IOC CONTINUES WITH DIALOGUE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Delegations From North and South Korea, China and Japan Invited to Lausanne for Olympic Day

During talks between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) President, Thomas Bach, and the President of South Korea, Moon Jae-in, and later with the leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Un, both leaders asked the IOC to continue to support the peace process with actions in sport. President Bach committed to this, and has invited delegations from North and South Korea - and also from China and Japan, who are the next Olympic hosts and neighbouring countries.

As well as officials from the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), top-level athletes from the four countries will take part in a friendly mixed table tennis exhibition in celebration of sport’s unique ability to build bridges and cultivate sportsmanship, which can translate into all areas of life.

Speaking about the announcement, IOC President Thomas Bach said: “This meeting is another step by Olympic sport to promote dialogue on and around the Korean peninsula. The joint march at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 showed the world the role that the Olympic Movement can play in opening the door to peace. Sport must continue to build bridges and show what it can do to bring people together. Japan and China will be the next hosts of the Olympic Games and Olympic Winter Games, and these mixed teams including athletes from North and South Korea, Japan and China, and the exhibition match, give us a glimpse of how sport can unite and make a contribution to changing the world through sport.”
During a recent visit to North Korea by the IOC President, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un fully committed to the participation of athletes from his country in the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 and the next editions of the Youth Olympic Games, in Buenos Aires this year and Lausanne in 2020. The IOC is already working on a special programme to allow North Korean athletes to prepare and qualify for the upcoming Olympic Games.

The IOC will be able to discuss further progress toward this participation with all the partners concerned. The talks will take place in the Olympic Capital, where the Lausanne declaration was signed on 20 January this year. That agreement made possible the participation of athletes from North Korea at the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 and the joint march at the Opening Ceremony.

The athletes taking part in the exhibition tournament are:

- Chinese Olympic gold medallists from Rio 2016 Ms Ning Ding and Mr Long Ma;
- South Korean Olympic bronze medallist in Athens (2004) and Beijing (2008) Ms Kyungah Kim, and Olympic gold medallist in Athens and IOC Member Mr Seung Min Ryu;
- Japanese Olympic silver medallist in London (2012) Ms Ai Fukuhara, and the youngest-ever winner of an ITTF World Tour men’s singles title at only 14, Mr Tomokazu Harimoto;
North Korean Olympic bronze medallist in Rio (2016) Ms Song I Kim, and elite athlete in the ITTF tour Mr Sin Hyok Pak. The athletes will be accompanied by the NOC Presidents of their countries.

Olympic Day is an annual, global celebration that takes place on 23 June to remember the creation of the IOC on 23 June 1894 at the Sorbonne in Paris. Every year, it sees millions of people – of all ages and from all walks of life – get active and participate in sporting, educational and cultural activities, encouraging them to enjoy and benefit from sport.

Additional activities at the Lausanne celebration will include: a traditional Olympic Day Run; a tango demonstration in an Argentine décor as a prelude to the Youth Olympic Games taking place in Buenos Aires in October; live music with Swiss Olympic snowboarder and artist Pat Burgener; and a live broadcast of the Switzerland versus Serbia FIFA World Cup match.

National Olympic Committees, International and National Sports Federations, Organising Committees of Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games, National Olympians Associations and Young Ambassadors around the world have been and are organising and participating in myriad Olympic Day activities to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, in the lead-up to and on 23 June. With the aim of spreading awareness of the core values and ideals of Olympism — and of encouraging the unifying spirit of sport and friendship — festivities include Olympic
Day Runs and multi-sport demonstrations, meeting sporting role models and several other interactive sports competitions and programmes.

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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 3.4 million US dollars goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world.

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