

Joint Statement from the International Olympic Committee and the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee

The President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, and the Prime Minister of Japan, Abe Shinzo, held a conference call this morning to discuss the constantly changing environment with regard to COVID-19 and the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

They were joined by Mori Yoshiro, the President of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee; the Olympic Minister, Hashimoto Seiko; the Governor of Tokyo, Koike Yuriko; the Chair of the IOC Coordination Commission, John Coates; IOC Director General Christophe De Kepper; and the IOC Olympic Games Executive Director, Christophe Dubi.

President Bach and Prime Minister Abe expressed their shared concern about the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, and what it is doing to people's lives and the significant impact it is having on global athletes' preparations for the Games.

In a very friendly and constructive meeting, the two leaders praised the work of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee and noted the great progress being made in Japan to fight against COVID-19.

The unprecedented and unpredictable spread of the outbreak has seen the situation in the rest of the world deteriorating. Yesterday, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that the COVID-19 pandemic is "accelerating". There are more than 375,000 cases now recorded worldwide and in nearly every country, and their number is growing by the hour.

In the present circumstances and based on the information provided by the WHO today, the IOC President and the Prime Minister of Japan have concluded that the Games of the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021, to safeguard the health of the athletes, everybody involved in the Olympic Games and the international community.

The leaders agreed that the Olympic Games in Tokyo could stand as a beacon of hope to the world during these troubled times and that the Olympic flame could become the light at the end of the tunnel in which the world finds itself at present. Therefore, it was agreed that the Olympic flame will stay in Japan. It was also agreed that the Games will keep the name Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

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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.