STORY SCRIPT:

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) together with the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Government of Japan have announced that the rescheduled Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will take place from 23 July to 8 August 2021, and the Paralympic Games will take place from 24 August to 5 September 2021.

The rescheduled dates were agreed during a telephone conference call earlier today with IOC President Thomas Bach, Tokyo 2020 President Mori Yoshirō, Tokyo Governor Koike Yuriko and Olympic and Paralympic Minister Hashimoto Seiko.

The new dates are exactly one year after those originally planned for the Olympic Games 2020: 24 July to 9 August 2020 and Paralympic Games: 25 August to 6 September 2020.

Following today’s decision, President Bach said: “I want to thank the International Federations for their unanimous support and the Continental Associations of National Olympic Committees for the great partnership and their support in the consultation process over the last few days.”

“I would also like to thank the IOC Athletes’ Commission, with whom we have been in constant contact. With this announcement, I am confident that, working together with the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the Japanese Government and all our stakeholders, we can master this unprecedented challenge. Humankind currently finds itself in a dark tunnel. These Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 can be a light at the end of this tunnel.”

Andrew Parsons, the President of the IPC, added: “It is fantastic news that we could find new dates so quickly for the Tokyo 2020 Games. The new dates provide certainty for the athletes, reassurance for the stakeholders and something to look forward to for the whole world. When the Paralympic Games do take place in Tokyo next year, they will be an extra-special display of humanity uniting as one, a global celebration of human resilience and a sensational showcase of sport.”

The decision was taken based on three main considerations and in line with the principles established by the IOC Executive Board (EB) on 17 March 2020 and confirmed at its
meeting today. These were supported by all the International Summer Olympic Sports Federations (IFs) and all the National Olympic Committees (NOCs):

1. To protect the health of the athletes and everyone involved, and to support the containment of the COVID-19 virus.

2. To safeguard the interests of the athletes and of Olympic sport.

3. The global international sports calendar.

The decision gives the health authorities and all involved in the organisation of the Games the maximum time to deal with the constantly changing landscape and the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It also has the added benefit that any disruption that the postponement will cause to the international sports calendar can be kept to a minimum, in the interests of the athletes and the IFs. Additionally, they will provide sufficient time to finish the qualification process. The same heat mitigation measures as planned for 2020 will be implemented.

The President of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, Mori Yoshirō, said: “Notwithstanding the postponement of the Olympic and Paralympic Games for the first time in history, and various other issues that have already been highlighted, the event schedule is the cornerstone of future preparations, and I am convinced that taking this decision promptly will help speed up future preparations.”

Governor Koike Yuriko said: “The preparation for the new dates will go smoothly, as the dates match with the same timeframe as the original competition dates, corresponding with ticketing, venue staffing, volunteers and transport. Therefore, I believe that celebrating the opening of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 on 23 July 2021 is ideal.”

It has previously been confirmed that all athletes already qualified and quota places already assigned for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will remain unchanged. This is a result of the fact that these Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, in agreement with Japan, will remain the Games of the XXXII Olympiad.

The Olympic flame, which arrived in Japan on 20 March, will continue to burn in the country until the Olympic Games.

SHOTLIST:

00:02 Various external shots of Olympic House

00:15 SOUNDBITE: IOC President, Thomas Bach (English Language).

Question: What has been decided today?

"Today we have set the dates for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 to be celebrated in the year 2021. For the Olympic Games, from the 23rd July - 8th August and for the Paralympic Games from the 24th August - 5th September."

00:39 SOUNDBITE: IOC President, Thomas Bach (English Language).

Question: Why have you chosen these dates?

“We chose these dates to follow our principles, which we established on 17th March, and this is, first of all, to safeguard the health of anyone involved in the Olympic Games and to make our contribution to the containment of the virus – a fact which has been acknowledged, among many others, by the summit of the G20 just lately. And we had to look into the international sports calendar to maintain the uniqueness of the Olympic Games. With these reasons, we can now look forward to having these Games next
01:45 SOUNDBITE: IOC President, Thomas Bach (English Language).
Question: What are the complexities of rearranging the Games?
This is a huge challenge. It is unprecedented. We don't have a blueprint. We have no experts to refer to. Now, we have to work and we're working already with the International Federations. We have to take the qualification into consideration - what it means for the athletes. We have to see, and in particular the Organising Committee will have to see whether the sports venues are still available. What is happening with all the installations which have already been accomplished for the Games in 2020. We will have to see with regards to the Olympic Village, which is the heart of the Games, to find a good solution there. We have to cooperate with all the broadcasters all over the world to have as many people as possible following these postponed Olympic Games. We have to find agreement with sponsors - they in turn have to adjust their programmes. So, it's really a huge challenge.

03:10 SOUNDBITE: IOC President, Thomas Bach (English Language).
Question: These are dark times. Will these Games provide some hope?
“We are all humankind. We are in a very dark tunnel at this moment in time and we do not know how long this tunnel might be. But we are confident with these Olympic Games at this new date then we can be the light at the end of this dark tunnel and we can therefore give hope to the athletes of the world, but also to the wider public, that there is something happening there next year, which can unite the world and as Prime Minister Abe said, unite the world in celebration of humanity for a victory against this virus.”

04:08 Shot of Tokyo 2020 mascots.
04:13 Sped up time-lapse of building process of Olympic/Paralympic Village, Tokyo, Japan.
04:19 Shots of IOC President Thomas Bach handing over the Olympic flag at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games Rio 2016 to Tokyo Governor Koike Yuriko.
04:29 Mario Kart animation and Prime Minister of Japan Abe Shinzō at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games Rio 2016.

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