



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach
President

Adoption of the Olympic Truce Resolution
UN General Assembly, New York, 9 December 2019

Please allow me to thank you for the great honour to address the General Assembly today. My thanks and gratitude also go to the Government of Japan under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for submitting this resolution on “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”. On behalf of the International Olympic Committee, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs Monaco and Qatar of the Group of Friends of Sport as well as the many Member States that have co-sponsored this resolution. As a Permanent Observer to the UN, the IOC has closely accompanied this process. It is encouraging to see the wide level support from the Member States for the resolution.

When our founder Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games exactly 125 years ago, he saw it as a way to promote peace among all nations and people. In this our 125th anniversary year, the resolution you are adopting demonstrates clearly that his vision endures. This resolution is a powerful reminder of the shared values on which both the United Nations and the IOC are built.

As the UN looks ahead to its 75th anniversary next year, what better time than this Olympic Year 2020, to celebrate our shared values. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres eloquently declared: “If there is a true symbol of peace in our world, it is the Olympic spirit.” With the adoption of the Olympic Truce resolution today, you are supporting the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 as this true symbol of peace in our world.

Today is therefore a welcome opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the IOC to our shared values of peace, solidarity and respect. Both our organisations are guided by universality, equality, non-discrimination and the rule of law. The alignment of our common values and principles are reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In the SDGs you specifically highlighted sport as an “important enabler” to achieve, in particular peace, health, education or empowering women.

Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in our comprehensive Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms. In fact, we have made sustainability a central element to all our activities. We walk



the talk. This is true for Olympic House, our new IOC headquarter building which in its category is the most sustainable building in the world. It is also true for the way the Olympic Games are run in the future.

The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be the most prominent expression of the IOC commitment to our shared values and to the SDGs in particular.

Thanks to Olympic Agenda 2020, we will achieve gender-balance at the Olympic Games for the first time in Tokyo, with the highest-ever number of female athletes in history at about 49 per cent, sending a strong signal on gender equality to the world.

In the spirit of our reforms, our friends from the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee under the great leadership of its President, His Excellency Yoshiro Mori, are promoting sustainability in an outstanding way. Tokyo 2020 aims for carbon-neutral Games. From the Olympic medals made from recycled electronics, to powering the Olympic Games with renewable energy or using zero-emission vehicles and many more actions, the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be an inspiration for sustainable development and inclusion also with regards to the Paralympic Games. This is why I would like to express my gratitude in particular to President Mori for his unwavering personal dedication to our values and principles.

The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be followed by far more than half of the world's entire population. Billions of people will see the greatest sports event on the planet.

The athletes from each and every one of your countries will inspire the world. They will inspire and unite your people. They will bring pride and joy to everyone. It is their sporting performance, their effort, their excellence, their emotions, their joy, their tears that create the magic of the Olympic Games.

At the same time, I can tell you from my own experience as an Olympic champion, participating in the Olympic Games makes you humble because you become part of something bigger. You are part of an event that unites the world. You are part of an experience that promotes the shared values of all humankind. You are part of a truly global community.



At the Olympic Games, there is no discrimination. At the Olympic Games, everyone is equal. At the Olympic Games everyone respects the same rules.

The Olympic Games are the only event today that brings the entire world together in peaceful competition. In Tokyo, the world will see athletes from all 206 National Olympic Committees and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team united. These 11,000 best athletes of the world are competitors in sport, but at the same time, they are living peacefully together under one roof in the Olympic Village.

This is the Olympic message of peace to all humankind. Our gracious Japanese friends and hosts will interpret this mission of the Olympic Games in an excellent way.

We can only achieve this universality if we enable everyone to participate. For this, we need solidarity. This is why the IOC distributes 90 per cent of all its revenues for the benefit of the athletes and the development of sport and Paralympic sport around the globe. In hard figures, this means five billion US dollars in the four years of one Olympiad. Each and every one of your National Olympic Committees benefits from this support. But please do not worry, not a single cent of tax payers' money is in the IOC budget.

Another illustration of this solidarity is the IOC Refugee Olympic Team. Exactly four years ago, in this very place, I announced the creation of this Refugee Olympic Team. These refugee athletes then competed on an equal basis together with all the other athletes at the Olympic Games Rio 2016. Standing here again four years later, I wish I could announce to you that we do not need an IOC Refugee Olympic Team anymore. But unfortunately, the reasons why we created this team continue to persist. This is why we will have once again an IOC Refugee Olympic Team for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. In this way, we want to send a strong message of hope to all refugees and at the same time we want to raise awareness across the world about the global refugee crisis.

In order to achieve this global solidarity and true universality, the IOC and the Olympic Games must be politically neutral. We can only accomplish our mission to unite the world if the Olympic Games stand above and beyond any and all political differences.



Our political neutrality goes hand-in-hand with the autonomy of sport. You can only be neutral if you are autonomous. With this autonomy, we can ensure the worldwide equal application of the rules and laws of sport. Starting with the adoption of the historic resolution A/RES/69/6 in 2014, the UN General Assembly has recognised and supported this autonomy that is so central to our mission. This is why I am grateful that I can personally ask for your continued support for this autonomy of sport here today.

In our fragile world, we see our shared values and principles challenged in many ways, not only in the international community but also in sport.

In sport, we can see an increasing erosion of the respect for the global rule of law. Some believe the rule of law does not apply to them or even want to impose their own laws on others.

Solidarity is under threat, when mistrust and self-interest is on the rise. Some want to devalue the Olympic Games to a purely profit-driven business model. To them we say: We are a values-based organisation. For the IOC, money is not an end in itself. For us, money is just a means to achieve our mission of uniting the world in peace and solidarity.

Universality is threatened when our political neutrality is not respected. Our political neutrality is undermined whenever organisations or individuals attempt to use the Olympic Games as a stage for their own agendas – as legitimate as they might be. The Olympic Games are a sports celebration of our shared humanity. They are not and must never be a platform to advance political or any other potentially divisive ends.

The IOC is fully committed to preserve and strengthen these values and principles of respect for the rule of law, solidarity and political neutrality. But our commitment is not enough. We depend on the support of you, the governments, for our mission and our neutrality.

This is why we are so grateful for your support for the Olympic Truce resolution. With this resolution, you are also supporting these values and principles that unite us. Please take these values and principles into account whenever you have to take decisions that affect sport.

In this Olympic spirit of universality, solidarity and peace, I invite you all to join hands and to celebrate our unity in all our diversity at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and beyond. Let us



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demonstrate together that our shared humanity is stronger than all the forces that want to divide us.