

INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Story script and Shot log

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: International Olympic Committee hosts two hour conference call with Athlete Representatives as consultations continue ahead of Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

LOCATION: Lausanne, Switzerland and Harare, Zimbabwe.

DATE: 18 March 2020

LANGUAGE: English

Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: <http://iocnewsroom.com>

STORY SCRIPT:

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has held a call with 220 athlete representatives from around the world in the latest of its consultations with stakeholders ahead of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

The conference call, chaired by Kirsty Coventry, chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission, lasted for more than two hours and the unprecedented number of athlete representatives asked over 40 questions.

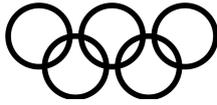
After the call she said: "I think the goal is definitely to get to the 24th July and the Tokyo Olympic Games but we also have to be realistic and not panic at this stage and know that this landscape is changing hourly and daily for everyone around the world and we share the concerns.

"We want to ensure that we are taking part in restricting this virus as much as possible and we are supportive of that, but at the end of the day the goal is to help all of our athletes get to Tokyo."

IOC President Thomas Bach was also on the call. He said: "We aim to continue being very realistic in our analysis so we were confronted with many questions concerning the qualification system and the restrictions in place now, but we were also very constructive in considering the path to Tokyo and everybody realised that we still have more than 4 months to go.

"We will address this action and we will keep acting in a responsible way that is in the interest of the athletes whilst always respecting our two principles. The first priority being the safeguarding and health of the athletes and contributing to the containment of the virus and secondly to protect the interest of the athletes and Olympic sport and this was the spirit of this very productive call."

A number of principles have been established by the IOC Executive Board (EB), together with their implementation in cooperation with all the stakeholders concerned.



The IOC will continue to act as a responsible organisation. In this context, the IOC asks all its stakeholders within their own remits to do everything to contribute to the containment of the virus.

The IOC issued on Tuesday the following communique outlining its position, which was unanimously approved by the IOC EB and supported by all Olympic Summer Sports Federations.

The communique reads:

This is an unprecedented situation for the whole world, and our thoughts are with all those affected by this crisis. We are in solidarity with the whole of society to do everything to contain the virus.

The situation around the COVID-19 virus is also impacting the preparations for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and is changing day by day.

The IOC remains fully committed to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and with more than four months to go before the Games there is no need for any drastic decisions at this stage; and any speculation at this moment would be counter-productive.

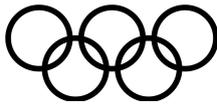
The IOC encourages all athletes to continue to prepare for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 as best they can. We will keep supporting the athletes by consulting with them and their respective NOCs, and by providing them with the latest information and developments, which are accessible for athletes worldwide on the Athlete365 website and via their respective NOCs and IFs.

The IOC has confidence that the many measures being taken by many authorities around the world will help contain the situation of the COVID-19 virus. In this context, the IOC welcomes the support of the G7 leaders as expressed by Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who said: "I want to hold the Olympics and Paralympics perfectly, as proof that the human race will conquer the new coronavirus, and I gained support for that from the G-7 leaders."

We will continue to act in a responsible way and have agreed the following overriding principles about the staging of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020:

1. To protect the health of everyone involved and to support the containment of the virus.
2. To safeguard the interests of the athletes and of Olympic sport.

The IOC will continue to monitor the situation 24/7. Already in mid-February, a task force was set up consisting of the IOC, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, the Japanese authorities and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The purpose of the task force is to ensure coordinated actions by all stakeholders. It has the mission to keep a constant appraisal of the situation to form the basis for the ongoing operational planning and necessary adaptations. The task force also monitors the implementation of the various actions decided. The IOC will continue to follow the guidance of this task force. The IOC's decision will not be determined by financial interests, because thanks to its risk management policies and insurance it will in any case be able to continue its operations and accomplish its mission to organise the Olympic Games.



A number of measures have been taken. The format of all the test events in March and April has been altered to allow for the testing of essential Games elements; the lighting of the Olympic torch in Greece and subsequent elements of the Torch Relay in Japan are being adapted; the entire Games preparation supply chain has been analysed; and alternative plans are in place in the event of anticipated disruption.

At the same time, the topics and issues which were identified by the IOC Coordination Commission for the Games as priorities continue to retain the full attention of Tokyo 2020, the IOC and the Olympic stakeholders. In this respect, work is ongoing for the preparation of athletics road events in Sapporo; heat countermeasures continue to be detailed and refined on a sport-by-sport basis; and transport and crowd movement planning remain a key focus of attention.

Concerning the next meetings, especially the upcoming Coordination Commission visit and various project reviews, adjustments have been made to the agenda and participation. While the activities remain planned on the same dates, the participation in Tokyo will be reduced while ensuring the Coordination Commission members can attend the most important part of the meeting by teleconference. The same will be done for any subsequent visits until further notice.

The day-to-day work between all organisations continues, although on a remote basis. Currently, all Olympic Movement stakeholders and the athletes face significant challenges around securing the final qualification places for the Games. In some countries, athletes are even finding it hard to continue their regular training schedules. The IOC is reassured by the solidarity and flexibility shown by the athletes, the IFs and the NOCs, that are managing these challenges across a number of sports.

To date, 57 per cent of the athletes are already qualified for the Games. For the remaining 43 per cent of places, the IOC will work with the IFs to make any necessary and practical adaptations to their respective qualification systems for Tokyo 2020, in line with the following principles:

1. All quota places that have already been allocated to date remain allocated to the NOCs and athletes that obtained them.
2. The possibility remains to use existing and scheduled qualification events, wherever these still have fair access for all athletes and teams.
3. All necessary adaptations to qualification systems and all allocation of remaining places will be:
 - a) based on on-field results (e.g. IF ranking or historical results); and
 - b) reflect where possible the existing principles of the respective qualification systems (e.g. use of rankings or continental/regional specific event results).

Any increase in athlete quotas will be considered on a case-by-case basis under exceptional circumstances, with the support of the Organising Committee Tokyo 2020.

The IFs will make proposals for any adaptations to their respective qualification systems based on the principles outlined above. The adaptations need to be implemented sport by sport because of the differences between qualification systems. The IOC has already put in place an accelerated procedure to solve this situation. Any necessary revisions to the Tokyo 2020 qualification systems by sport will be published by the beginning of April 2020 and communicated to all stakeholders.



The President of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), Francesco Ricci Bitti, added: "I would like to thank all those involved in the organisation of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and all the athletes and the International Federations for their great flexibility. We share the same approach and the same principles as the IOC, and we are as committed as the IOC to a successful Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. We will keep in touch and have further consultations with all stakeholders concerned."

SHOTLIST:

00:03 Various of IOC President Thomas Bach during the conference call

00:09 Cutaway of conference call phone

00:13 SOUNDBITE: IOC President, Thomas Bach (English Language).

"This situation which is unprecedented is evolving day by day so we will have to keep being flexible, as you have been in the past during the qualification and thank you for this great demonstration of solidarity. Without any complaints you accepted having venues changed for qualifications, having formats changed, accepting social and travel restrictions, travelling through countries and so on and so on. This was really a great demonstration of Olympic spirit and for that I say thank you to all of you."

01:11 SOUNDBITE: IOC President, Thomas Bach (English Language).

Q. Tell us about what just happened in the conference call?

"Well we have just had a really great call with 220 athlete representatives from all around the world, it was very constructive and gave us a lot of insight. We aimed to continue being very realistic in our analysis so we were confronted with many questions concerning the qualification system and the restrictions in place now, but we were also very constructive in considering the path to Tokyo and everybody realised that we still have more than 4 months to go. We will address this action and we will keep acting in a responsible way that is in the interest of the athletes whilst always respecting our two principles. The first priority being safeguarding the health of the athletes and contributing to the containment of the virus and secondly to protect the interest of the athletes and Olympic sport and this was the spirit of this very productive call."

02:42 General shot of Kirsty Coventry, Chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission at desk whilst on the conference call. (Harare, Zimbabwe.)

02:49 SOUNDBITE: Kirsty Coventry, Chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission

"I think the goal is definitely to get to the 24th July and the Tokyo Olympic Games but we also have to be realistic and not panic at this stage and know that this landscape is changing hourly and daily for everyone around the world and we share the concerns, we want to ensure that we are taking part in restricting this virus as much as possible and we are supportive of that, but at the end of the day the goal is to help all of our athletes get to Tokyo."

-- ENDS --

© Copyright International Olympic Committee 2020. This content is the exclusive property of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). It is made available to you for bona fide media reporting purposes on the basis of the [Creative Commons / Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO](#) license terms. All rights reserved.

For more information, please contact the IOC Media Relations Team: Tel: +41 21 621 6000, email: pressoffice@olympic.org, or visit our web site at www.olympic.org.