



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach
President

Opening Remarks Lausanne, 20 January 2018

Welcome to the International Olympic Committee.

Thank you for joining us here today for this important meeting about the participation of the NOC of the DPRK at the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 and potential joint activities with the NOC of ROK. Today is the result of a process that has been ongoing for a long time. As you know from the popular Korean folk song Arirang, it is a long journey across the cold mountains. Perhaps we can inspire a modern interpretation of the song today, so that the next generations may sing about the snow-covered mountains of PyeongChang, where flowers bloom even in the middle of winter.

Over the last several years, in fact since 2014, the IOC has addressed the special situation of having the Olympic Winter Games 2018 on the Korean peninsula. We have always done so with our belief that the Olympic Games are beyond all political tensions. In Olympic sport, we are all equal, regardless of where we come from or who we are: North and South, East and West, women and men, rivals and friends.

To address this sometimes fast-changing political situation in a holistic and comprehensive way, the IOC has, since 2014, met separately with each of you. Today is a great moment for the Olympic Movement, because the Olympic spirit has brought us all together. The Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 have opened the door for peaceful dialogue on the Korean peninsula. Our meeting today shows that Olympic sport always builds bridges. It never erects walls. The Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 give everyone a real opportunity for a new beginning, to open the doors for a brighter future. We still have a long way to go on our journey, but today we are taking one more significant step together.

In this Olympic spirit of respect and understanding, I am confident that we can achieve positive results in our discussions today.