



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

**UNDER EMBARGO
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Thomas Bach
President

Speech on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony

Olympic Games Rio 2016

Rio de Janeiro, 5 August 2016

- Check against delivery -

Boa noite, cariocas,

Boa noite, Brasil,

Dear fellow Olympians,

Distingués représentants des autorités brésiliennes,

Votre Excellence, Monsieur le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, Ban Ki-moon,

Excellences,

Monsieur le Président du comité d'organisation des Jeux Olympiques Rio 2016, mon cher collègue et ami Carlos Nuzman,

Chers amis olympiques du monde entier,

Bienvenue aux Jeux de la XXXI^e Olympiade Rio 2016.

This is the moment of the *cidade maravilhosa*. The first-ever Olympic Games in South America will go from Brazil to the entire world. The Organising Committee, Brazilian authorities at all levels, and all Brazilians can be very proud tonight. With the Olympic Games as a catalyst you have achieved in just seven years what generations before you could only dream of. You have transformed the wonderful city of Rio de Janeiro into a modern metropolis and made it even more beautiful.

Our admiration is even greater because you managed this at a very difficult time in Brazilian history. We have always believed in you.



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Votre passion pour le sport et votre joie de vivre nous inspirent. Célébrons ensemble ces Jeux Olympiques dans ce grand pays, le Brésil.

The best ambassadors of this Olympic Spirit à la Brazil are the many thousands of volunteers. Muito obrigado, voluntários!

We are living in a world of crises, mistrust and uncertainty.

Here is our Olympic answer:

The ten thousand best athletes in the world, competing with each other, at the same time living peacefully together in one Olympic Village, sharing their meals and their emotions.

In this Olympic world there is one universal law for everybody. In this Olympic world we are all equal. In this Olympic world we see that the values of our shared humanity are stronger than the forces which want to divide us.

So I call upon you, the Olympic athletes: Respect yourself, respect each other, respect the Olympic Values which make the Olympic Games unique for you and for the entire world.

We are living in a world where selfishness is gaining ground, where certain people claim to be superior to others.

Here is our Olympic answer:

In the spirit of Olympic solidarity and with the greatest respect, we welcome the Refugee Olympic Team.

Dear refugee athletes: you are sending a message of hope to all the many millions of refugees around the globe. You had to flee from your homes because of violence, hunger or just because you were different. Now with your great talent and human spirit you are making a great contribution to society.



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In this Olympic world we do not just tolerate diversity. In this Olympic world we welcome you as an enrichment to our “Unity in Diversity.”

There are millions of people around the world who contribute in different ways to make our world a better place through sport. To honour such outstanding personalities who put sport at the service of humanity, the International Olympic Committee has created a unique distinction, which we award for the first time now.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In recognition of his outstanding achievements in the fields of education, culture, development and peace through sport, in the true Olympic Spirit, the Olympic Laurel is awarded to the great Olympic Champion and great Olympic philanthropist: Mr. Kipchoge Keino.

And now let us all celebrate together Olympic Games à la Brazil.