NEWSLETTER
OF AFRICA'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES

TOKYO 2020

ACNOA – ANOCA

N°002

AFRICA IN TOKYO

Tokyo 2020...
for Africa that wins!

TOKYO 2020...FOR AFRICA THAT WINS!

Dear readers ;

The 32nd summer Olympic games of modern era officially started last Friday with an opening ceremony which brought together 206 participating delegations march-passing. These Games which were postponed for a year officially started 2 873 days after the designation of Tokyo as host city on 7 September 2013 in Buenos Aires. Needless to remind the very difficult context within which this event is being held and which is marked by the Covid-19 crisis, which compelled the IOC to postpone this competition which was previously scheduled for 2020. The great opening parade which took place within the Tokyo National Olympic Stadium displayed through a multicoloured show, Japan's main features, notably its high

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acquired technological level where, at the heart of the night, ***« the earth »*** appeared in the city's sky. A performance which was made possible thanks to the exceptional coordination of 1 800 drones. Tokyo set the tone of these summer Olympic Games; a foretaste of this feast which, for two weeks, will bring together participants from all over the planet. Tokyo 2020 is also somehow celebrating life, because in spite of Covid-19's several waves, the world of sports did not succumb, it showed proof of resilience. It is also the crowning of one man's dynamism and resolve who believed in these games and who succeeded in finding the best strategy to stage them despite the adverse health context; this man is no other than IOC President, our dear friend Dr. Thomas Bach. On this 23 July, we all witnessed this Japanese show where an outstanding cocktail of fireworks made us dream. We were charmed by an impressive artistic choreography.

The delegation's march-pass which followed was a wonderful moment of sharing and a blend of cultures. African various delegations showed the the rest of the world an image of a proud continent, visibly aiming at peoples' emancipation. These nations' performance proved that in Africa, origin, religion or colour don't matte. Only sport counts.

I am proud, with the entire ANOCA family, that all of Africa got mobilized for this great Olympic family ; this is testimony of our continent' vitality, its rich human resources, its talents and its confidence in the future.

The message sent by Africa

sounded loudly and clearly: our continent traveled to Tokyo to give a positive image, to make its voice heard both in the cultural and sporting aspects.

I would also like to hail the presence in this ceremony of various continental political, diplomatic and sports authorities

Dear readers; during these Games, Africa intends to portray to the world a true image of its sports potentials ; we will more thane ver before assert our presence among sporting nations. I wish good luck to all African nations who, despite the trying health situation, trained well with the assistance of ANOCA, governments, continental sports confederations, their trainers and various partners. I would also like to hail the presence in this ceremony of various continental political, diplomatic and sports authorities which, through this gesture, confirmed that united, Africans may contemplate these Games with serenity and optimism.

I call on you to discover this first issue of **« *Africa at Tokyo 2020* »**, the event's newsletter ANOCA intends to publish here in the Japanese capital to brief you on the latest developments regarding Africa's participation in these Olympic Games. This first issue, as to stick to the context, is fully devoted to the Games' opening ceremony and to ANOCA's activities on Japanese soil.

Enjoy your reading !

Mustapha Berraf,
IOC Member,
ANOCA President

INSIDE THE OPENING CEREMONY

Highlights of a beautiful Olympic celebration

The Tokyo Olympic Games were formally declared open on 23 July 2021. Due to the health context, the opening ceremony was very restrained but beautiful. It took place in the presence of a thousand of personalities, since spectators were not allowed in this magnificent Olympic stadium hosting the event. Among personalities present we had French President Emmanuel Macron, IOC President, Dr. Thomas Bach, United States First Lady Jill Biden, and Japan's Emperor Naruhito, just to name a few.

«I now declare open the Tokyo Games», Japan's Emperor Naruhito said solemnly, according to the established formula expected by athletes.

Covid-19 was present throughout this opening ceremony as it featured in various speeches and even in some performances. We saw nurses and health personnel carrying the Olympic flag right to the mast where i twill be flying for two weeks ; a video showing athletes training alone, referring

to competitions which were suddenly brought to a halt by the pandemic, and an unprecedented march-pass of athletes all wearing masks.

This health context was also reminded by IOC President, Dr. Thomas Bach who saluted Japan's and athletes' resilience: ***« Today is a moment of hope. Yes, it is very different from what all of us had imagined. But let us cherish this moment because finally we are all here together [...]This feeling of togetherness – this is the light at the end of the dark tunnel of this pandemic»***, he said. The 32nd edition of these Olympic Games' curtain raiser lasted for 3 hours and a half and included fireworks, modern dance episods, technological prowess with the terrestrial globe appearing in Tokyo sky using drones, Japanese crafts an even humour with pictogram mimics representing all disciplines on the Games programme.

Then, a video showing many athletes was screened, first recalling the moment back in 2013 when the Tokyo's application was chosen for the 2020 Games, before moving to pictures of a world silenced by the pandemic.

Tennis woman Naomi Osaka is the person who lit the Olympic bowl at the end of the opening ceremony.

Then followed the march-pass of the 20 delegations; one could see athletes following their flag-bearers, including one lady and one man as henceforth authorized by the IOC.

AFRICA SHINES AT THE GAMES OPENING CEREMONY.

It was 10:46 PM local time, and the whole world's eyes were focused on Japan. Due to the Covid-19 context, barely 1000 spectators including eminent political and sports personalities attended the march-pass of delegations where Africa did not go unnoticed. A gigantic performance, a smooth and relaxed march-pass of delegations, a visually impressive torch lighting as well as an armada of fireworks. It was actually difficult to detect any flaw in the Japan opening ceremony. The delegations' march-pass which followed the opening ceremony was true to tradition. Greece, the cradle of Olympism appeared first before the Refugees' Olympic team,

at the rhythm of video games music such as Mario, Final Fantasy, Sonic, etc.

Of course, this easy-going march pass enabled knowledgeable spectators and viewers to see each country's competitors. A total of 54 African delegations took part in this parade, representing all the continent's NOCs. At each country's appearence, we were able to discover some of its cultural features through their attire. Many of them wore traditional outfits thereby highlighting their potential.

With varied numbers, each

delegation displayed Africa's determination; the continent intends to play a major role during these games. The presence in the grandstand of many dignitaries from the continent who travelled

was testimony of the role of sport in strengthening African unity.

Côte d'Ivo

Botswana

Ethiopia

SECOND ATTENDANCE OF POLITICAL REFUGEES' TEAM

As in Rio in 2016, Tokyo 2020 welcomes again a delegation of refugees' Olympic team. This includes 29 athletes from ten countries, among whom 21 men and 10 women, about 3 times more than Rio wher 10 athletes attended. On their back, instead of the name of each country' the athlete represents, was written in capital letters ROT standing for Refugee Olympic Team. Six of the ten athletes who took part in the Rio Games will again take part in the Tokyo Games.

As a matter of fact, it was at the 2016 Rio Games that for the first time, a team made up of refugees took part in the summer Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) disbursed funds to sponsor this team. For IOC President

Dr. Thomas Bach, ***« We wish to send a message of hope to all refugees in the world. While they have no national team to belong to, no flag to stand behind nor no national anthem, these athletes are welcome to the Olympic Games behind the Olympic flag and anthem (…). They are showing the world that despite untold tragedies they went through, anyone can contribute in society through their talent, their gifts, their strength or their mental skills »***.

In Brazil, 10 sportsmen and women from South Sudan, Syria, RD Congo and Ethiopia were able to participate in athletics, judo and swimming contests. Their flag-bearer was South Sudan born Rose Nathike Lokonyen, 800m specialist. She will still be present this year in Tokyo. Yiech Pur Biel will also attend for the second time. Also hailing from South Sudan, he will contest the 800m race. In August 2020, he was appointed goodwill ambassador for the High Commission for the Refugees (HCR).

The delegation present in Japan also includes an Olympic medal winner, in the person of taekwendo athlete Kimia Alizadeh. Iran's flag bearer in 2016, she was the first Iranian to win an Olympic bronze medal in the under 57 kg category. Kimia Alizadeh found asylum in the Netherlands, then in Germany.

In exclusivity

SPEECH BY IOC PRESIDENT, DR. THOMAS BACH DURING THE TOKYO 2020 OPENING CEREMONY

«Your Majesty, the Emperor,
«Dear Athletes,
«Dear Prime Minister of Japan, Suga Yoshihide,
«Dear Governor of Tokyo, Koike Yuriko,
«Dear President of the Organizing Committee, Hashimoto Seiko,
«Your Excellencies;
«Dear Olympic friends,
«Welcome to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

«Today is a moment of hope. Yes, it is very different from what all of us had imagined. But let us cherish this moment because finally we are all here together: the athletes from 205 National Olympic Committees and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team, living under one roof together in the Olympic Village.

«This is the unifying power of sport. This is the message of solidarity, the message of peace and the message of resilience. This gives all of us hope for our further journey together.

«We can only be all together here, because of you, our gracious hosts, the Japanese people, to whom we would like to express all our appreciation and respect.

«The Organizing Committee and the Japanese authorities at all levels have done extraordinary work for which, on behalf of all the Olympic athletes, I want to express our deepest gratitude.

«Ten years ago, you set out on the journey to bring the Olympic spirit back to Tokyo after the outstanding Olympic Games Tokyo 1964. It was a difficult journey, with unprecedented challenges along the way: first, reconstructing after the Great East Japan Earthquake, then the coronavirus pandemic. This is why our gratitude and admiration for you is even greater.

«We thank all the many unsung heroes, the doctors, nurses and all the Japanese people who contribute to contain the pandemic.

«Special thanks go to the thousands of volunteers who, despite all the challenges they had to face, welcomed us wholeheartedly. You are the best ambassadors for Japan. A big thank you to all volunteers!

«Thank you to all Japanese people for making the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 possible.

«What is true for the perseverance

of the Japanese people is also true for you, my fellow Olympic athletes.

«You had to face great challenges on your Olympic journey. Like all of us, you were living with great uncertainty through the pandemic. You did not know when you could train again. You did not know whether you could see your coach tomorrow. You did not know if your teammates would be with you for the next competition. You did not even know if this competition would take place at all.

we need more solidarity. More solidarity within societies, and more solidarity among societies

«You struggled, you persevered, you never gave up, and today you are making your Olympic dream come true.

«You are true Olympic athletes.

«You inspired us, the IOC and the entire Olympic community. You inspired us to fight like you, and for you, to make this moment possible.

«This is why I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations, all our TOP partners and sponsors and our Rights-Holding Broadcasters for standing together with us.

«This made all of us a true community – the Olympic community.

«Dear athletes.

«This Olympic community is with you tonight and during these Olympic Games. Billions of people from around the globe will be glued to their screens, sending you their enthusiasm, their energy and cheering you on.

«Our Olympic community learned that we can address the many big challenges of our times only if we stand together.

«The lesson we learned is: we need more solidarity. More solidarity within societies, and more solidarity among societies.
«Solidarity means more than just respect or non-discrimination.

«Solidarity means helping, Sharing, Caring.

«This is what we are doing in our Olympic community. We are standing in solidarity to make the Olympic Games happen and to enable all of you, the athletes from all National Olympic Committees, whether big or small, whether rich or poor, and from all Olympic sports, to take part in the Olympic Games.

«This solidarity fuels our mission to make the world a better place through sport. Only because of this solidarity we can be here together tonight.

«Solidarity also reflects our 3000-year-old Olympic commitment to peace.

«Without solidarity, there is no peace.

«In this Olympic spirit of solidarity and peace, we welcome the IOC Refugee Olympic Team.

«Dear refugee athletes.

«With your talent and human

spirit, you are demonstrating what enrichment refugees are for society. You had to flee from your homes because of violence, hunger or just because you were different. Today, we welcome you with open arms and offer you a peaceful home. Welcome to our Olympic community.

we are so grateful to you, the athletes, for expressing your commitment to these Olympic values of solidarity

«In this Olympic community we are all equal. We all respect the same rules.

«This Olympic experience makes all of us very humble because we realize that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. We are part of an event that unites the world. United in all our diversity, we become bigger than the sum of our parts. We are always stronger together.

«This is why we are so grateful to you, the athletes, for expressing your commitment to these Olympic values of solidarity, non-discrimination, and sport without doping, inclusion and equality in your new Olympic oath.

«We can only go faster, we can only aim higher, we can only become stronger if we stand together – in solidarity.

«This is why the IOC has adapted the Olympic motto to our times: faster, higher, stronger – together. «This feeling of togetherness – this is the light at the end of the dark tunnel of this pandemic.

«The pandemic forced us to be apart; to keep away from each other; to stay away even from our loved ones. This separation made this tunnel so dark.

«But today, wherever in the world you may be, we are united in sharing this moment together. The Olympic flame makes this light shine brighter for all of us.
«Now I have the great honour of inviting His Majesty the Emperor to declare open the 32nd Games of the Olympiad, Tokyo 2020.

«I humbly request his Majesty the Emperor to declare open the Tokyo Olympic Games."

LET'S MEET THE AFRICAN FLAG BEARERS

The flag bearers of the African delegations for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games of Tokyo (in alphabetical order of the countries):

Afrique du Sud: Phumelela Luphumlo Mbande (judo)/Chad Le Clos (natation)

Algérie: Amel Melih (natation)/ Mohamed Flissi (boxe)

Angola: Natalia Santos (handball)/Matias Montinho (voile)

Bénin: Nafissath Radji (natation), Privel Hinkati (aviron)

Botswana: Amantle Montsho (athlétisme)/Rajab Otukile Mahommed (boxe)

Burkina Faso: Angelika Ouedraogo (natation)/Hugues Fabrice Zango (athlétisme)

Burundi: Ornella Havyarimana (boxe)/Belly-Cresus Ganira (natation)

Cameroun: Joseph Emilienne Essombe Tiako (lutte)/Albert Mengue Ayissi (boxe)

Cap-Vert: Jayla Pina (natation)/ Jordin Andrade (athlétisme)

Centrafrique: Chloé Sauvourel (natation)/Francky Mbotto (athlétisme)

Côte d'Ivoire: Marie-Josee Ta Lou (athlétisme)/Cheick Sallah Cisse (taekwondo)

Comores: Amed Elna (athlétisme)/Fadane Hamadi (athlétisme)

Congo: Natacha Ngoye Akamabi (athlétisme)

RD Congo: Marcelat Sakobi Matshu (boxe)/David Tshama Mwenekabwe (boxe)

Djibouti: Aden-Alexandre Houssein (judo)

Égypte: Hedaya Wahba (taekwondo)/Alaaeldin

Abouelkassem (escrime)

Eswatini: Robyn Young (natation)/Thabiso Dlamini (boxe)

Éthiopie: Abdelmalik Muktar (natation)

Érythrée: Nazret Weldu (athlétisme)/Ghirmai Efrem (natation)

Gabon: Aya Girard de Langlade Mpali (natation)/Anthony Mylann Obame (taekwondo)

Gambie: Gina Bass (athlétisme)/ Ebrima Camara (athlétisme)

Ghana: Nadia Eke (athlétisme)/ Sulemanu Tetteh (boxe)

Guinée: non communiqué

Guinée-Bissau: Taciana Cesar Judo Augusto Midana (lutte)

Guinée équatoriale: Alba Mbo Nchama (athlétisme)/Benjamin Enzema (athlétisme)

Kenya: Mercy Moim (volley)/ Andrew Amonde (rugby à VII)

Lesotho: non communiqué

Liberia: Ebony Morrison (athlétisme)/Joseph Fahnbulleh (athlétisme)

Libye: Alhussein Ghambour (aviron)

Madagascar: Damiella Nomenjanahary (judo)/Eric Herman Andriantsitohainia (haltérophilie)

Malawi: Jessica Makwenda (natation)/Areneo David (tir à l'arc)

Mali: Seydou Fofana (taekwondo)

Maroc: Oumayma Bel Ahbib (boxe)/Ramzi Boukhiam (surf)

Maurice: Marie Hanitra Roilya Ranaivosoa (haltérophilie/ Louis Richarno Colin (boxe)

Mauritanie: Houleye Ba (athlétisme)/Abidine Abidine (athlétisme)

Mozambique: Rady Adosinda Gramane (boxe)/Kevin Loforte (judo)

Namibie: Maike Diekmann (aviron)/Jonas Jonas (boxe)

Niger: Roukaya Moussa Mahamane (natation)/ Abdoul Razak Issoufou Alfaga (taekwondo)

Nigeria: Odunayo Folasade Adekuoroye (lutte)/Quadri Aruna (tennis de table)

Ouganda: Kirabo Namutebi (natation)/Shadiri Bwogi (boxe)

Rwanda: Alphonsine Agahozo (natation)/John Hakizimana (athlétisme)

Sao Tomé-et-Principe: D'Jamila Tavares (athlétisme)/Buly da Conceicao Triste (canoë sprint)

Sénégal: Jeanne Boutbien (natation)/Mbagnick Ndiaye (judo)

Seychelles: Felicity Passon (natation)/Rodney Govinden (voile)

Sierra Leone: Maggie Barrie (athlétisme)/Frederick Harris (judo)

Somalie: Ramla Said Ahmed Ali (boxe)/Ali Idow Hassan (athlétisme)

Soudan: Esraa Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed (aviron)/Abobakr Abass (natation)

Soudan du Sud: Lucia Moris (athlétisme)/Abraham Guem (athlétisme)

Tanzanie: non communiqué

Tchad: Demos Memneloum (judo)/Bachir Ahmat Mahamat (judo)

Togo: Claire Ayivon (aviron)/ Dodji Fanny (tennis de table)

Tunisie: Ines Boubakri (escrime)/ Mehdi Ben Cheikh (volley)

Zambie: Tilka Paljk (natation)/ Everisto Mulenga (boxe)

Zimbabwe: Donata Katai (natation)/Peter Purcell-Gilpin (aviron)

ANOCA PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITIES IN TOKYO

MUSTAPHA BERRAF ATTENDS THE 138TH IOC SESSION IN TOKYO

ANOCA President, Mr. Mustapha Berraf took part on 20 and 21 July 2021, in the 138th session of the International Olympic Committee. The meeting was chaired by the World Olympism governing body's boss, Dr. Thomas Bach. The opening ceremony was attended by Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshihide Suga. During the proceedings, Mrs. Nicole Hoevertsz (IOC Member in) was appointed IOC Vice-President; Dr. Robin E. Mitchell (IOC Member in Fidji Islands)

and Lawyer Denis Oswald (IOC Member in Switzerland) were reelected Executive Commission Member; and Mrs. Kristin Kloster (IOC Member in Norway) was newly elected at the Executive Commission. The IOC 138th session approved the change of status proposed by the Executive Commission for Mrs. Kirsty Coventry, IOC Member in Zimbabwe and currently Chairperson of the IOC Athletes Commission ; she moves from athlete active Member (a position linked to her active athlete condition) to IOC individual independent Member.

As member of the august institution, Mr. Mustapha Berraf actively took part in deliberations. At the end of the meeting, this is what he had to say: ***« We wish to pay deserved tribute to Japanese authorities who, through their abnegation, their courage end their resolve enabled athletes from the world to take part in the most prestigious sports event and above all to show humanity that sport is the greatest tool for development and for excelling oneself »***.

ANOCA PRESIDENT TALKS WITH TOP SPORTS LEADERS

ANOCA President, Mr. Mustapha Berraf, who is presently in Japan as part of the 32nd summer Olympic Games has been multiplying meetings with high-ranking personalities with the aim of developing his institution's portfolio of partners.

•With the Japanese NOC President.

The President of Africa's Olympic movement governing body met

Mr. Yasuhiro Yamashita before the Games opening. He is the Vice- President of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. He is also Executive Committee member of the Judo International Federation (JIF), President of the Japanese Judo Federation and President of Japan's National Olympic Committee. During their audience, both personalities exchanged on the possibility of building a cooperation relationships between the Japanese and African NOCs, especially in the areas of training African athletes for various competitions and event management.

•With the President of the

International Gymnastics Federation.

Mr. Mustapha Berraf also had a audience Mr. Morinari Watanabe, President of the International Gymnastics Federation. They also discussed on the possibility of establishing formal exchange mechanisms between both organizations. Gymnastics is a sport discipline which is being increasingly practiced in Africa and it should be more and more promoted trough multifaceted actions.

ANOCA PRESIDENT GRANTED AUDIENCE BY SOUTH SUDAN'S VICE-PRESIDENT

On the sidelines of the 32nd summer Olympic Games which formally started on 23 July 2021, ANOCA President, Mr. Mustapha Berraf was received in audience in Tokyo by the Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, H.E. Rebecca Nyandeng De Mabior. ANOCA expressed satisfaction for meeting South Sudan's leader whose commitment in developing sport in her country, and more especially for an increased practice of this activity by women is bearinf fruits day after day. For South Sudan's Vice-President, she hailed the gigantic job achieved by President Berraf since he arrived at the head of ANOCA.

Both personalities discussed many issues, including the development of sport in South Sudan, more involvement of women in sports and the building of South Sudan's NOC headquarters.

ABOUT THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

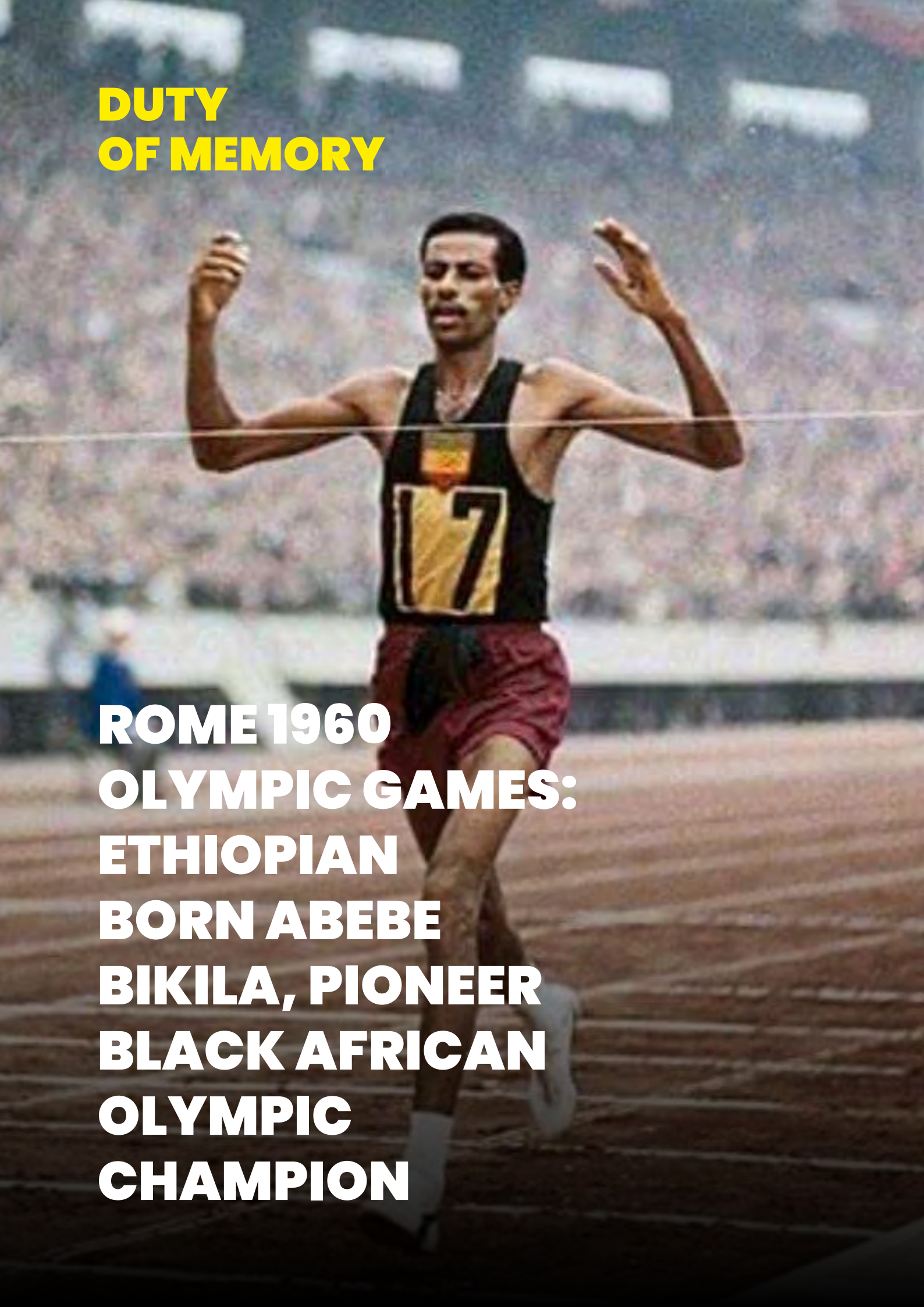
« FASTER, HIGHER, STRONGER – TOGETHER », THE NEW IOC MOTTO BEFORE THE TOKYO OLYMPIC GAMES

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on the 20th of July modified its motto, a few days ahead of the start of the Tokyo Olympic Games. The former motto which read: ***« Faster, higher, stronger »*** became: ***« Faster, higher, stronger - Together ».*** The announcement was made by its President, Dr. Thomas Bach, who underscored the need for solidarity in difficult moments, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

« We need to adapt our motto to our present times», he said following the adoption of the amended Olympic Charter. The motto now reads: ***« Faster, higher, stronger - Together».***

According to the Olympic Movement governing body's President: ***« We intend to lay special emphasis on solidarity. Collaboration efforts are yielding faster and best results than when working alone. It is a major step in our development process which sends a clear message. We intend to lay special emphasis on solidarity ».***

The original motto in Latin ***« Citius, Altius, Fortius »***, was adopted by the founder of the modern Games, Pierre De Coubertin, in the 19th century. The Latin version will henceforth become ***« Citius, Altius, Fortius - Communis ».***



DUTY
OF MEMORY

ROME 1960 OLYMPIC GAMES: ETHIOPIAN BORN ABEBE BIKILA, PIONEER BLACK AFRICAN OLYMPIC CHAMPION

An unknown shepherd's young son beats the world record by running barefooted the mythical 42.195 km in 2h15'16.

He has an outrageous stride, a disconcerting coolness, and outstanding power. The young man puzzles and his look makes one to laugh: who is this young athlete with a fine moustache, carved cheeks and with a haircut similar to a soul music singer who is about to run on the Italian tarmac barefooted?

Over to the close to seventy competitors, only few people had heard of Abebe Bikila. This 28-year old anonymous should not have been lined up to run the Rome 1960 Olympic Games marathon. The Ethiopian was selected by a stroke of luck: he replaced his compatriot Wami Biratu who was wounded at the last minute.

On this 10 September, the race's favourites were Russian born Konstantin Vorobyev and Sergei Popov, or even Moroccan Abdesiem Rhadi Ben Abdesselem. But Bikila believed in his lucky star. Wash e not born on a 7th of August

1932, the day the Los Angeles Games marathon was run? More so, in this type of contest, Olympic Gold usually smiles to those who are daring, and daring is what

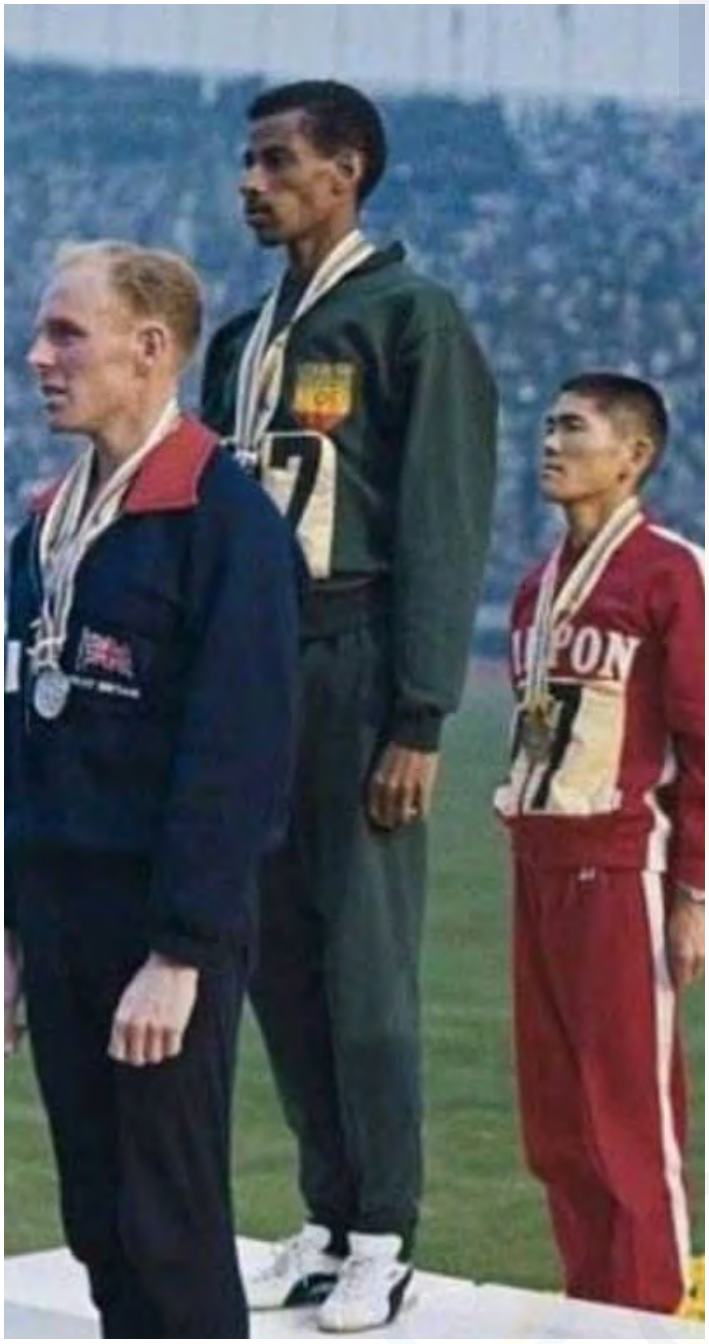
this shepherd's son has under his heels.

Throughout out the 42.195 km-long itinerary, athlete wearing green No. 11, red shorts with yellow edging ribbon, runs barefooted. This choice is far from being whimsical. This featherweight (57 kg for 1.77 m height) could have worn shoes, but these caused him blisters. Back in his country, Bikila has been used to running alone and barefooted on bare soil and other rocky paths at a height of 1 000, 2 000 or more than 3 000 meters where oxygen is a luxury. It is on these paths, bordered by eucalyptus trees that Swedish coach, Onni Niskanen, in charge of Ethiopian athletes detected him.

Double

The race is intense. In Rome's hot night, marathon runners swallow the dusty macadam, torch-lighted by Italian army soldiers. For several kilometers, the race is reduced to a battle between the Ethiopian and Moroccan Abdesiem Rhadi Ben Abdesselem. Bikila, who is fresher, speed up and launches an attack after Km 41 while overtaking the majestic Aksoum obelisk.

The symbol is very striking: in 1937, after conquering the



Ethiopian Empire (which was partially occupied by only for five years), Mussolini ordered for one of the columns which served as an ornament to the former Kingdom's capital to be brought back in Rome. The monument was therefore placed in front of the Ministry for Africa, which will become after the fall of the dictator, the Headquarters of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Abebe Bikila, alone ahead on this hugely crowded road, overcame the race in 2 hrs15'16", a new world record. He was the only black African Olympic Champion. However, this victory is a symbol of revenge: this soldier from the imperial guard of Negus Hailé Sélassié gave his pride back to his country and to the continent, by crossing the final line, by conquering under the Constantine Arch of Triumph, from where Mussolini's fascist troops left twenty-five years later to invade his country. The marathon runner thus became a national hero.

His adventure in the Olympic Games is far from over. Four years later in Tokyo, Bikila succeeded in keeping his title just after being operated upon of appendicitis. It was for the first time that a runner was winning an Olympic Marathon race for two consecutive times. Despite a 90% humidity and the

thick mist covering the Japanese capital, the Ethiopian, who stood as favourite and wearing sneakers this time, overcame his challengers by beating the world record in 2hrs12'11". The second arrived four minutes later.

Domination

On arrival at the Olympic Stadium, Bikila offered the 80,000 spectators a surreal scene. Once he crossed the line, the runner who was barely sweating, went aside and started skipping along and stretching his arms and legs, as if he was still warming up. Referees attempted to talk to him, but he went down on the pitch to carry on his relaxation lying on his back. Four years later at the Mexico Games, the former soldier, and then aged 36, started his third Olympic marathon race. Would it be a third victory? Unfortunately, he had to give up after a few kilometers due to an old wound. The race was won by his compatriot Mamo Wolde in 2hrs20''26'

In 1969, he was a victim of a car accident and lost the use of his legs. Far from being discouraged, he continues, even on a wheelchair, to practice sport, namely archery. He died in 1973 following cerebral haemorrhage. But for posterity, Abebe Bikila will always be remembered as he who paved the way for unchallenged domination of long distance runners from East Africa.