



International
Olympic
Committee

The President

State of the Olympic Movement

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We were all looking forward to meeting and to being together again, and to speak about sport, to speak about the Olympic Games, to speak about athletes, to speak about great performances, but I regret that I have to begin by addressing the position of the Olympic Movement with regards to the war in Ukraine.

Almost eight months have passed since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and still there is no end in sight.

This situation is unique for the Olympic Movement for two reasons. Firstly, because the Russian invasion of Ukraine represents a blatant violation of the Olympic Truce that was in place for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022.

This violation of the Olympic Truce was also a violation of the principles of our Olympic Charter by the Russian government.

Secondly, the situation is unique because of the consequences this war has for the sports world: Some governments are interfering in your autonomy. Some governments are interfering in the autonomy of world sport and with this jeopardising the integrity of international sport competitions.

We had to react to both: the violation of the principles of the Olympic Charter; and the political interference in international sport competitions.

Following our principles, we did so with sanctions on the one hand and with protective measures on the other hand.

We sanctioned the ones who are responsible for starting this war: the Russian and Belarusian governments. Therefore, we condemned the blatant violation of the Olympic Truce and the principles of the Olympic Charter just hours after the beginning of the invasion. We sanctioned the Russian and Belarusian governments by recommending that the International Federation do not organise any international sport events in Russia or Belarus. We recommended furthermore that no national symbols whatsoever of these countries should be displayed at any sport events.

By recently annexing Ukrainian territory, the Russian government has even deepened its violation of the Olympic Charter.

This annexation means that the Russian government is claiming authority over the people living in the annexed areas, including athletes. This is a clear violation of the jurisdiction of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine, which is protected by the Olympic Charter.

All this means for us: the sanctions against the Russian and Belarusian states and governments must and will remain firmly in place.

On the other hand we had to ensure the integrity of international sport competitions and protect our autonomy by taking protective measures. Therefore we recommended as a principle not to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials to take part in international competitions.

We needed to do so, because we had to realise that some governments were starting to interfere in the responsibility of sports organisations. We had to react because the autonomy of sport and the functioning of the international sports system is at stake. Governments were and are undermining our autonomy by deciding who would be allowed to participate in international competitions – and who not.

Some of you here are experiencing this interference first-hand: governments not issuing visas to Russian and Belarusian athletes.

Some governments threatening your athletes to withdraw funding if they were to compete against Russian or Belarusian competitors.

Some prohibiting athletes from participating in such competitions.

Some governments pressuring your athletes and you through public opinion.

This is why we had to take these protective measures. We did so with a very heavy heart – because they concern athletes and sports officials who did not start this war, who are not responsible for this war. Athletes should never be the victims of policies of their own government.

This situation puts us in an unsolvable dilemma. On the one hand, we cannot fully live up to our Olympic mission, which is to protect the athletes and to unite the entire world in peaceful competition.

We all had always agreed and insisted on this principle in the past when athletes from one or the other country refused to compete against athletes from another country for political reasons. We have insisted on this principle because we all agreed that such a unifying peaceful competition is at the core of our mission.

Now, unfortunately, in this unique situation, the only way to protect this mission was to recommend the non-participation of athletes just because of their passport. Because if we would have been bowing to this political pressure, if we would have been bowing to this attack on our autonomy, we would have experienced a domino effect which would lead to discrimination, division and conflict in sport.

We had to protect the international sports system from the full politicisation of sport. Because: today it is Russia and Belarus. But if we let politics take over sport then tomorrow it will be you.

And this we must prevent. We must avoid that sport becomes just another tool of this now so popular tit-for-tat sanctions regime for any political reason. Each of us has to know that they could be affected themselves in the future. Each of us knows that our government has not only political friends and allies in this divisive world and could therefore be affected by such sanctions.

In the interest of all of us, we will strongly resist such full politicisation of sport.

In standing up against this full politicisation of sport we will on the other hand not fall into the trap of the propaganda machine that wants to make people believe that it is us who are violating the Olympic Charter. A propaganda machine that even goes so far to not call this conflict for what it is: a war. A propaganda machine which is reversing cause and effect.

Whoever so blatantly violates the Olympic Truce and the Olympic Charter with even military means has to face sanctions that protect our values. It is perverse to denounce our sanctions and protective measures as a politicisation of sport.

The reasons for the sanctions as well as for the protective measures still exist: this is not the time to change any of our sanctions or protective measures.

In this context, some of you ask: why do our sanctions not extend to the Russian and Belarusian sport organisations?

Our answer is: This war has not been started by the Russian people, the Russian athletes, the Russian Olympic Committee or the IOC Members in Russia. Sanctions can and must only be imposed on those who are responsible for something.

Imagine where the precedence of such a breach of the rule of law would lead to. Every individual, every athlete, every sports official, every sports organisation would have to be punished for any illegitimate political action of their governments.

Then, with all the too many wars and conflict situations in the world, many of you could not be able to be here with us today because of such sanctions or counter-sanctions.

In the interest of all of us, we resist this full politicisation of sport.

We will not be more political than the politicians. At this moment we are meeting here, the General Assembly of the United Nations is meeting with the full participation of all their member states, regardless of whether their countries are in conflict.

But the fact that we cannot overcome our dilemma at this moment, must not prevent us from exploring ways of how we can overcome it in the future.

The Olympic Games, which unite the entire world in peaceful competition, are a powerful symbol of peace.

To be such a symbol of peace, Olympic sport needs the participation of all the 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 countries is not a credible symbol of peace.

The Olympic Games must always build bridges. They must never erect walls.

This is why we are in such a dilemma today: in protecting our principles, we cannot fully live up to our principles and our mission of uniting all the athletes of the whole world.

The political world is becoming more and more fragmented, hostile and polarised.

If we do not resist these forces of division, our Olympic Movement will become a part of this antagonistic zero-sum political game. We must do everything in our power to not become a victim of these confrontational political forces.

Therefore we need ourselves to answer the question: what future for the Olympic Movement do we want?

Do we want our Olympic Movement to be pulled apart and divided by political pressure?

Or do we stay committed to our Olympic mission to unite the entire world in peaceful competition?

So I ask each and every one of you: what Olympic future do you want?

Which path do we choose?

The path of division – or the path of unity?

For the IOC, for the vast majority among us here, for the International Federations and for me personally, the answer is crystal clear:

We do not want to be pulled apart and divided. We want to live up to our Olympic peace mission.

This path of unity and peace is what the Olympic Movement stands for.

We all have our feelings and emotions about the war in Ukraine. We all feel the urge to help in face of the human tragedy that is taking place there.

We feel the pain of the Ukrainian athletes and of all the Ukrainian Olympic community, who are suffering day after day from this cruel war. We are saddened to realise that we cannot take all of this pain away. All the more so we are committed to our solidarity efforts to help our Ukrainian friends in every way we can. For this, during my visit to Kyiv this summer, we have tripled our solidarity fund for Ukraine. This solidarity as well as our other measures were greatly appreciated by the athletes, by the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine and by the highest authorities of the country.

In this context I would like to thank so many of you, NOCs and IFs, who have been overwhelming us with their demonstration of solidarity, which comes in many cases on top of this fund.

I am sure I can speak for all of you that we will continue this solidarity effort by the entire Olympic community and we will continue to stand at the side of the Ukrainian athletes so that we can welcome a strong team from the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine at Paris 2024 and Milano Cortina 2026.

When it comes to our actions as the Olympic Movement as a whole, we have to be guided by our mission and by our principles. We have to act in order to protect the mission of the Olympic Movement and that is to be a unifying –not a dividing– force in our already too fragmented world.

All this is taking place in a time when there is a new world order in the making. We can see already today that this new world order will be more divisive than the one we are striving for.

This unfortunate trend alerts us in the Olympic Movement because it is going against our mission to unite the world. But exactly in these divisive and confrontational times, people around the world are looking for a unifying force. A unifying force that brings humankind together. And this the Olympic Movement can offer: We unite the entire world in peaceful competition.

Together with all people of goodwill, we want to make our humble contribution to peace.

We did so right here on the Korean Peninsula not so long ago. The Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 were on the brink because of the threat of war and confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, just a few months before the opening.

By standing together and by always acting according to our principles we overcame these challenges.

What began as a seemingly insurmountable situation ended with the unforgettable joint march of the athletes of the NOCs of South and North Korea at the Opening Ceremony.

It ended with the unified women's ice hockey team showing the world the unifying power of sport.

It ended with the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 sending a powerful message of peace from the Korean Peninsula to the world.

Even more recently, we faced the global pandemic and its consequences. Also during this dark time, we managed to significantly strengthen the relevance of sport and of our values in society.

We did so by highlighting the contribution of sport to physical and mental health.

We did so by promoting the great social significance of sport as the glue which bonds communities together.

We did so by emphasising the economic contribution of sport.

We did so by successfully and safely organising two editions of Olympic Games during the global pandemic, thereby sending a powerful message of hope, resilience, solidarity and peace to the world.

We could achieve all this only by being foresightful and by being united as one Olympic Movement.

When we show this unity and foresight also in the context of the war in Ukraine, I am very confident that we can overcome this challenge also and yes, that we can also overcome our dilemma.

But how?

First and foremost, we must stay united. This is why I would like to thank very much all the NOCs, the IFs and all the athletes that have been following our recommendations with regard to the sanctions and to the protective measures.

At the same time I call on everybody in the Olympic Movement – and I call especially on each and every NOC: do not divide our one Olympic Movement.

Choose the path of unity and peace.

Please always keep our Olympic mission in your minds and in your hearts. Always remember that we are a global movement. The Olympic Movement is universal. This

means that all of you are first and foremost a member of our worldwide Olympic Movement.

Keep this in mind and always remember that you, your autonomy, your athletes could be the next in line to be sanctioned for political reasons.

Secondly we have to act with foresight, we have to be pro-active. To protect and defend our autonomy, we have to convince the political leaders of this world of the importance of our unifying mission.

We have to convince them that sport must be something that binds us together despite all the disputes and differences we can have. We have to convince them not to cut this precious bond. This precious bond which they have been celebrating in the past in countless declarations.

To be able to convince them of this unifying power of sport, we need first of all to stay united among ourselves. We have together to resist any attempt to divide our Olympic Movement.

In a time when we are facing too many divisions and conflicts, in a time when we are facing too much confrontation and too many wars, in such a fragile and turbulent time, I am sure that all of you, all the NOCs of the world, will join me in our call to all political leaders of this world – the call that I already made at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022: Give peace a chance!

The unifying mission and the contribution to peace by our Olympic Movement is mentioned by many leaders in politics and sport I talk to.

Many of them and so many of you have expressed the hope – and some even the confidence – that sport can contribute to change this confrontational mindset; that the

great symbol of the Olympic Games can inspire political leaders to think about pathways to peace and cooperation instead of war and division.

In this true Olympic spirit of solidarity and peace, I invite you all to join hands, to stand united with confidence in each other, as we have been doing so well in the past years.

Let us not divide our precious Olympic Movement. Let us together walk this path of unity and peace. Let us together live up to our Olympic mission.

Keep following the sanctions and protective measures. Do not do less, because doing less means you divide the Olympic Movement. Do not do more, because doing more means you divide the Olympic Movement.

Based on such a strong foundation of unity, we can look forward to the development of the Olympic Movement with great confidence.

We know that the challenges will not diminish, but we have been preparing for this as much as we could. As we said already in April 2020 at the outbreak of the pandemic: even once we have overcome the health crisis, we will have to face the far-reaching social, financial, economic and political consequences. They are now exacerbated by the consequences of the war.

Because we stood together in unity and with foresight, we were able to seize the opportunities that these crises offered to us.

This was in large part thanks to the great success of the unprecedented cycle of three consecutive editions of Olympic Games in Asia: 2018 in Korea, 2020 in Japan, 2022 in China. Building on this great success we have not only brought stability to our Movement. The success allowed us to emerge from these crises even stronger than before.

Just how successful this Asian cycle was, is illustrated by the latest global broadcast audience figures. The Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 were the most digitally engaged Olympic Winter Games ever, with more than 2 billion people watching globally across linear TV and digital platforms.

These latest figures build on the preceding record figures from the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

Yes, each of these Olympic Games faced unprecedented challenges. Political conflict and tensions. A global pandemic, that still is ongoing as we speak. And yet, each in their own unique way, these three successive Olympic Games editions have shown what we can achieve together when we act with foresight, with solidarity and in unity. This is why I would like to once again express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all of you, and in particular to our Olympic friends in Asia – thank you to our Olympic friends in Korea, Japan and China. Thank you for writing Olympic history. We did it. We did it for the athletes. We did it together.

Because of this unity and foresight, we are facing these turbulent times from a position of strength and stability.

How important this position of strength and stability is for our Olympic Movement is highlighted by the worsening global economic situation. Inflation, exponentially rising energy costs and recession are exacerbating the social, financial and political pressures from the COVID-crisis, causing hardship and affecting the lives of people everywhere. The Olympic Movement is not spared from this reality. But thanks to our position of strength and stability, you can continue to count on the IOC in these turbulent times:

The IOC will fully deliver on its financial commitments that we made to you.

This is also true for our Olympic Solidarity budget, which we even increased for this Olympiad by 16 per cent to a total of 590 million dollars. All of the NOCs, all of the IFs, all of the athletes benefit from this funding. Also here, we acted with foresight to be prepared for an unpredictable future; so that we would be in a position to give financial security to the Olympic community when times get rough. And times are rough now.

Therefore our stable situation is by no means a foregone conclusion. We are where we are today thanks to the collective and concerted effort by all of us. In this fragile world, the stability that we are enjoying is perhaps the strongest currency that you can have. Not many other organisations can claim to have this strong currency of stability in our volatile times.

This volatility also means that each one of you faces different circumstances and different challenges.

Therefore each one of you has to be prudent. It is in your own interest to now look into all your actions and now set clear priorities. Review now all your planned activities and decide whether every event, every competition, every meeting is really necessary given the precarious situation the world economy is and will be facing.

Such a review of our actions is prudent not only from a financial perspective. In our interconnected world, we are also facing interconnected challenges. The climate crisis is one such urgent global challenge.

This is why in line with our Olympic Agenda 2020+5, we undertook an in-depth review of our activities not only from an economic standpoint, but especially with a view to reduce our carbon emissions. Today the IOC is already a carbon-neutral organisation. And we are committed to becoming a climate-positive organisation by 2024. To achieve this we have already reduced our carbon footprint significantly and are committed to reach our target of a 50 per cent reduction by 2030. Likewise, all upcoming editions of

the Olympic Games are already committed to be carbon-neutral. Going further, we will require all Olympic Games to be climate-positive at the latest from 2030 onwards.

I can only urge all of you to do the same: review all your sport events, your competitions, meetings and all your activities not only from a financial perspective but also with the aim to reduce your, to reduce our collective carbon footprint. In doing so, you will be showing solidarity, in particular with your fellow NOCs who are threatened in their very existence by the climate crisis. In this sense, all of us share a double-responsibility – the responsibility to ensure the financial sustainability of sport and the responsibility to safeguard the sustainable future of our planet.

To state the obvious: the two are inextricably linked.

The effects that climate change is having already now is especially obvious in winter sports.

Global warming is making it more and more difficult in many areas of the world to enjoy winter sports in a responsible and sustainable way. This is why we have asked our Future Host Commission to look into the consequences of climate change for winter sport and what it means not only for hosting winter sport events but also for the legacy and sustainability of such events. We can only encourage all stakeholders to benefit from this expertise before they take far-reaching decisions on their winter sport competitions. We would have appreciated it, if such a consultation would have taken place with regard to one or the other recent decision in this respect.

In order for us to better address global challenges, our Olympic Agenda 2020+5 is focused on strengthening the role of sport as an important enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Again, all of us need to play our part when it comes to the realisation of the SDGs. This is why it is so encouraging that just this year already 120 new projects have been initiated by National Olympic Committees from around the world, focused on promoting community cohesion, health, well-being and the Olympic values.

With Olympism 365, we have established a framework to strengthen partnerships with NOCs and development institutions in areas such as education, gender equality, climate action, and many more.

With Olympic Agenda 2020+5, we have also committed to strengthen our credibility and integrity – because we know that our ability to make the world a better place through sport rests on our credibility.

In this context, the IOC Strategic Framework on Human Rights is an important milestone. The Framework details how we are further embedding human rights within our remit, across our three spheres of responsibility. This will fundamentally shape the working practices of the IOC, the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement. It is important to emphasise that with this Framework, we are fully abiding by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. These UN Guiding Principles confirm our position that we can only be held responsible for something related to our remit. These UN Principles make it clear that we cannot be held responsible for any human rights issues that take place in a country. These UN Principles are explicit that any issues beyond the remit of the respective organisation is the responsibility of the governments.

The same is true for you. Your governments cannot task you and your athletes to solve problems that generations of politicians have not been able to solve. I can only encourage you to follow the IOC Strategic Framework on Human Rights within your remit. They provide a clear and unambiguous way forward. They are another contribution of the entire Olympic Movement to the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Olympic Agenda 2020+5 is also driving the digitalisation of the Olympic Movement. One of the many actions in this regard will be the second edition of the Olympic Esport Series, a unique digital experience to grow direct engagement with new audiences in virtual sports.

And we will go even a step further. In 2023, we will have a true festival around this Olympic Esport Series, getting all stakeholders together to celebrate the Olympic spirit also in this virtual world.

These are just a few examples to illustrate that implementing Olympic Agenda 2020+5 is well underway. We had to hit the ground running, because the global pandemic and the geopolitical situation have confronted the entire world and us in the Olympic Movement with unprecedented challenges. Here again – it is only thanks to our foresight and unity that allows us to look to the future with great confidence.

The Olympic Games Paris 2024 will mark the beginning of a new era: Olympic Games inspired by and aligned with Olympic Agenda from start to finish.

They will be more inclusive, more youthful, more urban, more sustainable and the very first with full gender parity. And all of this in one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

We can already look forward to a stunning Opening Ceremony, with hundreds of thousands of people welcoming and celebrating the best athletes of the world along the river Seine, with iconic landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower or Notre Dame cathedral as backdrops – a perfect reflection of our vision for innovative, spectacular, inclusive Olympic Games, offering an outstanding athletes' experience.

Paris 2024 is also setting the bar with its ambitious climate goals, aiming to become the first climate-positive Olympic Games in history, even 6 years ahead of our timeline.

We can also look forward with great confidence to the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. The extensive use of existing venues significantly reduces cost, carbon footprint, and ensures legacy, thereby achieving three sustainable effects at the same time. Yes, there are challenges we have to face, in particular in light of the difficult global financial and economic situation. But we also know about the enthusiasm, the efficiency and the dedication of our Italian friends. This is why we are very confident that we will celebrate excellent Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026, which will vibrate with the Olympic spirit, with the Italian passion for sport, with the Italian culture, with the Italian way of life.

Already in early 2024, we will have the great privilege to enjoy the great hospitality and the outstanding organisational skills of our Korean Olympic friends again when we celebrate the Winter Youth Olympic Games Gangwon 2024, as another example of a great positive Olympic legacy.

In 2026, we will celebrate together a first in Olympic history by having the first Olympic event ever on African soil: the Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026. We are all looking forward to this festival of youth sport and the “ubuntu” spirit of African culture which our friends from Senegal will offer us.

The Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028 will combine Olympic innovation with Olympic legacy, guided by the vision to organise fiscally and environmentally responsible Olympic Games.

Just like the Olympic Games LA 1984 made history as the first Olympic Games to be staged without government funding, LA28 will be entirely privately funded. Demonstrating the value of Olympic Agenda, LA28 will be the first Games that will only use existing or temporary facilities, capitalising on the city's numerous cutting-edge stadiums and iconic legacy venues from the Olympic Games 1932 and 1984. And I fully

trust that LA will build on the great work being done in Paris when it comes to ambitious reductions of its carbon footprint.

With regard to the Olympic Winter Games 2030, we are on track to take a decision on the host next year. Here we are privileged to have three very strong interested parties, all of whom are former hosts of Olympic Winter Games.

They obviously know about the positive legacy of the Games and are clearly inspired by the focus on sustainability and legacy of Olympic Agenda.

The Olympic Games Brisbane 2032 will be inspiring the next generation of youth. Already now, the Brisbane 2032 vision plan fits perfectly into long-term strategies for social and economic development in Queensland and Australia. They fully reflect the goals of Olympic Agenda 2020+5 for sustainable and economically responsible Olympic Games.

Even the race for the Olympic Games 2036 is on with an unprecedented high number of interested NOCs already 14 years before the Games.

With this foresight and with this unity, we have every reason to be confident in the bright future of our beloved Olympic Movement.

So let us continue this journey together.

Let us go faster, let us aim higher, let us become stronger – together.