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**TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES POSTPONED**

In light of the increasing concern related to the evolving COVID-19 plague throughout the globe, the International Olympic Committee President, Thomas Bach and the Prime Minister of Japan, Abe Shinzo have concluded that the Games of the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021, to safeguard the health of the athletes, everybody involved in the Olympic Games and the international community.

In a joint statement issued by the IOC and The Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee on Tuesday afternoon, due to the present circumstances and based on the information provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) today, the Tokyo games have had to be postponed.

The statement highlighted that the leaders agreed that the Olympic Games in Tokyo could stand as a beacon of hope to the world during these troubled times and that the Olympic flame could become the light at the end of the tunnel in which the world finds itself at present. Therefore, it was agreed that the Olympic flame will stay in Japan. It was also agreed that the Games will keep the name Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is in full support of the decision. According to a letter from the IPC, postponing the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games as a result of the global COVID-19 outbreak is absolutely the right thing to do. The health and well-being of human life must always be our number one priority and staging a sport event of any kind during this pandemic is simply not possible.

Due to the restrictions in travelling and cancellation of most of the qualification events, it was already proving a challenge for our potential Olympians and Paralympians to qualify and train adequately in preparation of the Games.

SASCOC Acting CEO, Ravi Govender commented, “Our stance on this matter has always been centered around the well-being of our athletes. We therefore welcome the decision by the IOC, IPC and Japan Local Organising Committee.



“I realise that it is very unsettling to our athletes who have worked hard for the past four to seven years in preparation for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. However, the COVID-19 plague is a tragedy beyond anyone’s control and this decision is to safeguard the health of all athletes and everyone involved in the Olympic and Paralympic Games,” Govender concluded.

**Issued by SASCOC**