



International
Olympic
Committee

The President

**Welcome speech of the 139th IOC Session
Beijing, 3 February 2022**

Together we are writing a new chapter in sporting history. Tomorrow, Beijing will become the first city ever to host both summer and winter editions of the Olympic Games.

China has already made history by surpassing the goal of engaging 300 million Chinese people with sport on snow and ice. For people, who may not know China very well, this figure seemed hardly believable. But we always had confidence because we knew about the Chinese determination, efficiency and dynamism.

Today we can say: China is a winter sport country. I can only reiterate my heartfelt congratulations to our Chinese partners and friends on this extraordinary achievement. It will change the landscape of winter sport around the world forever.

This is why the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will be the start of a new era for global winter sport.

On the eve of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, I would therefore like to express the thanks and gratitude of the entire Olympic community to our gracious hosts, the Chinese people from all walks of life, for welcoming us so warmly.

The cultural world celebrates the Olympic spirit with special concerts. The artists are engaged in an Olympic cultural festival, featuring performers from cinema, theatre, dance and other performing arts. Painters, calligraphers, sculptors, ceramic artists, and many more, are blending the Olympic spirit and their art in imaginative ways.

Cutting-edge technology in Artificial Intelligence is powering China's first AI television anchor, bringing the coverage of the Olympic Winter Games to an audience with hearing impairments.

More than one million Chinese people applied to become volunteers at these Olympic Winter Games.

Thousands of schools around the country are teaching winter sports and the Olympic values.

Even babies on snowboards are becoming social media stars.

This genuine affection is truly heart-warming. The athletes feel this and all of us feel this and we are grateful.

Thanks to the excellent work of the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee, everything is in place for safe and outstanding Olympic Winter Games.

The athletes will have magnificent, world-class Olympic venues from which to shine.

The Chinese people will enjoy tangible health, social and economic benefits.

From re-using venues from the Olympic Games 2008; to powering all Beijing 2022 venues with renewable energy; and the many measures to minimize environmental impact, these Games are also showcasing important ways forward for sustainable development in China.

These Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 enjoy the strong support of the international community. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Olympic Truce Resolution by consensus of all 193 UN Member States.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, summarises this strong support in his address to us.

It is now my great pleasure to turn to our gracious Chinese hosts.

Mr Gou Zhongwen, President of the Chinese Olympic Committee, Mr Cai Qi, President of the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee. They cannot join us in person because they are outside the closed-loop. Therefore, we are connecting remotely and I welcome them to take the floor.

Thank you very much for this warm welcome and we are looking forward to seeing you again later at this Session.

Now it is my distinct honour and privilege to invite His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, to officially open the 139th Session of the International Olympic Committee.