ANOCA PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL MESSAGE, 365 DAYS TO THE YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES DAKAR 2026



WE WILL MAKE OLYMPIC HISTORY!

Dear African NOC Presidents,

Your Excellencies, Ministers of Sport,

Distinguished members of the African Olympic family,

Dear athletes, coaches and sports leaders,

Ladies and gentlemen,



It is with immense pride and deep emotion that I address you today as we celebrate a defining moment for our continent: we are now 365 days away from the Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026. This countdown is not just a date on a calendar; it vividly symbolises an African dream taking shape, a promise on the cusp of fulfilment, a long-awaited recognition.

For the first time in the history of the Olympic Movement, Africa will host an Olympic event and Senegal, the land of Teranga, renowned for the legendary African hospitality, will have the singular honour of organising the 4th edition of the Summer Youth Olympic Games. This is a privilege, but above all, it is a significant responsibility that we are undertaking collectively, with determination and conviction.



Dear friends of African sport,

Distinguished partners of the Olympic Movement,

Sisters and brothers of Africa,

This Olympic first in Africa is far more than just a sports event. It represents the culmination of decades of perseverance, struggle, sacrifice and relentless effort by generations of athletes, leaders and enthusiasts who have proudly flown African colours on every international stage. Dakar 2026 is the reward for our patience, a testament to our potential and a recognition of our ability to host world-class events.

Africa richly deserves this honour - a continent of 1.4 billion people, the cradle of humanity where it all began, a generous land that has gifted the world with some of the greatest Olympic champions in history. Our athletes have penned some of the most glorious pages in Olympic history, and today, it is our continent's turn to author its own page in the annals of the Olympic Games.

Your Excellencies,

Dear leaders of continental sport,

Esteemed members of the international Olympic community,

Dakar 2026 presents a significant challenge for Africa, one that extends far beyond the realm of sports. While it is certainly an organisational challenge, it is above all developmental. These Games will be an extraordinary showcase, demonstrating to the wide world that Africa is not only a breeding ground for sports talent, but also a continent that can excel in organisation, innovation and management of world-class events.

Senegal and the entire African continent are working tirelessly to make these Games a paragon of efficiency, sustainability and inclusiveness. Infrastructural development is ongoing, skills are being honed, and partnerships are being consolidated. Every passing day brings us closer to the opening of these Games, laying another brick in the edifice of our collective pride.









Yet, beyond the sports facilities and logistics, Dakar 2026 affords a unique opportunity to transform the lives of millions of young Africans. These Youth Games are true to their name: they are dedicated to tomorrow's hopefuls, the teenagers who dream of Olympic glory, the budding talents who embody the future of African and world sport.

Dear young athletes of Africa,

Future stars of our national delegations,

Ambassadors of tomorrow,

These Games belong to you. They are designed to inspire, motivate and empower you, offering an exceptional platform to demonstrate your talent, passion, and determination. In 500 days, thousands of young people from every continent will converge on Dakar to celebrate the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. You, young Africans, will have the privilege of competing on home soil, driven by the enthusiasm of a continent, supported by the love of millions of Africans whose personal dreams will be reflected in you.

We count on you to rise to the occasion. Prepare diligently, train with discipline, dream big. Dakar 2026 must mark the beginning of a new era for African sport, one in which our young talents leave an indelible mark on the international scene, not despite their African identity, but thanks to it.

HONOURABLE MUSTAPHA BERRAF
ANOCA President
IOC Member of
ANOC Vice President
President of the Olympafrica Foundation

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my capacity as ANOCA President, I solemnly appeal to all stakeholders in African sport to join forces, mobilise our resources and coordinate our actions to make Dakar 2026 a resounding success that will echo far beyond our borders and long after the closing ceremony.

May these final 500 days be marked by renewed commitment, strengthened solidarity and unwavering determination. Africa has a date with history. We cannot afford to let down our young people, our continent or the world, which is watching us with keenly interest and, dare we say, with admiration.

Long live the Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026!

Long live African sport!

Long live African unity!

May the Olympic spirit guide our steps towards this historic moment that will glorify our continent and inspire future generations!