



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

## Interview with the IOC President on the current state of preparation for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020

27 February 2020

### **IOC President introduction:**

The preparations for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 are continuing, with a view to having successful Olympic Games this summer in Tokyo and to reassure the athletes and to encourage them to go ahead with full steam with regard to their training and their preparations for what we expect to be very successful Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

**Question: In the last two days, there are so many reports within the Japanese media especially on the internet, citing Mr Dick Pound's interview. The interview itself could be a sound interview, but his comments were taken, especially for the area where first he did set the date and time limit for whether or not to decide on the cancellation of the Games, and the word “cancellation” was everywhere now, even in the Parliament. And also he did talk about a new war as a situation and there are lots of media reports here comparing it to the wartime cancellation. Your response to those, President?**

Answer: I think the facts speak for themselves, and we should also not forget that Dick Pound also said that the IOC is fully committed to have the Opening Ceremony there on July 24th in Tokyo. And this is in fact what we are working for, and we see great unity and solidarity of the Olympic Movement with regard to that, to the preparations for the Games and in particular to the qualification. This is something I must say I'm pretty proud of: to see how so many National Olympic Committees, countries, federations are working together to address the challenge of this virus. Then because you're mentioning these comparisons with a war. I think any comparison with world war is out of all proportion.

**Question: So in theory until when could you wait for the final decision to deliver the Games, or is there any option for cancellation or maybe postponement to next year?**

Answer: You gave the answer yourself: you said “theoretically”, and you will understand that I'm not ready to add fuel to the flames of speculation there in any way. It is about now, not about speculation. What it is now is to ensure the qualification procedure and protecting the safety of the athletes at the same time. This is what we are doing in cooperation with the Japanese authorities. In cooperation with the World Health Organization, also in cooperation with the Chinese Olympic Committee and the authorities and with many NOCs.

Let me give you some examples. Now, the Chinese wrestling team is training in Serbia and travelling from there to the different qualification tournaments. The table tennis team of China is in Qatar. The Chinese women's basketball team is in Croatia. We have managed to move qualification competitions and tournaments within weeks from China to other countries where the safety of the athletes could be ensured.

So based on this, we can really say we are looking forward to successful Olympic Games in Tokyo.



**Question: I just want to confirm the IOC stance at this point, and is there now an option for an alternative plan or having multiple locations, and also is a one-year delay a realistic option?**

Answer: You can ask me in many more ways around; I will not add fuel to the flames of speculation. The IOC, in cooperation with all the authorities and the NOCs, is fully committed to successful Olympic Games in Tokyo starting on the 24 July.

**Question: President, this situation, and now the world trend we seemed to be facing a new aspect, not knowing where these kinds of clusters of viruses might pop up next. So in a way you really have to see it, not a 100 per cent sure solution, but more how you value the risks. What are the things you think is important for Japanese to prepare, as far as what may be the safe condition satisfying the IOC for staging the Games?**

Answer: We have seen the Japanese authorities taking very important measures, just also today. We appreciate that the close cooperation with the Organising Committee, which is doing everything to ensure the safety of the athletes and all the visitors to Japan. We also see in this respect, again, the great solidarity of the world to contribute to the safety of the Games and contribute to successful Games. I gave you some examples already. There are many more.

We see for instance the Chinese Olympic Committee already planning to get almost or if not the entire Olympic team out of the country as soon as possible and then afterwards to get the finally qualified athletes as soon as possible to Japan in order to comply with any medical regulations there may be in place. This determination by Japan and this great solidarity by the sports movement and beyond the sports movement puts us in a position again to say we are continuing our preparations for these are successful Games as planned.

**Question: A lot of speculation has created a big confusion in Japan. So what are your messages to the Japanese people and people around the world who is looking forward to these Olympic Games?**

Answer: The IOC is fully committed to the success of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

**Question: Mr John Coates is a coordination leader for Tokyo 2020, and he answered to the local Australian newspaper that, as Mr Dick Pound said, we need to make a decision in three months' time. But it seems that this is not the official stance of the IOC at the moment, I just want to confirm that?**

Answer: The official position of the IOC is that we are fully committed to the success of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and that we are already now doing everything to ensure not only the success of the Games, but also to ensure the qualification and the preparations of the athletes of the world, because the safety of every participant at the Olympic Games, be it athlete, official, spectator, is the top priority for the IOC and also for the Organising Committee Tokyo 2020.

**Question: So what do you think is the final criteria for making sure the Olympics is on schedule?**

Answer: They are on schedule. The preparation and qualification procedures are going on with great effort, again being made by everybody. By the Organising Committee, by Japan, by China, by the IOC, by a big number of NOCs, and all this again with a view to have then



after, yes, a challenging but nevertheless successful qualification period, then looking forward to celebrate with the Japanese people together, successful Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.