



NEWSLETTER
OF AFRICA'S PARTICIPATION
IN THE 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES



N°004

AFRICA
IN TOKYO

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ANOCA

**TOKYO 2020 IS NOW
HISTORY
WELCOME PARIS 2024**



2020





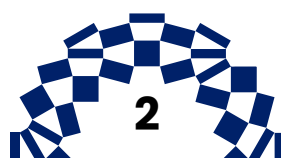
TOKYO 2020 IS NOW HISTORY, WELCOME PARIS 2024



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Dear brothers and sisters of Africa's Olympic family,

The 32nd summer Olympic Games held in the Japanese capital from 23 July to 8 August 2021 have just ended with satisfaction for some and of course, disappointment for others. After two weeks of competitions, of sweating, of tears of joy and pain, the dust have set on this major event which brought together athletes from all over the globe. This event took place in a particularly difficult context marked by the throes of the Covid-19 pandemic plaguing the world, with the consequence of restricting the gathering of large numbers of spectators as it used to be the case before. Fortunately enough, the challenge has been brilliantly





taken up by the International Olympic Committee and by Japan, the Games' host country. All this thanks to the Insight and constant efforts deployed by President Thomas Bach to whom I wish to extend my warmest congratulations. On behalf of the African Olympic and sports movement, I also commend his incredible commitment and his unflinching faith which all our

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efforts wouldn't have bore any fruits. This is an opportunity for me to sincerely say bravo! I also wish to thank Japanese authorities for mobilizing thousands of devoted volunteers whose bravery and commitment were so highly efficient. I also commend world athletes in general, and Africans in particular, for their lust for victory and stubbornness.

For the time being, it would be difficult to make an exhaustive appraisal of Africa's participation





in these Games. Nevertheless, when we look back, we are able to agree on some striking facts of our continent's presence on Japanese soil. We enjoyed exciting and memorable moments in Tokyo, marked by brotherhood, good ambiance, colourful competitions... Youths from the world enjoyed exciting and decisive moments during this jamboree. I strongly believe that these Games will leave their mark on history. Africans who attended for the first time certainly discovered exceptional things. Tokyo 2020 was a wonderful platform where the values of ethics, fair-play, respect of the opponent, sound lifestyle and modesty were put at the forefront.

If the number of medals won by Africa has reduced from 45 in Rio to 37, the continent can boast in terms of quality. As a matter of fact, from 10 gold medals won in Rio in 2016, we moved to 11 in Tokyo. Congratulations to all those sportsmen and women who

made Africa's star shine during these games. They overcame all serious challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic during their training ahead of this competition. During Tokyo 2020 16 days of competitions, the African sports family paid special attention to their performances in the field and is proud and happy about each of its ambassadors' achievement. Let's all hold these athletes

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in high esteem, as they ably defended our continent's values. They each worked very hard and spared no effort to win a medal; some of them did succeed in making their dream come true, but unfortunately, others did not. Many of our athletes achieved impressive performances against their opponents. The variety of countries that won a medal and of disciplines in which laurels were obtained shows how high our sports potential is. However, it should be noted that since 1968, athletics remains the area which yields the highest number of medals

to our continent.

But beyond these figures and sports performances, we should agree on the fact that in Tokyo, Africans adhered to Coubertin's triptych: «Excellence, Friendship and, Respect».

As far as behaviour is concerned, we should feel satisfied of the fact that no African athlete was disqualified for doping reasons. Nevertheless, I am still stressing on ANOCA's commitment to fight against this plague. Each African country should consider setting up a national anti-doping agency, as many other nations. This would certainly go a long way to prevent disgraceful situations.

This provides me with the opportunity to strongly call on all African countries to adopt a special status for high-performing athletes. They must be able to make a living out of their job.

In the same vein, no athlete withdrew or ran away for clandestine immigration as was the case in 2012 in London. This awareness on the part of our athletes should be praised. This provides me with the opportunity to strongly call on all African countries



to adopt a special status for high-performing athletes. They must be able to make a living out of their job. This would be a starting point in solving the increasing number of cases of clandestine immigration and adoption of foreign nationalities by many of our best athletes. In this situation, Africa is the main loser as medals won by these athletes go to host countries.

All was not bright for Africa in Tokyo; the unbalanced

geographical distribution of the 37 African medals should make us stop and think. If athletes from Eastern, Northern and Western Africa were able to win medals, this was not the case for Central Africa which leaves the Games without any single medal. These discrepancies oblige us to reflect on at least two aspects. First, sports policies seem to be still suffering from lack of projection in their athletes' participation in international events. Next,





public policies do not provide adequate conditions to encourage athletes in the follow-up of their career. Therefore, it is necessary to promote other medal-yielding sports disciplines in addition to football.

The other lesson to be learnt from these games is administrative, especially at the level of athletes' training at two levels. First, countries whose athletes won medals should try to strengthen Tokyo's victories. This entails a close and in-depth follow up of these sportsmen and women. For other countries, sports policies should immediately give priority to athletes' training for international competitions. As I have been saying since I was elected as ANOCA President, high-level performances have to be prepared well ahead; this should not be the duty of federations alone, but involve all sports partners: Governments, NOCs, Federations, clubs, etc. The concept « together

» included in IOC's motto is far from being pointless. It should encourage us to work in synergy for the fulfillment of our athletes; we are at their service. The era of great omnipotent and omniscient leaders is over. The time now is for collective management of the participation in international events, with the athlete being at the centre of all concerns. African countries should make more efforts to provide adequate conditions to better prepare and follow-up their athletes. This entails well structured and powerful technical departments at the level of federations and NOCs, a good talents detection policy, good cooperation relationships between the various stakeholders of the national sports movement, as well as adequate planning and the private sector's financial support.

Each country should develop a strategic frame of reference to prepare for competitions and





follow-up athletes. Everything must be planned: targeting athletes, assessing their potential, setting objectives, training staff, adequate means to improve their performances, follow-up modalities, funding of training campaigns, and so on. Such are some aspect which should draw our attention starting today, because the hierarchy of countries reminds us every four years that medal rankings are not a matter of

chance. The human capital is available, it is just a matter of harnessing it; for Paris 2024 is already around the corner, and tomorrow must be prepared now!

Today, let's be faster and stronger!

Mustapha BERRAF,
IOC Member
ANOCA President

