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Thomas Bach
President

New Year's Message 2021

Transcript

Dear Olympic Community,

What a year 2020 has been. I think we all had unique experiences and had to face many challenges. But for us, the Olympic community, I can say that we have managed to turn these challenges into opportunities. We have strengthened the role of sport in society with our “#StayStrong #StayActive #StayHealthy” campaign, by organising the world's biggest digital Olympic workout, when during one single day, Olympic Day, half a billion people were introduced to this important role of sport for society.

The role of sport for physical and mental health, the role of sport for our social life, the role of sport for our economic life has been recognised widely. We have signed a new cooperation agreement with the World Health Organization. Together with the United Nations and the WHO, we have started a co-branded “Healthy Together” campaign, which is rolling out internationally.

At the end of the year, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution by consensus, which calls on the governments of the world to include sport in their recovery programmes. The General Assembly emphasised our autonomy, and the leadership role of the IOC and IPC and the Olympic Charter is acknowledged. And, very importantly for this extraordinary Olympic year 2021, there is clear support for all the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games from Tokyo over Beijing to LA 2028. The same is true for the G20 Leaders' Summit, which has also declared its support [for] and appreciation of these forthcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo and Beijing.

These will indeed be the priorities for us in this extraordinary Olympic year 2021. Tokyo is still the best prepared Olympic city ever. We can only thank our Japanese partners and friends for their great commitment and their determination, which is absolutely in line with our commitment and our determination to organise these Games in a safe and secure way for all the participants



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and to make these Olympic Games fit for the post-coronavirus world. We all will live unforgettable Games.

These Olympic Games will be the light at the end of the tunnel. They will be a celebration of solidarity, of unity of humankind in all our diversity and of resilience. But it is not that, 'after Tokyo is before Beijing'. We have to already start at the beginning of this year to prepare for the upcoming Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. And there, really all are on board. We see the same commitment and determination of our Chinese partners and friends and all the Olympic venues are already ready for the best winter sports athletes of the world.

But at the same time, while preparing for Tokyo and Beijing, we all have to look into the further future. And that means: how we can even strengthen the role of sport for a more human-centred and inclusive post-coronavirus world.

There we have learned one lesson. This one lesson is: we need more solidarity. We need more solidarity within societies, and we need more solidarity among societies.

And we will learn from this lesson and, by learning from this lesson of solidarity, we will turn the challenges of the future into opportunities again. In this spirit, we will carry forward the Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms to the future. I invite you to join us in these ongoing reforms and to live our motto of "change or be changed" also in the years to come.

In this Olympic spirit, I wish you all a very happy, prosperous, healthy, and for us all, a successful, extraordinary Olympic year 2021. All the very best to all of you.