It is with great pleasure that I can announce the outcomes of our meeting today. Before I get into this, I would like to thank all the participants for a meeting which was held in the true Olympic spirit of respect and friendship.

In particular, my thanks go to the leaders of the delegations who are here with me: President of the NOC of the ROK, Lee Kee-heung, and the Minister of Sport of the ROK, Do Jong-hwan; President of the NOC of the DPRK and Minister of Sport, Kim Il-guk; and President of POCOG, Lee Hee-beom.

Thank you to my fellow IOC Executive Board members, Gunilla Lindberg and Gian-Franco Kasper, for their great support and enthusiasm. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to all the delegation members and everybody who was working on and behind the scenes.

Today marks a milestone on a long journey. Since 2014, the IOC has addressed the special situation of having the Olympic Winter Games 2018 on the Korean peninsula. Until today, we met separately with the parties on a bilateral basis to address an often fast-changing political situation in a comprehensive way. Today is therefore a great day, because the Olympic spirit has brought all sides together.

This was not an easy journey, but thanks to the commitment of everyone here today, I am happy to announce that athletes from the NOC of the DPRK will participate in the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018. The IOC today has taken exceptional decisions and has allocated additional quota for 22 athletes from the NOC of the DPRK who will compete in three sports and five disciplines in PyeongChang. They will be accompanied by 24 coaches and officials.

Following the wish of the two NOCs, the IOC has approved their request to have their delegations marching together as one under the name Korea at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018. This team will enter the Olympic Stadium under the Korean Unification Flag. I am sure this will be a very emotional moment not only
for all Koreans but also for the entire world. Coming myself from a formerly divided country, it is a moment that I am also personally looking forward to with great anticipation and great emotion.

For the first time in their Olympic history, the two Korean teams will unite to compete as one team in a sport. The unified women’s ice hockey team will be represented by the Korean Unification Flag and will compete as Korea, with the anthem being the song “Arirang”. This team will be a great symbol of the unifying power of Olympic sport.

These great results could only be achieved with the enthusiastic cooperation of the Olympic Winter Sports Federations, in particular the International Ski Federation, the International Ice Hockey Federation, and the International Skating Union.

Let us not forget that such an agreement would have seemed impossible only a few weeks ago. In this respect, I would like to express my most sincere thanks to the governments of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea for paving the way for these decisions in the Olympic spirit.

The Olympic Games are always about building bridges. They never erect walls. The Olympic spirit is about respect, dialogue and understanding. The Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 are hopefully opening the door to a brighter future on the Korean peninsula, and inviting the world to join in a celebration of hope.

The Olympic athletes can show us the way. They show us how to compete peacefully. They show us how, despite all our differences, it is possible for humankind to live together in peace, respect and harmony. In this way, the Olympic Games show us what the world could look like, if we were all guided by the Olympic spirit of respect and understanding.

This is the Olympic message that will go from PyeongChang to the world.