



International  
Olympic  
Committee  
The President

**Continuation of the 139th IOC Session  
Lausanne, 20 May 2022**

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Dear colleagues and friends,

We began our 139th IOC Session in Beijing this past February. It was not so long ago, but how much our world has changed since then.

We will dedicate, as planned, a significant portion of today's schedule to Olympic Agenda 2020+5 and the long-term outlook for our Olympic Movement. But unfortunately I have to begin by giving some perspective on our actions regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“Give Peace a Chance” – this was my appeal to the political leaders across the world in my opening and closing speeches in Beijing. As it turned out, the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 were but a fleeting moment of hope that peace and the Olympic Truce would prevail.

Unfortunately we could only appeal, because our relationship with the Russian political leadership has dramatically deteriorated over the past years. It deteriorated following the doping scandal, cyber attacks and even personal threats to individuals from the IOC and Olympic Movement.

Since the appeal fell on deaf ears, the IOC and the Olympic Movement took immediate actions after Russia, supported by Belarus, started this war. The position of the Olympic Movement on the war is outlined in my “Give Peace a Chance” message which has been widely shared and appreciated by governments and organisations worldwide.

The Olympic Movement strongly supported the message, by widely following the recommendations and by confirming their support again, only last week when we had

consultation calls with representatives from the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations and the athletes. For all this support, I would like to reiterate our deep gratitude to all our stakeholders.

Our actions are two-fold: sanctions on the one hand and protective measures on the other.

We condemned the blatant violation of the Olympic Truce on the day of the invasion. We sanctioned the Russian and Belarusian states and governments that are responsible for this war. We did so by recommending that no international sporting events be held in Russia and Belarus; by not allowing national symbols to be displayed; and even for the first time in our history by withdrawing Olympic Orders that had been awarded to the President and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

At the same time, we also had to take protective measures to ensure the integrity of international competitions. For this we had to recommend not to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials to take part in international competitions, or to at least prohibit any identification of their nationality.

Let me emphasise again that these are protective measures – not sanctions – measures to protect the integrity of competitions. The safety of the Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials could not be guaranteed because of the deep anti-Russian and anti-Belarusian feelings in so many countries following the invasion.

We had to move quickly because it was evident that governments wanted to decide who can take part in which international competitions. This is true not only for governments of host countries of such competitions. There are governments who prohibit athletes from their country to take part in any competition with Russian or Belarusian athletes. There are governments who are threatening to withdraw funding from any athlete who

would participate in such a competition. There are governments who are putting public and political pressure on National Olympic Committees and national sports federations.

We had to and continue to have to consider this situation from the end. Today it is Russia and Belarus, but if we do not act, tomorrow it will be the government from country A not wanting athletes from country B to participate. Or government C demanding its athletes not to compete against athletes from country D and so on and so forth.

This would be a situation that is contrary to all the principles we are based on. If it is in the hands of politicians to decide who can take part in which competition, then the non-discriminatory foundation of our global sports system is gone. This would be the full politicisation of sport. This would mean that sport and the athletes would become just a tool of the political sanctions system.

This was and this is our dilemma. Because of this dilemma, we had to take these protective measures - albeit with a very heavy heart.

Following our sanctions and protective measures, we received questions from two angles.

The first question was: why did we react to this war in a different way than to the many other wars around the world?

There are two answers to this. The first is: the war in Ukraine is different because it is a blatant violation of the Olympic Truce. The second is: the far-reaching political, social and economic consequences of the war make it a turning point in world history.

The second question was: why are our sanctions limited to the government and national symbols and not extended to all members of the Russian Olympic community?

The answer is: according to international rule of law, sanctions can and should only be imposed on those who are responsible for something. This war has not been started by the Russian people, the Russian athletes, the Russian Olympic Committee or the IOC Members in Russia.

Imagine where the precedent of such a breach of the rule of law by us would lead to. Every individual, every athlete, every sports official, every sports organisation would have to be punished for any illegitimate political action of their governments.

There is no justice if you paint everyone with the same brush. This would even be counterproductive because it would play into the propaganda of those who are claiming that sanctions are just a part of a wider conspiracy directed against their country.

By the way, our approach is in line with the governments who are also bound by this rule of law when it comes to their sanctioning measures. Also they cannot sanction individuals only because of the passport they hold.

Therefore, we are monitoring closely who is supporting this war with their statements or actions and have drawn and will draw the necessary consequences. This has been demonstrated for example by FINA and FIG, who have sanctioned athletes that have expressed such support for the war.

In judging this, we also have to realise that there is a Russian law threatening anyone who speaks out against the war with up to 15 years in prison. Therefore, we can appreciate that, under such circumstances, silence in itself can be a message.

Our guiding principle is peace. The Olympic Games, which unite the entire world in peaceful competition, are a powerful symbol of peace. But in order to unite the entire world, Olympic sport needs the participation of all the athletes who accept the rules, even and especially if their countries are in confrontation or at war. A competition

between athletes from only like-minded nations is not a credible symbol of peace. And it is certainly not in line with our mission.

As already our founder, Pierre de Coubertin, said, and I quote: “In truth, the entire work of the Olympic Games is based on concord — it means erasing the memories of old battles or preventing new ones.” End of quote.

While our actions brought clarity to all stakeholders of the Olympic Movement and helped us to maintain our unity, they also highlight the dilemma that we are facing: at this moment in time, we cannot fully live up to our mission to unite the entire world in peaceful competition.

Therefore we need to be prepared for the day when peace will prevail – hopefully soon. There will come a time when the world will need to rebuild bridges. When that moment comes, then we in the Olympic Movement need to be ready to overcome our current dilemma and unite the entire world again in peaceful competition.

Our Olympic mission is not a political mission. Our Olympic mission is a humanitarian mission.

Because of this humanitarian mission, we are of course painfully aware of all the too many wars and conflicts in the world. In our Olympic community we are all equal and this is why everyone affected by war deserves our attention and our support. This is exactly what we are doing through our Olympic Refugee Foundation and through supporting all members of our Olympic community who are suffering from war and conflict.

Take Afghanistan as an example. There, too, we had to act quickly following the humanitarian crisis that unfolded after the change of political power. Thanks to a true demonstration of solidarity, we have managed with the active support of many NOCs and IFs to get around 300 members of the Olympic community in Afghanistan to safety.

Together with the UNHCR, we also supported around 2,000 members of the Afghan Olympic community who are remaining in the country with a special winter relief fund to get through the harsh winter.

This humanitarian mission also applies to the members of the Ukrainian Olympic community. Just as in Afghanistan, our humanitarian assistance for Ukraine goes beyond financial aid. We have been overwhelmed with an outpouring of solidarity. I would like to thank everyone in our Olympic community who is so generously contributing to our solidarity efforts. Going beyond purely financial support, we are also offering logistical support. We are ensuring that Ukrainian athletes can continue to take part in competitions. We are providing travel support, training facilities, accommodation, equipment and uniforms.

We will continue to support Ukrainian and Afghan athletes in the same way we support other members of the global Olympic community who are affected by war and conflict.

At the end of the day, all our actions will be judged by the suffering members of the Olympic communities concerned. In this case, the Ukrainian Olympic community. There is nobody better to explain this than our dear colleague and friend Sergii Bubka, President of the NOC of Ukraine, who is leading the coordination of all our humanitarian efforts for Ukraine. This is why I would like to now hand over to Mr. Sergii Bubka.

[Sergii Bubka]

Thank you very much Sergii and thank you from the bottom of our hearts for what you are doing to coordinate all our efforts. It is hard to imagine what this means for you, to work day in day out, under such stressful conditions and in a stressful environment. You are with all your feelings and emotions, with all your heart, you are with your compatriots in Ukraine. And still you have to concentrate on your work to see how we can all together help them in the best way. There you are showing great quality and we are with you.

Dear friends,

One of the lessons we learned from successfully and safely organising two editions of the Olympic Games during a global pandemic is that we are stronger together.

In both Beijing and Tokyo, the athletes were living this togetherness in an outstanding way. They demonstrated their gratitude for being able to make their Olympic dreams come true, after overcoming so many obstacles and challenges.

Both the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 and the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 took place under unprecedented circumstances. Each time, the athletes stepped up and amazed us with their response to all the challenges and adversity, showing all of us the best that humankind can be, if we come together in peace and solidarity. This reaction touched the hearts of billions of people around the world and of course, it touched our hearts.

Against the backdrop of the troubled times we are living through, people from across the world were longing for inspiration from our Olympic values even more. Billions of people tuned in to follow both of these Games.

In Tokyo, over 3 billion people tuned in to Olympic coverage across linear TV and digital platforms. 28 billion views on digital platforms made these the first streaming Games and most watched Olympic Games ever on digital platforms.

For Beijing there are only preliminary numbers at this stage, but what we can say already now is that the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 had more broadcast hours than any Olympic Winter Games edition.

This appreciation for the Olympic Games and what they stand for is also reflected by the overwhelming response we got from people from across the globe and from all walks of life. Be it from Heads of State, business and cultural leaders, scientists, our Rights-Holding Broadcasters and TOP Partners, from youngsters and kids – we received and still are receiving countless letters and messages saying: thank you for pulling it off.

This worldwide reaction gives us all confidence as we look to the future of the Olympic Movement. Fortunately, we can do so from a position of strength. In our uncertain times, this position was never a foregone conclusion. We had to lay the foundation for this with the results of our Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms and with our Olympic Agenda 2020+5, which is already well underway.

The strong standing the Olympic Movement enjoys in wider society is reflected by the fact that despite the extremely difficult and challenging circumstances, we did not lose a single TOP Partner or Rights-Holding Broadcaster. On the contrary. Only last month, we announced Deloitte as a new TOP Partner until 2032. Having one of the so-called Big Four firms join our TOP Programme is a testimony to the attractiveness of the Olympic Games and is a testimony to the confidence in the governance of the IOC. They would not have committed if they were not absolutely convinced of the integrity and soundness of our Olympic Movement. They will dedicate a big portion of their sponsorship to the support for athletes worldwide and to the good governance of the Olympic Movement.

Under Olympic Agenda 2020, we revolutionised our procedure to select hosts for Olympic Games. This has also greatly contributed to our position of strength. Today, we have interested parties from all three continents, which have the geographic and climatic conditions to organise the Olympic Winter Games 2030.

As far as the Games of the Olympiad are concerned, we have already now a significant number of interested parties from around the globe for the Olympic Games 2036 and some even for 2040. This level of interest in hosting the Games of the Olympiad is



unique. I cannot remember a time when we had such a significant number of interested parties to host Olympic Games 14 or even 18 years in advance.

With Olympic Agenda 2020+5 we are strengthening the role of sport as an important enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. One of our key actions in this regard is to address the global climate crisis.

In fact, the Executive Board just yesterday approved our ambitious carbon reduction implementation plan, lowering IOC carbon emissions by 30 per cent until 2024 and by 50 per cent until 2030.

The IOC will be a climate-positive organisation by 2024. We are committed to make the Olympic Games climate-positive at the latest by 2030 when it is a obligation for the hosts. Paris is already on track to overachieve this goal by reaching it in 2024 already.

We are partnering with the United Nations to plant an Olympic Forest in Sub-Saharan Africa, to over-compensate our remaining emissions. Olympic House, our new IOC headquarters, is internationally certified as one of the most sustainable buildings in the world.

These are just a few examples of our full commitment in the fight against climate change.

With Olympic Agenda 2020+5 we will continue to lead by example in corporate citizenship: strengthening good governance throughout the Olympic Movement; fostering gender equality and inclusion both on and off the field of play.

With Olympic Agenda 2020+5, we have committed to strengthen the IOC human rights approach. We are doing so by developing our strategic framework. We are doing so by aligning with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights for its

implementation. We are fully committed to going further and embed human rights due diligence within our remit.

These are just a few of many initiatives to bolster our credibility and our integrity.

Olympic Agenda 2020+5 is driving the digitalisation of the Olympic Movement. One of the many actions in this regard will be the second edition of the Olympic Virtual Series, a unique digital experience to grow direct engagement with new audiences in virtual sports. And we will go even a step further. In 2023, we will have a true festival around this Olympic Virtual Series, getting all stakeholders together to celebrate the Olympic spirit also in this virtual world.

With Olympic Agenda 2020+5 we are enhancing the road to the Olympic Games for the athletes. We are doing so by launching an Olympic qualifier series for Paris 2024 for four urban sports. This completely new format will blend sport and culture in a festival atmosphere in major city locations, taking sport to where the people are. We are not in a position anymore that we can just offer a sport event in a stadium somewhere and wait for the people to come. We have to go where the people are, be it in the virtual world, be it in the urban centres.

These are just a few examples to illustrate that implementing Olympic Agenda 2020+5 is already well underway. We had to hit the ground running, because the global pandemic has confronted the entire world and us in the Olympic Movement with unprecedented challenges.

Concernant les Jeux Olympiques Paris 2024, nous entendrons plus tard le comité d'organisation sur l'état d'avancement des préparatifs. Mais je suis heureux de pouvoir vous dire déjà maintenant, que la vision de Paris 2024 est pleinement conforme à l'Agenda olympique 2020 et à l'Agenda olympique 2020+5 pour des Jeux innovants, inclusifs, paritaires et durables. Les Jeux Olympiques Paris 2024 marqueront le début

d'une nouvelle ère: des Jeux Olympiques inspirés de l'Agenda olympique du début à la fin.

Paris a ainsi une occasion unique de donner le ton pour cette nouvelle ère des Jeux Olympiques. Nous pouvons déjà nous attendre à une cérémonie d'ouverture exceptionnelle, avec des centaines de milliers de personnes célébrant les meilleurs athlètes du monde, le long de la Seine, avec en toile de fond des monuments emblématiques comme la Tour Eiffel ou la cathédrale Notre-Dame – un parfait reflet de notre vision pour des Jeux Olympiques innovants, spectaculaires et inclusifs.

In the true Olympic spirit of going faster, aiming higher, becoming stronger – together, the next Olympic hosts of Milano Cortina, Los Angeles and Brisbane are already in the starting blocks to build on this momentum and shape this new era for the Olympic Games in their own unique way.

Our values. Our solidarity. Our togetherness – this makes our Olympic Movement so special. And while we may still be separated physically for this final part of our Session, I distinctly feel that our togetherness is stronger than ever. Let us build on our strength and our togetherness.

As our founder Pierre de Coubertin said: “Charge boldly through the clouds and do not be afraid. The future belongs to you.”

Dear friends and colleagues,

Let us join hands and shape our future – together.