The International Olympic Committee (IOC) OFFERS THE FOLLOWING VIDEO NEWS RELEASE TO ALL NEWS AGENCIES, BROADCASTERS AND ALL ONLINE PLATFORMS FREE OF CHARGE.

Story Headline: IOC President Thomas Bach officially invites athletes to compete at the 23rd Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 as the South Korean countdown clock hits one year to go.

Location: Gangneung Hockey Centre, Gangwon Province, South Korea & IOC headquarters, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Date: 9th February 2017

STORY SCRIPT
The countdown to the 23rd Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 in South Korea is officially underway with IOC President Thomas Bach signing invitations to winter athletes and their National Olympic Committees.

An official ‘Year-to-Go’ ceremony held in Gangneung, one of the two locations that will host the fifteen Olympic winter sports, also marked the twelve month countdown to February 9th 2018 when the Olympic flame will arrive in the mountainous Gangwon Province for the start of 17 days of winter Games.

Speaking at the ceremony in a video message, President Bach said: “The Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 will open up new horizons. It will connect the people and the passion of the Republic of Korea with the world.”

The event, attended by IOC Coordination Commission Chair Gunilla Lindberg and representatives of the government of the Republic of Korea, showcased ski performances and a joint musical K-pop and choir concert. It also included the unveiling of the PyeongChang 2018
Olympic Torch and torchbearer uniforms.

91,000 applications have already been received for the 22,400 Olympic volunteer places that will need to be filled and over 20 test events are planned for the Korean facilities before the Games get underway next year.

Planning and construction of new infrastructure for the 23rd Olympic Winter Games are also transforming the region with a new high-speed train connection bring the Eastern and Western parts of the country together. Thirteen state-of-the-art sports venues are being prepared and new hotels and tourist facilities under construction in both PyeongChang and Gangneung.

The Republic of Korea has participated in 18 editions of the Winter Olympic Games since 1948 but never hosted them.

Eight new medal events at PyeongChang will take the total of gold medal events to 102, more than any previous Olympic Winter Games, and the first time in history that the number will have exceeded 100.

Korean figure skating legend Yuna Kim and US Alpine skier Lindsey Vonn are spearheading a team of official PyeongChang 2018 ambassadors already raising the profile of the next Winter Olympic Games.
END