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**Story Headline:** IOC President holds Fruitful Talks in Pyongyang with Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un. DPRK Commits to participation in Future Olympic Games.

**Location:** Pyongyang, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

**Date:** 31st March 2018

**STORY SCRIPT**

IOC President Thomas Bach was in the North Korean capital Pyongyang on Friday for meetings with political and sports leaders.

Following an extensive ‘four eyes’ meeting with Kim Jong-un it was confirmed that the country is committed to athletes competing at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, as well as the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires Summer 2018 and the Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne Winter 2020.

Mr Bach said: “It is the mission of the International Olympic Committee always to build bridges, and by building these bridges through sport we hope that we can also make a contribution to the ongoing political talks, which are now underway, and which we are very happy about, and hope
that they will lead, in the Olympic Spirit, to a peaceful future for the Korean peninsula."

The Supreme Leader also praised President Bach and the IOC for the role they had played in mediating and bringing about an agreement for the participation of the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

During the visit, which came at the invitation of the DPRK NOC, President Bach expressed his appreciation for the participation of the DPRK NOC athletes at the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

“In particular, the joint march sent a strong message of peace,” President Bach said. “Now, on the political level, the discussions can continue in the Olympic spirit of understanding and peace. We will continue to accompany this political dialogue through sport, by helping athletes to prepare for and compete in future editions of the Olympic Games.”

This support has already begun, with immediate assistance to athletes from the DPRK NOC to compete in the table tennis World Championships, which are taking place in Sweden this April.
Earlier in the day, President Bach met representatives of the DPRK NOC, led by its President, Kim Il-guk, who is also the country's Sports Minister. In a packed agenda, President Bach also discussed the IOC's support for the athletes and sport in the country with the two Vice-Chairmen of the Workers' Party, Choe Hwi, who is also Chairman of the National Sports Guidance Committee, and Choe Ryong-hae, who is also Vice-Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK.

The visit finished with a dinner hosted by the President of the Praesidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Yong-nam, who had led the DPRK delegation to the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

As well as discussing help for and future participation of athletes, President Bach visited several sporting facilities in an impressive city centre complex, where he met athletes, Olympians and future potential competitors in the Olympic Games in swimming, weightlifting and table tennis. He also met the figure skating pair, Ryom Tae-ok and Kim Ju-sik, who had competed in the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

Bach said: “We will help them to participate in international competitions and if they want, also to have training camps outside the country and competitions so that they can gather as much international experience as possible and to be then perfectly prepared to participate in the Olympic Games and maybe, like the table tennis players, winning medals in the
Olympic Games. I think this would be the greatest experience for these athletes.”

President Bach was accompanied throughout the visit by the IOC Member from North Korea, Professor Ung Chang.

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