



International
Olympic
Committee

The President

G20 Leaders' Summit
Bali, 15 November 2022

Please allow me to thank our gracious host, President Joko Widodo, for the great honour to address you, the world leaders. I applaud Indonesia for choosing its motto for this Summit: “Recover Together, Recover Stronger”, which perfectly resonates with our new Olympic motto: “Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together”.

The global pandemic made it crystal clear how important sport is for our physical and mental health: sport can save lives.

This is why the International Olympic Committee is working closely with the World Health Organization to promote healthy and resilient societies through sport. Olympic athletes are central to this, as role models for healthy lifestyles.

The excellent cooperation with the governments of Japan and China and our close partnership with the WHO were crucial for us to successfully and safely organise two editions of Olympic and Paralympic Games during the height of the pandemic. During these dark times, the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 gave so many people around the world hope and optimism.

The countless messages of appreciation from all walks of life are summed up in an excellent way by WHO Director General Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, who said: “The Olympic Games bring the whole world together in solidarity and in a celebration of hope.”

We can only bring the whole world together if the athletes from all 206 National Olympic Committees can participate at the Olympic Games. Only in this way the Olympic Games become this celebration of hope and resilience.

This is what the Olympic and Paralympic Games are all about: bringing the whole world together in peaceful competition, without any discrimination whatsoever.

For Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022, the challenge to bring the whole world together was the pandemic.

Today, the challenges for the Olympic Games are consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Russia's invasion violated the Olympic Truce resolution adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly.

We have condemned and sanctioned the Russian government in an unprecedented way for this blatant violation of the Olympic Charter.

We are supporting the athletes and members of the Ukrainian Olympic community everywhere with all our solidarity.

But in contrast to the far too many other wars and conflicts in our world, regarding this war some governments started to decide which athletes would be allowed to participate in international sports competitions – and which not.

They did and they do so purely on political grounds. They want to decide which athletes can now qualify and finally compete at the Olympic Games Paris 2024. If sport becomes – in this way – just another tool to achieve political goals, international sport will fall apart. Because: it is the very essence of international sport that decisions about participation and results have to be based purely on the sporting merit of an athlete.

If, however, this kind of politicisation of sport becomes the norm, it will be impossible for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to be a unifying force.

Olympic sport needs the participation of all 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 states is not a credible symbol of peace.

In this age of division, our role is clear: to unite the world – and not to deepen divisions.

To live up to our unifying mission, the IOC must be politically neutral. To allow future Olympic hosts to welcome the best athletes of the entire world, regardless of political conflicts, I appeal to you, the world leaders, to support this political neutrality.

France, Italy, the USA and Australia are the next Olympic hosts. In at least eight G20 countries, there is already now declared interest in hosting future Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This is why I humbly ask you: give us this opportunity to contribute to peace and understanding through sport. Support the autonomy of sport as you have done in so many UN resolutions and declarations before.

There are not many occasions when all humankind can set aside our differences and come together in peace.

As the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said: “The Olympic spirit is the most important symbol of peace in today’s world.”

Let us not abandon this precious unifying mission of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in a time when the world needs more solidarity and peace.

As you, the G20 leaders, are shaping the new post-pandemic world order, I am grateful that I can personally ask you today to support this unifying mission of the Olympic Games.

In this Olympic spirit of solidarity and peace, I thank you for your kind consideration.

I reiterate the call to you, the world leaders, that I made already at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022:

Give peace a chance!