

Tokyo 2020 first ever gender-balanced Olympic Games in history, record number of female competitors at Paralympic Games

On International Women's Day, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, the Government of Japan and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) are reiterating their commitment to make the Olympic and Paralympic Games this summer a landmark in gender equality on and off the field of play, paving the way for a more equal and inclusive society.

At the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020:

- Almost 49 per cent of the athletes participating will be women, according to the IOC quota allocation. These will be the first gender-balanced Games in history.
- There will be a ground-breaking competition schedule, ensuring equal visibility between women's and men's events and featuring nine more mixed events than at Rio 2016, raising the overall number to 18.
- For the first time ever, all 206 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) should have at least one female and one male athlete in their respective Olympic teams.
- All 206 NOCs and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team will be encouraged to have their flag carried by one female and one male athlete at the Opening Ceremony.

At the Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020:

- At least 40.5 per cent of all the athletes will be women, according to the IPC Qualification Criteria. This equates to 1,782 athletes, an increase on the 1,671 women who competed at Rio 2016 (38.6 per cent).
- At the Opening Ceremony, all the competing National Paralympic Committees will also be encouraged to have their flag carried by one female and one male athlete.

Following the appointment of its new President, Hashimoto Seiko, the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee has increased the size of its Executive Board, bringing the percentage of women to 42 per cent. It has also created a Gender Equality Promotion Team under the leadership of its Sports Director, Kontani Mikako, in order to further promote gender and inclusion initiatives during the Games.

"The IOC is committed to gender equality in all areas, from the athletes competing on and off the field of play to leadership roles in sports organisations", said IOC President Thomas Bach. "With only four months to go until the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, the Olympic Movement is getting ready for a new milestone in its efforts to create a gender-equal sporting world – the first gender-balanced Olympic Games in history."

“Inclusion is at the core of everything the IPC does,” said IPC President Andrew Parsons. “We are constantly striving with our members to increase female participation at all levels of the Paralympic Movement, from athletes to administrators, from coaches to Board members. Tokyo 2020 is on course to have more female athletes compete than any previous Paralympic Games. In less than a decade, we will have increased the number of women competing at the Paralympics by at least 18.7 per cent compared to London 2012. Despite this progress we will not rest on our laurels, and we will continue to work hard with our members to increase women’s participation at all future Games until we reach gender equality.”

“Tokyo 2020 upholds ‘Unity in Diversity’ as an important concept of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It has been making various efforts for this purpose together with the IOC, IPC, TMG and the Government of Japan. Currently, the Gender Equality Promotion Team is actively working to put together possible further action, including proposals for leaving a lasting legacy after the Games. We resolve to make the Tokyo 2020 Games considered as a turning point in history when looking back many years later,” said Tokyo 2020 President Hashimoto Seiko.

“Participation of both women and men in all fields, and the active participation of women will lead to the creation of a prosperous, vibrant and sustainable society and the realisation of a society in which everyone can live comfortably,” said Marukawa Tamayo, Minister for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, Minister in charge of Women's Empowerment and Minister of State for Gender Equality. “To re-acknowledge the importance of unity in diversity throughout the world and to make the Tokyo Games an opportunity to develop a harmonious and inclusive society, the Government of Japan, together with the IOC, IPC, TMG and the Tokyo Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, will pledge to make the Tokyo Games the all-time best in terms of gender equality; promote gender equality in the field of sport; and support women affected largely by the pandemic.”

Koike Yuriko, the Governor of Tokyo, said: “The Tokyo 2020 Games uphold ‘Unity in Diversity’ as one of the primary concepts. The TMG has also been engaging in fostering the public’s awareness towards human rights by enacting the ‘Ordinance aiming for realisation of the concept of respect for human rights as stipulated in the Olympic Charter’. Furthermore, the promotion of women’s active participation in society is positioned as one of the vital tasks of the TMG, and we are determined to continue to work on various measures extensively. We would like to make these Games an opportunity for the concepts of diversity and respect for human rights to take further root in society. We will make this a legacy and build a better future based on it. The TMG, together with the IOC, IPC, Japanese Government and Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, will aim to realise Games with the concept of unity in diversity.”