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Press release

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Lillehammer 2016 celebrates one-year-on successes while athletes set sights on PyeongChang 2018

One year ago today on 21 February 2016, the flame of the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Lillehammer 2016 was extinguished after 10 days of competition, but the city, nation and participants continue to reap the benefits of the Winter YOG, while many of the rising stars make steps towards Olympic Winter Games success.

An NOK 20 million (USD 2.4 million) surplus from the Games has recently been announced by the Norwegian Olympic Committee (NIF), consisting of profit and the state guarantee, all of which will go back into the national sports system. In addition to the NOK 1 million contribution from the International Olympic Committee, NOK 6 million of the surplus has been pledged to the new Lillehammer Legacy Centre, a place where young people can come to be educated and train for their future careers in sport; NOK 11 million will go to a youth volunteer fund; NOK 2 million to healthy eating workshops; and the remaining NOK 1 million will support a biennial youth games and a youth volunteer conference.

Internationally, young athletes from Lillehammer 2016 continue to strive on the world stage. Sixty-four athletes made the jump from the first YOG in Innsbruck in 2012 to the Olympic Winter Games Sochi 2014. This number of YOG athletes is set to increase at PyeongChang 2018, with athletes such as Alpine skier Mélanie Meillard (SUI) who, since winning Youth Olympic gold, is now a serious contender on the FIS World Cup circuit; US snowboarder Chloe Kim, who went straight on to pick up another X Games gold; and YOG cross country champion Magnus Kim (KOR) has continued his winning streak as recently as this week, claiming gold at the Asian Winter Games 2017.

All existing venues of the Olympic Winter Games Lillehammer 1994 used and upgraded for Lillehammer 2016 continue to be used for national and international events. As a further boost to the '94 legacy, which saw the original Main Media Centre transformed into a University College for the city that now hosts almost 5,000 students, a Youth Olympic Village was constructed for Lillehammer 2016 with the help of an IOC NOK 108 million contribution, and now provides home to some 360 students.

IOC President Thomas Bach said: "With the success of the Winter Youth Olympic Games Lillehammer 2016, the legacy of 1994 has passed to the next generation. Lillehammer 2016 showed us all the power of sport to inspire young people. This is what the YOG is all about. The YOG will be remembered as the moment that launched the sporting careers of many young athletes; and, thanks to the innovative YOG programme, a new generation of



leaders is looking to the future with confidence, making the world a better place through sport.”

Lillehammer 2016 CEO Tomas Holmestad commented: “Here in Lillehammer the Youth Olympic Games have contributed lots to the city. The Winter YOG have made the Lillehammer region into a centre for winter sport in Norway and almost in the world – a true legacy from the Games. The Olympic venues from 1994 are being used every day and [after the refurbishment for YOG 2016] I know that for another 20 years that they will be operational and fully up-to-date.”

With the strong support of government and the National Olympic Committee (NIF) from the outset, Lillehammer 2016 was central to a 10-year plan to boost youth sport nationwide by not only supporting young athletes, but also producing the next generation of coaches, leaders and volunteers, while creating new competencies and enthusiasm for sport, both regionally and nationally. This goal is already starting to come to fruition as the 230 young leaders and change-makers involved in the Games from all 19 counties continue to be active in their fields and their communities.

Lillehammer 2016 was also used as a showcasing of sports and new innovations to inspire the young spectators, with 21,000 schoolchildren enjoying their “Dream Day” at the Games. Over 200,000 spectators experienced top-level sports competition and the “Sjoggfest” concept, which offered hundreds of cultural and music acts and included the “Try the Sport” initiative, which saw 22,000 taking part.

Echoing the Games slogan “Go beyond. Create tomorrow”, Mayor Espen Granberg Johnsen commented: “If you give the responsibility to the youth from day one, if you trust them and believe in them, they will show to you that they will succeed. That was what we saw last winter and what will mean a lot to us in years to come.”

Lausanne, Switzerland, will host the next Winter Youth Olympic Games in January 2020.

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The International Olympic Committee is a not-for-profit independent international organisation made up of volunteers, which is committed to building a better world through sport. It redistributes more than 90 per cent of its income to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of 3.25 million US dollars goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world.

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