



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach  
President

## Opening Session of the 2016 SportAccord Convention

Lausanne, 19 April 2016

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Dear President of SportAccord Convention, my dear colleague and friend Francesco Ricci Bitti,

Dear President of SportAccord Association, my dear colleague and friend Gian-Franco Kasper,

Dear IOC Vice Presidents and IOC Members,

Dear Presidents of ARISF (Association of IOC Recognised International Sport Federations), IWGA (International World Games Association), and AIMS (Alliance of Independent recognised Members of Sport),

Dear Presidents and Secretary-Generals of the International Federations,

Monsieur le Conseiller d'état du Canton de Vaud, Philippe Leuba,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Let me first congratulate President Francesco Ricci Bitti for organising this SportAccord Convention in such a brilliant way. Let me also thank you for the positive approach that you are taking with all your colleagues in the SportAccord Convention to address the challenges that we all are facing. May I also congratulate you to your unanimous re-election as President of ASOIF. This expresses the great confidence all your colleagues are having in you.

Thank you for choosing Lausanne, the Olympic Capital, for this year's SportAccord Convention. Lausanne is offering us a great stage when sport is eagerly looking forward to the Olympic Games Rio 2016. In just a few weeks, we will come together in Rio de Janeiro, for the very first Olympic Games in South America. Brazil and the Brazilians will enthusiastically welcome the world with their joy of life and their passion for sport.

We know the current economic and political situation in Brazil will continue to make the final preparations challenging. Despite these challenges, I am convinced – and I am not alone in this conviction, we are all convinced – that the Olympic Games Rio 2016 will be truly spectacular. The reason for my confidence is two-fold.



Firstly, the Olympic Games enjoy the strong public support of the Brazilian people. Even in these challenging circumstances we see the power of sport to bring people together. Secondly, the organisers can count on the solidarity of the Olympic family and the sporting world. Delivering the Olympic Games is a team effort and we can see the team working together to deliver something very special. The many successful test events that have already taken place are an excellent example of this teamwork. As the IOC Coordination Commission, chaired by Nawal El Moutawakel, confirmed last week, the sport facilities are either completed or about to be finished.

We know from other host cities that the final stretch leading up to the opening of the Olympic Games is always the most challenging. This is even more the case in the current environment in Brazil. In light of this unprecedented situation, it is important that we stand together. The Olympic family and the family of sport is always at its best whenever we are united in our resolve and focused on the goal.

Let me take this opportunity to especially thank all the International Federations for the great solidarity that you have shown already with our Brazilian friends with the International Olympic Committee and with the Brazilian people. Everyone is making truly extraordinary efforts to ensure the success of the Games under these very difficult circumstances in the host country. If everyone in the Olympic family – the International Federations, the National Olympic Committees, the partners and sponsors and the IOC – plays their part and continues to show this kind of solidarity, I am confident that the Games will be a great success.

With this focus and unity of the Olympic family, Brazil's success will be your success – it will be a success not only for the Olympic Movement, it will be a success not only for the International Federations taking part, it will be a success not only for the Brazilians and for the IOC, it will be a success of the entire world of sport. With this Olympic Games – in a time when our world is maybe more fragile than ever – and with the great support and enthusiasm of the Brazilian people, we can show the power of all sports to send a signal of hope and joy to the world in our so much troubled times. This message of hope is perhaps the most important legacy that the Olympic Games will bring to Rio de Janeiro, to Brazil and to the entire world.

Let us address all these challenges we are facing in the world of sport today. Let us address them together under the motto you have here in one of your conference programmes: We



are all in it together. This sums up the approach of the International Olympic Committee and our invitation to all of you to work together, to collaborate together because we are all in it together.

When Olympic Agenda 2020 was adopted, this message was clear. Olympic Agenda 2020 was not only for Olympic sports, it was for all of us. It was an offer and an invitation to all of you to change before being changed. One just needs to look at the events of the last year to realise that this message is even more urgent with regards to good governance and the credibility of sports. As these recent developments have shown, safeguarding integrity and credibility are not only issues of fundamental importance for the world of sport, but their relevance is all too clear for all areas of public life and society.

As the role and relevance of sport in society continues to grow, so do the expectations of the public vis-à-vis the integrity of athletes and sports organisations. Yes, we are all in it together. It is our shared responsibility in the world of sport to provide new answers to new questions: new answers to new questions with regards to the integrity of sports competitions as well as sports organisations.

We all have our responsibility in this regard. We all stand for the values of excellence, friendship, fair-play and respect. As values-based organisations, as we all are, we have the double-duty to ensure that we uphold the principles of good governance in all our activities. Only in this way can we defend the integrity and credibility of sports.

With Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC has already implemented internationally recognised standards of good governance in all its activities. All stakeholders of the Olympic Movement have agreed also to apply these principles. Many International Federations and National Olympic Committees already have all the instruments in place and have done a remarkable effort in this respect. For all those who still need some more development, I would like to point out the new ASOIF taskforce on sports governance under the leadership of President Francesco Ricci Bitti. It is a great example for all International Federations of how you are making good governance a priority. It is encouraging to see such efforts in line with Olympic Agenda 2020. We fully support the results of this taskforce and look forward to the swift implementation of their recommendations. We are all aware that rules alone do not make us immune to any wrongdoing. However, it is our duty to have all the rules in place now, in order



to prevent misconduct. If there is misconduct, we need to act swiftly, like most of us, including the IOC, have always done, including the recent past.

With regards to protecting the clean athletes, the IOC with Olympic Agenda 2020 and together with all our stakeholders strengthened our commitment to make the world's anti-doping system and the sanctioning of doped athletes independent from sports organisations. The fourth Olympic Summit last October recommended this major step forward. Building on this, the IOC Executive Board in March agreed to delegate the decisions on alleged anti-doping rule violations during the Olympic Games to a new anti-doping division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) that will handle cases from the Olympic Games Rio 2016 onwards under the leadership of the CAS President John Coates. We are absolutely convinced that all these changes are necessary to better protect the clean athletes and to enhance the integrity of sport. These measures will benefit all of us because they reinforce our credibility as sports organisations. This is in our collective interest. It is necessary to counter even the perception of a conflict of interest, or the perception that sports organisations are not interested to reveal doping cases. An independent testing system is in the interest of all sports organisations because it means more credibility. It also means clearer responsibilities. Finally, it also means more efficiency, as all the resources and know-how of the International Federations will be kept and bundled so as to galvanise intelligence and concentrate efforts in anti-doping.

We need to create this new structure together by putting our existing human resources at its disposal. All the expertise, all the human resources we have gathered in the International Federations and in all sports organisations have to be kept in place. Their expertise, their knowledge has to enrich this new entity. They have to make this new entity work. The many committed people from so many International Federations with all their expertise and all their knowledge will be critical for the success of this independent testing system. For this to succeed, close cooperation with governments will also be necessary in order to align National Anti-Doping Agencies for a more efficient and harmonised approach in all countries worldwide. WADA, with its President Craig Reedie, can serve as an organisational platform for this kind of cooperation with national governments.

An independent testing system is also key to protect the clean athletes. It will reinforce the important application of individual justice; individual justice that every citizen in the world is



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entitled to; individual justice for each athlete, in every country, in every sport. In this way we are able to punish the cheats to the fullest extent of the rules. At the same time, we shield the clean athletes from general suspicion.

Dear partners and friends, I am sure that this SportAccord Convention will be a success because in the meetings today I could already feel that all of you are united in the determination to make important progress in the areas of good governance and protecting the clean athletes. Therefore, this SportAccord Convention here in Lausanne can be the beginning of a new and positive SportAccord in many respects. In this spirit of dialogue and partnership between all the International Federations and the IOC, I thank you for the excellent cooperation which we enjoyed in the last year and I wish you a successful convention in Lausanne.