



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach  
President

## Inauguration of Olympic House Lausanne, 23 June 2019

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“Imagine all the people living life in peace.”

This peaceful world, which John Lennon asks us to imagine, this peaceful world is what we all are working for. This is the mission of the International Olympic Committee: to make the world a more peaceful place through sport.

On this very day, 125 years ago, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1894 at the University of Sorbonne in Paris, Pierre de Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee and revived the Olympic Games. He saw this as a way to promote peace among nations and people. He was clearly a visionary, when he said, and I quote: “Should the institution of the Olympic Games prosper, it can become a potent factor in securing universal peace.” End of quote.

Today, 125 years later, this dream lives on. On this important milestone, we can be proud to carry this legacy into the future. This Olympic House, which we are inaugurating today, is a reflection of this mission, of our values.

By bringing the entire world together in peaceful competition, the Olympic Games are a symbol of hope and peace for all humankind. The ones who embody this message are the Olympic athletes. This is why we have among us today, Olympic athletes who represent over 125 Olympic medals. They give the Olympic Games the magic moments that have defined us for 125 years.

Therefore, I say to all my fellow Olympians: welcome home.

Our value of peace is reflected in the design of Olympic House, literally from its foundation right to the sky. A sculpture of the Greek olive tree, an ancient symbol of peace, is at the heart of the building, right at the base of the five-ring staircase that connects everybody in this building. The rooftop takes the shape of a dove, another universal symbol of peace, together with the Olympic rings.



Just as the Olympic Games are a gift for all humankind, this Olympic House is the home for the entire Olympic Movement. This Olympic House is the home for all of us.

To my dear friends and colleagues, the IOC Members; to the 206 National Olympic Committees; to the International Sport Federations; to all of you, the Olympic family gathered here today I say: welcome home.

When we set out on this project to construct a home, we wanted it to be more than just another office building. Of course, we wanted to bring together everyone, the Olympic family and all IOC staff, under one roof. In this sense, the Olympic House is an expression of our unity.

At the same time, we want the Olympic House to incorporate the elements of sustainability, credibility and youth – the same three pillars of Olympic Agenda 2020. The building reflects these three elements that are so central to our mission.

Olympic House takes sustainability to the next level. The building has been constructed according to the highest sustainability standards in every way. We are happy and proud for the recognition that we have received, confirming that this Olympic House is one of the most sustainable buildings in the world.

Transparency is another key element to many of our Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms around credibility and good governance. This is reflected in the building through its glass facade and open office spaces. The whole design is intended to make the building welcoming and to reflect our transparency. Another element of good governance is efficiency. Managing the IOC in the most efficient way is only possible by having everyone united under one roof.

We have also integrated the element of youth in the building. When we started the construction of Olympic House at the end of 2015, we did not lay the traditional foundation stone. Instead, we were looking to the future, by having children create time capsules with their dreams about the Olympic future. These time capsules are featured prominently, placed in the foundation, circling the Olive Tree sculpture at the heart of the building. What is more, the entire design of Olympic House is inspired by the movement of an athlete, by the movement of young people, reflecting their dynamism and agility.



The Olympic House is also a demonstration of our deep bond to Lausanne, the Canton of Vaud and all of Switzerland. In 1915, Pierre de Coubertin, moved the IOC headquarters from Paris to Lausanne, to escape the ravages of World War One. In this way, he wanted to emphasise the political neutrality of the IOC.

Mais, mis à part ces considérations importantes, Pierre de Coubertin avait aussi une grande affection pour la ville, comme il le révélait dans ses écrits, et je cite: « Une ville étalée délicieusement au bord du lac, couronnée de forêts, munie de toutes les possibilités sportives imaginables, était, pour y établir le siège administratif de l'Olympisme, la mieux désignée qui puisse se concevoir ». Fin de citation.

Si je puis me permettre, je partage ces sentiments avec Pierre de Coubertin. À cette époque, comme aujourd'hui, cet environnement est le meilleur endroit pour travailler à rendre le monde meilleur par le sport.

Mais pour une fois, j'ai le sentiment qu'il me faut humblement compléter ce que mon prestigieux prédécesseur a dit. Pour moi, ce sentiment va au-delà de l'environnement physique. Mon affection personnelle porte aussi sur les Lausannois, leur hospitalité et leur gentillesse, que je ressens chaque jour. Du fond du cœur, je tiens à vous remercier de nous tous faire sentir à la maison, ici à Lausanne, ici dans le Canton de Vaud et ici en Suisse.

C'est pourquoi j'adresse mes remerciements à toutes les autorités publiques de la Capitale olympique, du canton de Vaud et de la Confédération suisse: merci pour cette hospitalité merveilleuse qui nous donne confiance dans un avenir fondé sur notre respect et notre affection mutuels.

On our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we clearly see what a great visionary Pierre de Coubertin was.

As we just heard earlier in the song "Imagine", you could say, he was a dreamer.

But he was not the only one.



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All of us assembled here, we are all dreaming this dream. In this Olympic House, we are all working together to make this dream come true.

Carrying this dream into the future, this is the responsibility for all of us.

Obviously, also John Lennon saw it in this way. In his last days, he said, and I quote: "We're not the first to say 'Imagine No Countries' or 'Give Peace a Chance,' but we're carrying that torch, like the Olympic torch, passing it hand to hand, to each other, to each country, to each generation . . . and that's our job." End of quote.

We, the Olympic family are not only dreaming this dream, we are taking on this job. Through the Olympic Games, we invite the entire world to join us.

Therefore, to all of us dreamers, I proudly say: our dream lives on and it is stronger than ever.

Welcome to Olympic House.

Bienvenue à la Maison Olympique qui est votre maison.

Maintenant, j'ai le grand honneur et privilège d'inviter sur scène le Président de la Confédération suisse, Son Excellence Monsieur Ueli Maurer.