



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

## OLYMPIC HIGHLIGHTS

N°1305  
1 JANUARY 2020

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### NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM THE IOC PRESIDENT

*Dear Olympic friends,*

As we stand on the threshold of this Olympic Year 2020, we can look back with pride and satisfaction on a memorable 2019 which has set the course for our future.

We celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the International Olympic Committee and the revival of the Olympic Games by Pierre de Coubertin. To mark this historic milestone, we officially inaugurated Olympic House, the new IOC headquarters, on 23 June 2019, in the presence of representatives of the entire Olympic family. This 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary year highlighted the enduring vision of our founder to make the world a better place through sport and showed us that his ideals are more relevant than ever in our fragile world.

It was also a successful year with regard to the delivery of Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms and strengthening its three pillars of credibility, sustainability and youth.

We took a significant step in 2019 to strengthen the long-term credibility of the Olympic Games with the far-reaching reforms to evolve the process of selecting Olympic hosts. With Olympic Agenda 2020, we have revolutionised the candidature procedure and the organisation of the Olympic Games from start to finish. With the establishment in 2019 of the Future Host Commissions to oversee the interest in hosting future Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games, we are evolving the candidature process even further. This evolution of the revolution will strengthen the relevance of the Games in our times.

To safeguard the long-term credibility of sport, the IOC has most recently committed to a 10-million US dollar action plan to reinforce the protection of the clean athletes. This commitment represents a major step forward in the fight against doping together with the World Anti-Doping Agency.



With Olympic Agenda 2020, we have made sustainability a central element to all our activities. What better example of this than Olympic House, which in its category is the most sustainable building in the world.

Our commitment to sustainability and feasibility is also reflected in the way the Olympic Games are run. The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be the most prominent expression of this IOC commitment. Tokyo 2020 aims for carbon-neutral Games. From the Olympic medals made from recycled electronics, to powering the Olympic Games with renewable energy or using zero-emission vehicles and many more initiatives, the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be an inspiration for sustainable development.

The Olympic Channel is another concrete outcome of Olympic Agenda 2020 and, in the three years since its launch in 2016, it has become our platform to connect with the young generation and engage them digitally with Olympic sport 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. With over 2.6 billion video views, we already have a solid foundation to build on. Most importantly, nearly 80 per cent of the audience engaging on social media are below the age of 35, so clearly the content is resonating with our target audience of young people.

All our actions to reinforce the Olympic Agenda 2020 pillars of credibility, sustainability and youth are also resonating with our partners. In 2019, we saw our TOP Programme expanding and strengthening in significant ways. Most recently, we welcomed Airbnb to the Olympic family as a TOP Partner, in a partnership designed to create a new standard for hosting that will be a win for host cities, a win for spectators and fans, and a win for athletes. This past year also saw significant extensions of contracts with existing TOP Partners and Rights-Holding Broadcasters. The first-ever joint TOP Partnership of Coca-Cola and Mengniu was another demonstration of the relevance and stability of the Olympic Games. Having our longest-standing partner, Coca-Cola, an iconic American brand, together with a young Chinese company, Mengniu, joining hands under the roof of our Worldwide TOP Programme is a great example of the unifying power of the Olympic spirit. We are grateful to all our partners because their trust and confidence in the Olympic Movement is our most valuable asset.

All these elements taken together give the Olympic Movement unprecedented strength and stability to carry out its mission. In our fragile world today, this stability is the strongest currency that any organisation can have. This strength and stability reinforce the great unity of the Olympic Movement. And it is this unity that is at the heart of our success.

With this solid foundation, we look ahead to this Olympic Year 2020 with full confidence and anticipation.



We start off this momentous year with the Winter Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020, in what will be a special moment for all the young athletes and for everybody in the Olympic Capital. For the first time, this unique festival of culture, youth and winter sport will come to our home, the Olympic Capital of Lausanne and to Switzerland. With local youth involved in so many aspects of the organisation, these will truly be YOG by young people, for young people. In this way, the Winter Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020 will inspire a new generation with Olympic sport and the Olympic values.

When the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 get underway, the eyes of the world will be on Japan. Over half of the world's population will follow these Olympic Games, demonstrating their true universality.

I have never seen an Olympic host as prepared as Tokyo at this stage before the Games. All the elements for successful Olympic Games are already in place. All of Japanese society is uniting behind the Olympic Games. Interest in tickets has surpassed all expectations. Over 200,000 people have applied to volunteer. Engagement of the business community is at record levels. The Olympic Torch Relay, which will soon get underway, will be another moment to galvanise public enthusiasm ahead of the Games.

The athletes of all 206 National Olympic Committees of the world and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team can look forward to an amazing experience. The Olympic Games are not only the greatest sporting event in the world. The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will also be a celebration of unity in diversity of all humankind.

An Olympic Year is an important reminder that we can only send this strong message of unity in diversity to the world with solidarity. Universality at the Olympic Games is only possible if everyone can participate. At the beginning of this Olympic Year, let me reiterate the unwavering commitment of the IOC to our Olympic Solidarity model, which benefits all athletes from all NOCs in the world. As the athletes of the world set their sights on Tokyo and beyond, they can rely on our support and solidarity. Building on the great strength and stability of the Olympic Movement, we want all athletes to continue to benefit from the success of the Olympic Games, either directly or through their respective teams and sports.

We can only accomplish our mission to unite the world if the Olympic Games stand above and beyond any and all political differences. We can only achieve this global solidarity and true universality if the IOC and the Olympic Games are politically neutral.



The Olympic Games are always a global platform for the athletes and their sporting performances. They are not, and must never be, a platform to advance political or any other potentially divisive ends. We stand firmly against the growing politicisation of sport because only in this way can we accomplish our mission to unite the world in peaceful competition. As history has shown, such politicisation of sport leads to no result and in the end just deepens existing divisions.

This is why we are engaged in an ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders to ensure that the political neutrality of the Olympic Games is respected. In 2019, I was able to address this matter at the G20 Summit and at the UN General Assembly. On both occasions, our message was well received by the world leaders and the representatives of the UN Member States, who showed their support for our political neutrality by unanimously adopting the Olympic Truce Resolution for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Athletes have an essential role to play in respecting this political neutrality on the field of play. It is important to note in this regard that there is broad support and understanding among a great majority of athletes that the field of play and ceremonies should not become an arena for political statements or any kind of protests. Respecting one's fellow athletes also means respecting their unique Olympic moment and not distracting from it with one's own political views.

We all have to do our part to ensure that the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be remembered as a wonderful celebration of unity in diversity of all humankind. United in our Olympic values and building on the solid foundation of the continued strength and stability of the Olympic Movement, we look to the future with great confidence and in eager anticipation of memorable and successful Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. In this Olympic spirit, I wish you a happy and prosperous Olympic Year 2020.

*With kind regards*

*Thomas Bach*