



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach
President

Opening Remarks for the Olympism in Action Forum
Buenos Aires, 5 October 2018

Nelson Mandela, the great statesman and humanist once said: “Sport has the power to change the world”. This belief in the power of sport is the basic idea behind the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement. Making sport a force for good in the world was central to the thinking of Pierre de Coubertin, when he founded the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Movement over 100 years ago. Although a century separates Mandela and Coubertin, their shared belief that we can make the world a better place through sport, endures to this day.

It is this same conviction that is at the heart of the IOC’s mission today. It is the same belief in the power of sport that has brought all of us together here in Buenos Aires. A warm welcome to all of you. Welcome to the Olympism in Action Forum.

We welcome representatives from all walks of life, from government, business, culture, civil society and of course from the world of sport. Thank you all for your belief in the power of sport.

Seeing so many of you here today shows that the topic of Olympism in Action clearly resonates across all parts of society and all around the world. We look forward to stimulating discussions on the most important issues on the agenda of the world of sport. It is my hope that over the next two days, we will be inspired by new and innovative ideas on how to make the world a better place through sport.

For the IOC, our goal at this Forum is simply to listen. We want to hear your perspectives on what the overarching trends are that will affect the future of sport. With this Forum, we are opening our windows, to let in fresh air, to learn about new trends and hear about new perspectives.

I encourage all of you to think out of the box.

At the IOC Session that takes place just two days after the end of our Forum, we will already start discussing how to translate your input into our action.



We will discuss how the conclusions from the Forum can inform our ongoing Olympic Agenda 2020 reform programme for the entire Olympic Movement. The forty recommendations of Olympic Agenda 2020, built around the three pillars of credibility, sustainability and youth, have guided our actions since its adoption in 2014.

The overarching goal of Olympic Agenda 2020 is to strengthen the role of sport in society in order to even better pursue our mission to make the world a better place through sport.

We succeeded in this at the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018. It was an inspiring symbol of the power of sport when as a result of our year-long efforts, the athletes from North and South Korea marched together as one team at the Opening Ceremony, behind one flag, the Korean Unification Flag.

Both leaders of both countries thanked the IOC afterwards for having opened the door for their peace talks through these actions.

Also in other respects we have made great progress with our Olympic Agenda 2020. To date, we have implemented over 80 per cent of the recommendations. These include a spectrum of reforms that touch all aspects of our activities.

We have implemented good governance reforms to safeguard the integrity of sport organisations and competitions. All of our accounts are audited according to the International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) which is a much higher standard than we are legally required to have. We publish an annual report where you can see all the activities of the IOC and all the flows of money of the revenues and expenses. We have a well-respected Ethics Commission, chaired by the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who I welcome here among us.

We are promoting gender equality on and off the field of play. At the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018, we will have the first-ever Olympic 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.

We have strengthened the support for the protection of clean athletes, by allocating more funds to all anti-doping programmes and, in particular, by creating the International Testing Agency, with the aim to create an international level playing field for all athletes.



Over the past months, the athletes of the world have developed a Declaration of their Rights and Responsibilities. At this IOC Session we will accept this Declaration, thereby strengthening even further the role of the athletes in the Olympic Movement.

We have undertaken the most comprehensive reform of the Olympic programme in our recent history. As a result, the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be more youthful, more urban and more female.

We have reformed the candidature process for Olympic Games. With Olympic Agenda 2020, we have turned the page and are writing a new chapter in the way future Olympic Games are organised, making them more feasible and more sustainable. We have changed the Host City Contract by adding an explicit commitment to human rights.

We have successfully launched the Olympic Channel in order to make the magic of Olympic sport and of the Olympic athletes available throughout the year to everybody around the globe. The Olympic Channel content resonates well, in particular with the young generation, as demonstrated by the 2 billion video views since it began operating two years ago.

We have transformed the Youth Olympic Games. As you will see here in Buenos Aires, with this new concept, we will be taking sport with fascinating new disciplines to where the people are, instead of waiting for the people to come to us.

At the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, we will have effectively achieved gender balance with the highest-ever female athlete representation at close to 49 per cent. Off the field of play, we have increased number of women on IOC Commissions to almost 43 per cent. That is an increase of 98 per cent since 2013.

In fact, this Olympism in Action Forum is another direct result of Olympic Agenda 2020.

But after all, Olympic Agenda 2020 was always meant to be work in progress. This Forum is a part of this ever-ongoing effort.

Not only sport, all of society must evolve in our time. You know this as well as we do. Coming from politics, business, media, academia, or other parts of society, you know from your own areas that in our fast-changing world, we are all under great scrutiny. We are all affected by public mistrust. We all need to keep evolving.

This is why this Forum is so important for the future of the Olympic Movement.



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In this spirit of change, I thank you already now for your valuable contribution to the bright future of the Olympic Movement.