International Olympic Committee

The President

65th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors

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It is always such an emotional moment to gather here. With the inspiring backdrop of the Acropolis, what better place than the Hill of Pnyx to reflect on the two great gifts of Greek civilisation to the world: democracy and the Olympic Games – both born here in Greece, and both shaping our world to this very day.

The Olympic Movement is forever grateful to Greece for these precious gifts. Our admiration is even greater, when we see how they have stood the test of time. This is why we are so honoured and privileged that the President of the Hellenic Republic, His Excellency Constantinos Tassoulas, is joining us today. Your presence, Mr. President, highlights the unique role that Greece plays in the Olympic Movement and shows the continued relevance of our noble Greek heritage.

The Olympic Games have their roots in ancient times. At the same time, the Olympic Games are always about the future. They are intrinsically connected to the youth of the world. Each edition of the Olympic Games is an invitation to the young generation to embrace the timeless Olympic values of peace, excellence, friendship, respect, fair-play and solidarity. As Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the IOC and renovator of the modern Olympic Games, once said: “The Olympic Games are a pilgrimage to the past and an act of faith in the future.” These words capture the unique nature of the Olympic Movement: a 2,800 year-old institution constantly renewing itself through innovation and youth.

This is why I would like to congratulate the International Olympic Academy, under the leadership of its President Charilaos Tsolakis, for choosing such a timely theme for this Session: “Olympic Movement and AI - Opportunities and Challenges”. This theme reflects the forward-looking spirit of the Olympic Games. It is exactly this faith in the

future that explains why the Olympic Games have always embraced innovation. The power of the Olympic Games is their universality. So what better platform to explore how artificial intelligence can transform society and how it must be guided by human values.

It was in this spirit that the IOC began its journey into the world of AI about three years ago. We could already see back then that the rapid development of AI was shaping every facet of our lives at breakneck speed. It was never a question of if, but how and when AI would change the world of sport.

When we launched Olympic Agenda, our comprehensive reform programme in 2014, we did so under the slogan: “change or be changed”. This call to action is even more urgent today, as the pace of technological change is being turbo-charged. Just as we did with Olympic Agenda, we knew that we need to lead change rather than be overtaken by it. This same mindset guided our approach to AI. Our guiding question was simple: will we be the leaders, or the object of change? As the leaders of the Olympic Movement, our answer was clear: we want to be the leaders of change also when it comes to AI in sport.

As a values-based organisation, our first concern was not technology, but people. How can AI serve humans in sport? How can it support athletes, enhance fairness, and protect integrity? How can it promote the Olympic values in a rapidly changing digital age?

These humanistic questions shaped our Olympic AI Agenda — our strategic framework to harness AI responsibly and in a human-centred way. This Agenda, launched in 2024, is both visionary and practical. It defines our ambition and guiding principles and embraces AI’s full potential while protecting human dignity.

With this Agenda, we are shaping a vision: one where technology serves the athlete, and not the other way around. One where AI strengthens the role of sport as a force for good in society – and does not exacerbate existing inequalities.

Unlike other areas of society, in sport we are not confronted with the ultimate ethical question of whether AI will replace the human being. The 100 metres will always be run by an athlete — a human being. Therefore, we are in the position to concentrate on the potential of AI to support the athletes. We want to use AI to empower athletes, coaches, and the entire Olympic community. To expand opportunity. To promote wellbeing. To foster greater solidarity. To preserve human dignity.

This spirit of solidarity is a cornerstone of the Olympic Movement. It also shapes our approach to AI. Our Olympic AI Agenda is not just about innovation — it is about inclusion. It is about ensuring that the AI revolution in sport does not deepen existing gaps and divisions but, on the contrary, helps to close them. In line with our mission to promote solidarity across all 206 National Olympic Committees, we are committed to making AI a force that uplifts everyone. By integrating solidarity into our AI strategy, we aim to ensure that new technologies enhance equal opportunity and shared progress across our global Olympic community.

This is why another key pillar of our Agenda is accessibility. As universality lies at the heart of the Olympic Games, we must ensure that AI in sport is accessible to all. This means: AI technology must be available for everybody in our Olympic community. Not just for a privileged few. Like sport itself, it must be universal. AI can expand access, reduce barriers, and spread the benefits of sport more widely.

We are already putting our AI Agenda into action in this spirit of solidarity and equality.

In Senegal, ahead of the Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026, we launched an AI-powered talent identification project with Intel and the Senegalese Olympic Committee. Using mobile phones and simple testing equipment, we reached over 1,000 young people across the country. AI helped us to identify 48 promising athletes — many of whom would have been missed by traditional systems. These athletes will now receive targeted

support to pursue their dreams. This project shows AI's power to expand opportunity — and reflects our Olympic values of universality and inclusion.

Another example comes from the Olympic Games Paris 2024, where we protected athletes with the largest AI-powered online abuse monitoring programme used in sport. Real-time AI tools filtered harmful content on social media of Games-participants. In total, this programme analysed 2.4 million posts and comments from the 20,000 athletes' and officials' social media handles, in real time and in over 35 languages. To put that in perspective: if a human read each post for about one minute, it would take five years to get through them all. We would still be monitoring the posts from Paris today. This was more than a hi-tech solution — it was a clear expression of our values of individual dignity and protecting the well-being of athletes.

In Paris, we also brought fans closer to the athletes. With OMEGA, we introduced AI-powered systems offering real-time insights — split times, biometrics, movement patterns — deepening our appreciation of human performance. These tools did not replace the athletes — they revealed their excellence in even more detail.

With Alibaba Cloud, we made operations of Paris 2024 more efficient and sustainable. AI-powered energy tools helped optimise power use at venues — a practical contribution to our sustainability goals.

AI also proved invaluable in managing the enormous complexity of Paris 2024. From optimising athlete transportation and venue crowd flow to enhancing security through real-time monitoring, AI helped the Organising Committee to plan and operate the Games more efficiently and safely. These applications demonstrate how AI can streamline logistical challenges while improving the experience for athletes, officials, and fans alike — a clear example of how technology can support solidarity by ensuring equal access and smooth participation for all. Importantly, many of these innovations can

also benefit sports events of all sizes around the world, making them more inclusive, efficient and sustainable.

When it comes to broadcasting, AI has the potential to revolutionise how fans engage with sport. By combining AI with virtual and augmented reality technology, spectators will soon be able to tailor their viewing experience. Every person can effectively becoming the director of their own unique Olympic experience. These kinds of innovation will make the Olympic Games and sport as a whole more accessible and immersive, bringing the excitement of the competition to people everywhere in ways never before possible.

In judging and refereeing, AI is already making an impact with systems like VAR in football and Hawk-Eye in tennis. Looking forward, AI can further enhance fairness and accuracy in sports where human judgement has traditionally been decisive — gymnastics, figure skating, boxing, to name a few. By supporting officials with precise data and instant review, AI upholds the integrity of competition while respecting the essential human element that lies at the heart of sport.

Beyond the field of play, AI is also enhancing how we work behind the scenes — from media summaries to archive access, governance training and streamlining office work using generative AI. Across the Olympic Movement, we are using AI to work smarter, faster and with greater impact.

These are just a few examples that show how AI, when guided by values, can be a force for good.

While we are actively seizing the opportunities, we are also mindful of the risks. AI knows no borders. It moves faster than national legislation. It raises fundamental questions about fairness, transparency, responsibility, and control. As a global organisation, we know that we cannot realise our humanistic vision of AI without global regulation. This is

why international cooperation is essential. We need common standards. We need guardrails that preserve human dignity, promote innovation, and ensure equitable progress within and among societies.

Therefore, we urge the global community to build a global regulatory framework for AI that allows us all to seize the opportunities and to manage the risks.

AI is just one example of a new world order in the making. Historic disruptions are reshaping the international system that has existed since the second World War. We see economic decoupling; growing nationalism; “Global South” vs “Global North”; and a retreat from multilateralism. Cooperation and compromise—once pillars of international relations—are sadly considered disparaging terms in some quarters.

These trends are deeply concerning to the Olympic Movement because they undermine our mission to unite the world in peaceful competition. And yet, they also show how important the Olympic Games and their message of peace and solidarity have become today. That is why we are more determined than ever to do everything within our power to bring the entire world together in peaceful competition. If we can show that AI — one of the defining forces of our time — can be shaped by values, then we can help shape not just the future of sport, but the future of humanity.

This future, dear Young Ambassadors, belongs to you. We rely on your ideas, creativity and engagement so that together, we can promote sport as a force for good in our world. Through your work at the International Olympic Academy you are giving contemporary meaning to our ancient Greek heritage and carrying the Olympic values into the future. Like the athletes, you are demonstrating our Olympic motto in an excellent way: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together. The word “together” tells us: no matter what challenges we might face – in sport, or in life – we can only go faster, aim higher, become stronger, if we stand together – in peace and solidarity.

This is why I encourage you: make the most of your time at the Academy. Learn from our history. Embrace the uniqueness of the Olympic Games.

Dear friends,

In just a few days, my time as IOC President will come to an end. So it is with a great emotion that I address you today for the last time in this role.

Every visit to the International Olympic Academy, indeed, every encounter with a new class of Young Ambassadors, has been a highlight. Each time, I was inspired by your energy, your passion, and your purpose. The Academy is a special place. It preserves our Greek heritage and nurtures the next generation of leaders in sport. You ensure that our Olympic Movement remains rooted in its values and focused on the future.

Meeting so many inspiring young people here and throughout the world, I have every confidence that the future of our Olympic Movement is bright – and that it is in good hands. My successor, the IOC President-elect Kirsty Coventry, represents a new generation of leadership. She embodies our shared values. She reflects the truly global nature and the youthful, forward-looking spirit of our Olympic community.

Dear friends,

Greece and the Greek people will always hold a special place in my heart. Every time I return, I am filled with emotion — touched by the beauty of your country, the richness of your culture, and the generosity of your people. It is here that the Olympic Games were born, and it is here that the Olympic spirit is lived with great passion. I have always felt your warmth and your friendship — and I have always admired the deep emotional connection that the Greek people have with the Olympic Games to this very day. These moments have left a lasting mark on me. Even as my term comes to an end, I hope to return — to ancient Olympia, or here to Athens — to once again share in this Olympic

spirit and to celebrate the deep bonds of friendship that unite us. Our friendship goes beyond any official role or function. This is why today I do not say “farewell”. Today, I say: “see you soon”, my dear Greek friends.