angeles, the Candidate Cities for the Olympic Games 2024 and 2028, are the first to fully benefit from Olympic Agenda 2020. Both cities, who will address us tomorrow, have really embraced this Agenda in a great way. We see this especially by the record number of existing and temporary facilities that are planned to be used. This is something we have not seen in this dimension in the history of the Olympic Games. Such proposals lead to significant cost reductions in the organisation of the Olympic Games.

Olympic Agenda 2020 is also focused on engaging youth. Never before have there been more young people in the world. More than half the world's population is under 30 years old and this number continues to increase. What does this mean for us? It means that we must engage with youth, making sure that the appeal of sport remains strong with young people, that the Olympic Games keep their relevance, and that the Olympic Values continue to resonate with the next generation.

In this respect, the Olympic Channel is key to spread these values 365 days a year, reaching people everywhere around the world. This is another direct result from Olympic Agenda 2020. Only a few weeks ago, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Olympic Channel. It has already reached nearly 1 billion video views across all platforms. 77 per cent



of the Channel's followers on social media are under the age of 35, showing that the content resonates with our key target audience of young people.

When we all voted Olympic Agenda 2020, the spirit we expressed at is: To change or to be changed. It continues to be as true today as it was when we first adopted it. In a world that is changing at an ever-faster pace, we cannot afford to stand still. We need to continue to lead the change to make a difference.

The IOC cannot do this alone. This is why we are so grateful to all stakeholders of how they have embraced Olympic Agenda 2020. It is only this spirit of cooperation and partnership that has enabled the IOC to take a leadership role in promoting the role of sport in the world. This is in fact the best expression of our strength, of our unity in diversity.

When we take everything together what I have just described – the increased relevance of sport in society, the importance of our values, the continued success and appeal of the Olympic Games, our unity in diversity – if we take all this together, we can see that the Olympic Movement is an anchor of stability in our troubled times.

This stability is a key motivation for our partners, to demonstrate their trust in us through long-term agreements and commitments.

Stability is perhaps the most valuable currency of our times. However, our success so far does not mean that we can lean back and be complacent. This is why the decisions at this IOC Session in Lima are so important: they will chart our course for the future.

The historic double-allocation of the Olympic Games 2024 and 2028, which we will discuss tomorrow, is just one example among many.

Olympic Agenda 2020 was always meant to be work in progress. At halftime, I think it is fair to say that we played a very strong and good first half. But in sport, this is only half-time and the game is decided in the second half. We have to continue playing the second half with the same determination, the same speed and the same confidence in us and our values.





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I am sure that each and every member of our team, in particular, we, the IOC Members, will continue to play full strength in this second half.

Together, we will carry our Olympic Values to the future.