



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach  
President

**137<sup>th</sup> IOC Session – Olympic Agenda 2020 Closing Report**  
**10 March 2021**

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Chers amis et collègues,

Dear friends and colleagues,

When we unanimously adopted the Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms in December of 2014, we embarked together on a journey of change. At this memorable 127<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Monaco, the overarching goal was to safeguard the Olympic values and strengthen the role of sport in society. In 2014, we could already see the challenges that we would be facing. And we could see that, if we did not proactively address these challenges, we would be hit by them.

Everyone knows the eternal question of Hamlet: “to be or not to be”. In the world of business today, one would say “change or perish”. For us in the Olympic Movement, the question was “to change or to be changed”. Our answer to that question was: Olympic Agenda 2020.

Today, we look back at what we have achieved together. Over the course of the past years, all Olympic Movement stakeholders have contributed to make Olympic Agenda 2020 come to life.

Olympic Agenda 2020 was a vision intended not only for the IOC but for the entire Olympic Movement. This is why I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you, the IOC Members, for your support and commitment to make this vision a reality. A big thank you also goes to the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations, the athletes, and so many stakeholders who translated these reforms into their own areas.

With Olympic Agenda 2020 we turned the challenges into opportunities. With Olympic Agenda 2020, we have changed the Olympic Movement.

To put our reforms into a broader perspective, let us not forget the “sea of troubles” we had to navigate since 2014.



There was the unprecedented attack on the integrity of the Olympic Games with the systemic manipulation of the anti-doping system at the Olympic Winter Games Sochi 2014. We responded with our toughest sanction: the suspension of the Russian Olympic Committee from the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

The Olympic Games Rio 2016 were on the brink before and during the Olympic Games because of the unprecedented political, economic, ethical and social crisis in Brazil. We met this challenge with an equally unprecedented investment and concerted effort by the IOC, the IFs and NOCs. Finally, half the world's population followed these first Olympic Games in South America, making them the most consumed Olympic Games in history.

The Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 were on the brink because of the threat of war and confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, just a few months before the opening. Our extensive engagement with both Koreas, other interested countries and the United Nations, resulted in the "Olympic Korean Peninsula Declaration", signed by the two NOCs, both governments and the Organising Committee, under the leadership of the IOC. It culminated in the iconic moment of the joint march of the athletes of the NOCs of South and North Korea at the Opening Ceremony. With the support of the International Ice Hockey Federation, we made it possible for the two NOCs to form one united women's ice hockey team. Finally, the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 sent a powerful message of peace from the Korean Peninsula to the world.

For the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, we are confronted with the global coronavirus crisis. Last year, we faced a choice: cancellation or postponement. Together with our Japanese friends, we chose postponement, for the sake of all to make the Olympic dream come true, even if only one year later.

This fight against the virus, as we all know, is a tough one. But we are fighting this fight, for and like, Olympic athletes. This means with full determination, with a will to win, with hard work every day, and with all the physical and mental strength we have.

You all know from your own experience of the many other challenges the world faced in recent years. Against the backdrop of this fragile environment, I am even more pleased to present to you the results of Olympic Agenda 2020.



After you elected me as your President in 2013, we together made Olympic Agenda 2020 our roadmap until today. The results of Olympic Agenda 2020 therefore also summarise my first term as your President. With this term coming to an end, I owe you, my dear friends and colleagues, an accountability report.

The three pillars of Olympic Agenda 2020 are sustainability, credibility and youth.

### **Sustainability**

With regard to sustainability, we have established the IOC Sustainability Strategy in 2016. It is a holistic approach which comprises our three spheres of responsibility: the IOC as an organisation; the IOC as the owner of the Olympic Games; the IOC as the leader of the Olympic Movement. With this strategy, the IOC has turned the page with regards to sustainability.

In this respect, Olympic House, our home, certified as one of the most sustainable buildings in the world, is testimony to our sustainability commitment. I am sure, we all remember that wonderful Olympic Day in the summer of 2019, when we together inaugurated Olympic House. We celebrated at the same moment our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, accompanied by the timeless peace song of John Lennon's "Imagine". We did so in the presence of Olympic athletes who won 125 Olympic medals, thereby highlighting the magic moments of our rich history. It is strange to remember today a time not so long ago, when we all could still meet in person. Although it is hard to judge your body language from a video screen, I feel that we all are longing for that day, when we can see and hug each other again here in our home, here in Olympic House.

Today, the IOC is a carbon-neutral organisation, also thanks to Olympic House. But in response to the worsening climate crisis, we cannot afford to stand still. As the leader of the Olympic Movement, we have a responsibility and we have to be ambitious.

This is why we have committed to becoming a climate-positive organisation by 2024, meaning that we will be removing more carbon from the atmosphere than we emit. The Olympic Forest project is an illustration of how we are becoming climate-positive. The



Olympic Forest will cover more than 2,000 hectares in Senegal and Mali, and the IOC will plant more than 350,000 trees. In this way, we are contributing, in collaboration with the UN, to the Great Green Wall project in Africa. With the Olympic Forest, the IOC will help improve lives of people, support local communities to build resilience to climate change, and to use forest and agricultural lands in a sustainable way.

Following Olympic Agenda 2020, the Organising Committees of all upcoming editions of the Olympic Games have committed to carbon neutrality.

The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will showcase zero-carbon technologies.

At the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, all Olympic venues will be powered with renewable energy.

The historic double-allocation of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and of the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028 set the course for sustainable Olympic Games. Following Olympic Agenda 2020, Paris and Los Angeles will use a record number of existing and temporary facilities. Paris will use 95 per cent existing or temporary venues. Los Angeles will need no new permanent venues at all. Also for the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026, over 90 per cent of the venues exist already. This extensive use of existing venues significantly reduces cost, carbon footprint, and ensures legacy, thereby achieving three sustainable effects at the same time.

We are going even further. The IOC, together with the Organising Committees, is committed to make the Olympic Games climate-positive at the latest from 2030 onwards.

### **Solidarity**

We know that we can only achieve true sustainability with solidarity. We cannot build a sustainable world if we are motivated by narrow self-interest or by isolating ourselves from society. We can only make the world a better place through sport if we care for one another.

In this spirit of solidarity, we addressed in 2015 the unprecedented global refugee crisis. Living up to our mission, we created an opportunity for refugee athletes and we sent a signal



of hope to all the too many refugees in the world. We raised the worldwide awareness about the magnitude of this crisis. This is why we created the IOC Refugee Olympic Team for the Olympic Games Rio 2016.

I am sure, none of us will ever forget this historic moment, when for the first time a Refugee Olympic Team marched proudly behind the Olympic Flag and competed side by side with the teams from all 206 NOCs. The message of this emotional moment, which gives me goose bumps until today, this Olympic message was: you are our fellow human beings and you are an enrichment to our Olympic community.

And what an enrichment they are for all of us. Whenever you meet with one of the refugee athletes, you can feel their almost boundless determination, the strength of their human spirit, and their will to make the world a better place. Many of you shared this experience, when meeting them in Rio. And we all have another opportunity to do so in Tokyo.

With this strength of human spirit, the refugee athletes have inspired the entire world, and in particular, the world of sport. Here my thanks go to the many IFs and NOCs, who followed our example, by including refugee athletes in their activities. In this way the participation of refugee athletes has now become almost commonplace.

This positive momentum encouraged us to go even a step further and to create the Olympic Refuge Foundation. Together with the UN High Commission for Refugees, we are addressing not only refugee athletes but the refugee community at large. Since its launch in 2017, the Olympic Refuge Foundation has already reached over 200,000 displaced young people and their host communities, with the aim to reach one million people by 2024.

Solidarity also defines our partnership with the Paralympic Movement with whom we share our cherished Olympic values. Following Olympic Agenda 2020, we signed a long-term agreement until 2032 with the International Paralympic Committee, taking our partnership to a new level. It ensures the financial stability of the IPC and strengthens the visibility of the Paralympic Games. A demonstration of this new partnership, and indeed of our true friendship with the IPC, is that we talk in many respects now of the “Olympic and Paralympic Games”.



With Olympic Agenda 2020, we are living solidarity. We put our money where our mouth is. Before Olympic Agenda 2020, the budget for our Olympic Solidarity programme was 311 million US dollars. With Olympic Agenda 2020, we increased this budget to now 590 million dollars. This money benefits the athletes, who are at the heart of our Olympic Movement. It goes to the development of global sport, and it supports the many initiatives to contribute to society.

Olympic Solidarity fuels our mission to make the world a better place through sport.

### **Credibility**

The second pillar of Olympic Agenda 2020 is credibility. This refers to the credibility of sport organisations as well as to the credibility of sport competitions.

We strengthened the credibility of sport competitions by significantly enhancing the protection of clean athletes. At the most fundamental level, we had to change the mindset to a more positive and comprehensive approach. Our ultimate goal must always be to protect the clean athletes. The fight against doping is just a tool to do so. Protecting clean athletes goes beyond fighting doping. It is about promoting, enabling and empowering the clean athletes. Once again, we put our money where our mouth is.

Following Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC has invested, an incremental 60 million dollars for the fight against doping and manipulation alone. This increased the overall anti-doping investment of the Olympic Movement in the last Olympiad to 260 million dollars.

At the start of Olympic Agenda 2020, we set up a 20 million dollar fund. This investment has delivered new scientific approaches to anti-doping as well as comprehensive prevention programmes concerning match-fixing and related corruption in sport.

We were the first sport organisation ever to make our entire anti-doping system fully independent. We delegated testing and sample management to the newly created International Testing Agency and sanctioning to the CAS Anti-Doping Division. To achieve this, we provided a fund of 30 million dollars. We are happy to see that many IFs and other sport event organisers are following our example.



At the 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Doping in Sport in 2019, we issued an anti-doping action plan worth an additional 10 million dollars. This plan covers anti-doping research, enhancing intelligence and investigation, as well as a long-term sample storage and re-analysis programme, not only for Olympic Games but now also for the pre-Games testing period.

But again, protecting clean athletes means more than fighting against doping. It is about promoting, enabling and empowering clean athletes, both on and off the field of play. Following Olympic Agenda 2020, we have significantly strengthened the role of the athletes at the heart of the Olympic Movement.

We adopted the Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration in 2019, developed by athletes for athletes. More than 4,200 athletes from 190 NOCs took this historic step to strengthen the role of athletes in our Olympic Movement.

As a former chair of the German Athletes' Commission and a founding member of the IOC Athletes' Commission, I have been fighting for athletes' representation since the 1970s – fighting for the rights of athletes to sit at the decision-making table. This topic has always been and remains close to my heart. Seeing these goals enshrined in this Declaration feels for me like coming full circle.

We have empowered athletes to speak up at the International Athletes' Forum in 2019, the biggest ever and most representative gathering of official athlete representatives. 350 athlete representatives from 185 NOCs, 50 IFs, five continental Athletes Commissions, the Athlete Commissions of all the Organising Committees of the upcoming Olympic Games, of the International Paralympic Committee, the World Anti-Doping Agency and the World Olympians Association attended this 9th edition of the International Athletes' Forum.

We are also empowering athletes through the Athlete365 platform, reserved for athletes and their entourage only. We are happy and proud that now more than 105,000 Olympians, elite athletes and their entourage take part in specially tailored programmes.

We have created an innovative tool for athlete empowerment off the field of play. The Business Accelerator programme is a unique collaboration between the Muhammad Yunus



Foundation and the Athlete365 Career programme. In its first year of existence, over 5,000 athletes have taken online courses and workshops with a specific focus on business, social entrepreneurship and career training.

A major way that we have strengthened the credibility of the IOC was by revolutionising the candidature procedure for Olympic Games. Let us not forget the situation we were facing before Olympic Agenda 2020. The procedure was like applying for a business franchise – the IOC setting the conditions for the tender. Potential candidates wanting to outbid each other spent tens of millions in the process. When not being elected, the candidates were considered as losers at home and could not justify another candidature anymore. On top of that, we were facing serious ethical problems because of lobbying misconduct. As a result, we had less and less candidates and our reputation suffered.

With Olympic Agenda 2020, we have turned this page. We introduced a more targeted and flexible approach to electing future hosts. We are ensuring that the Olympic Games are now fully aligned with the long-term plans and needs of Olympic hosts and of their communities. The new approach is focused on keeping costs to a minimum and it prevents undue influence and lobbying.

Our revolution had immediate positive results.

Soon after you approved the reforms in 2019, we received declarations of interest from more parties than we had seen for many, many years.

Costs were significantly reduced. Before Olympic Agenda 2020, the average budget of candidates for the Olympic Winter Games 2022 was approximately 35 million US dollars. With the Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms, this average budget for the Olympic Winter Games 2026 was down to less than 5 million dollars – a reduction of 80 per cent. According to all information we have, we can safely expect the same reduction or even better with regards to the Olympic Games 2032.

Tomorrow we will hear more about this new approach from the Future Host Commission for the Games of the Olympiad.





## **Gender equality**

Another integral part of good governance is gender equality.

Gender equality is not just another administrative exercise. It is anchored in our Olympic Charter and we are pursuing it with full engagement.

Gender equality is one of the key components of our Olympic Agenda 2020. For the participation in the Olympic Games, we can proudly say: we made it. At the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, we will achieve gender equality for the first time in history with almost 49 per cent women participating. To even further enhance gender equality, we have changed the rules to allow and encourage NOCs to have one female and one male athlete jointly bearing their flag at the Opening Ceremony. We are also aiming to have, for the first time ever, at least one female and one male athlete in each and every one of the 206 Olympic teams.

Going one step further, gender parity will be achieved at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, when we will have the same number of male and female events and the same number of male and female athletes.

With regard to leadership positions, we are not there yet. But we are making good progress. Before Olympic Agenda 2020, 21 per cent of IOC Members were women. With Olympic Agenda 2020, within six years, we increased female membership to 38 per cent. On the IOC Executive Board, female representation has grown from 27 per cent to 33 per cent. Before Olympic Agenda 2020, female membership in IOC Commissions was 20 per cent. With Olympic Agenda 2020, within six years, we reached the figure of 48 per cent.

## **Good governance**

We know that our ability to make a difference in the world rests on our credibility and integrity. For this reason, we are proud that we have implemented all good governance measures called for under Olympic Agenda 2020: We have put in place a robust system of governance and transparency. Our accounts are audited at a much higher standard than legally required. We publish an annual report making all our flows of money transparent. We



have an organisational excellence programme to ensure best-in-class operations. We made the Ethics Commission independent from the IOC.

With these new tools, we unfortunately still have to address wrongdoing from before the adoption of Olympic Agenda 2020.

With Olympic Agenda 2020, we have turned this page. All rules and tools are now in place to prevent misconduct as well as to swiftly sanction such misbehaviour. We know rules alone do not make us immune. No organisation in this world is immune against misconduct. But with Olympic Agenda 2020 we have done what you can expect from a responsible organisation.

We also know that in order to tackle manipulation and corruption in sport, we need the support of governments, in particular with regard to the harmonisation of legislation and law enforcement. For this reason, we have together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Interpol co-initiated the “International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport”. IPACS brings together all actors that have a stake in fighting corruption in sport: sport organisations, governments, law enforcement authorities, and relevant intergovernmental organisations. This multistakeholder approach is so important because by cooperating, we leverage the expertise and authority of each partner, while respecting each other’s areas of responsibility.

### **Trust creates stability**

The credibility and trust we now enjoy with our Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms can even be measured in figures. Before Olympic Agenda 2020, the revenues from the TOP Programme were at about 1 billion dollars. With Olympic Agenda 2020, they are projected to triple to 3 billion for the Olympiad 2021-2024. What is more, we have already now, in 2021, secured contracts worth 4.1 billion dollars with TOP Partners and Rights-Holding Broadcasters for the Olympiad 2029-2032.

They are strong supporters of Olympic Agenda 2020, especially in the areas of athlete support, digital engagement, gender equality, sustainability, and youth programmes.



This money is not falling from heaven. Rather – this financial support and engagement demonstrates how much confidence our TOP Partners and Rights-Holding Broadcasters have in the relevance and future of the Olympic Games and how much they trust us, the IOC.

We are grateful to all our partners. These mutually trustful partnerships have even stood the extreme stress test of the COVID-19 crisis: all our partners, without any exception, stayed at our side.

## **Youth**

The third pillar of Olympic Agenda 2020 is strengthening our engagement with youth.

Today sport has to compete for the time of young people, in particular with the digital world. Therefore, we have to reach out to the youth to where they are in this digital world. This is why our digital Olympic Channel is such a necessary game changer.

The young at heart among you may remember that I first floated such an idea at the Olympic Congress 1994. Therefore, seeing the Olympic Channel flourishing now is another emotional moment for me of coming full circle.

Since its launch at the end of 2016, the Olympic Channel has enjoyed more than 3.4 billion video views across all platforms, with nearly 75 per cent of social media engagement coming from people under 35 years. With this the Olympic Channel has overachieved. In fact, it has not only overachieved, it has also delivered on budget. I can announce to you today, that the Olympic Channel has broken even last year.

With Olympic Agenda 2020, we have innovated the Olympic Programme with the most comprehensive reform in our recent history. As a result, the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be more youthful, more female and more urban.

We have transformed the Youth Olympic Games. The Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018 have showcased this new concept in an impressive way. More than one million spectators did not only attend the Youth Olympic Games but were part of it. The same we



can say about the Olympic Winter Games Lausanne 2020, bringing the action to the heart of the Olympic Capital.

With the IOC Young Leaders programme we are engaging with and empowering young people off the field of play. We are not only supporting their innovative social projects. We are making them a part of our decision-making process. In fact, 17 such IOC Young Leaders are making their voices heard in IOC Commissions.

### **Relevance in society**

The vision we had with Olympic Agenda 2020 was that by strengthening sustainability, credibility and youth engagement, we open ourselves to a respectful dialogue with society at large. We are not living in a bubble, as we would say today. Sport is in the middle of a diverse and digital society. To accomplish our mission to make the world a better place through sport, we need to interact with the world. Our success in this is therefore judged by the international community.

The foremost organisation representing this international community is the United Nations. This is why at the very beginning of my presidency we signed a ground-breaking MoU with the UN. This MoU guides our collaboration with the UN to this very day.

On 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2020, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in which they expressed their judgement on how they see us after the reforms of Olympic Agenda 2020. This resolution was adopted by consensus of all 193 UN Member States. They benefited from the report of the UN Secretary General, who considers sport to be “a global accelerator of peace and sustainable development for all”.

The resolution supports the leadership role of the IOC, the IPC and our mission. It explicitly supports “the independence and autonomy of sport”. It acknowledges the Olympic Charter, and with this recognises our political neutrality. Furthermore, the resolution recognises that sport and physical activity: “have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours, as well as to inspire people, break down racial and political barriers, combat discrimination and defuse conflict, as reflected in the political declaration adopted at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit in 2018.”



The resolution furthermore welcomes with appreciation all upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as Youth Olympic Games, as a way to promote peace and development.

With regards to sustainability, the resolution acknowledges the important contribution of sport as an important enabler to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular peace, health, education, social inclusion, gender equality and promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. The resolution also highlights the positive impact of sport for the COVID-19 recovery, citing in particular the contribution of sport to health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

To this judgement by all 193 UN Member States about the relevance and importance of our Olympic Movement and our values after Olympic Agenda 2020, I have nothing to add.

Our reforms have of course not only impacted the international community at large, but first and foremost, they have changed our Olympic community. Therefore, it is at least just as important to know how the stakeholders of the Olympic Movement judge the success of our Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms.

And for this I invite you to watch the following film.

[Film]

This concludes my report. Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much.