



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Thomas Bach  
President

## Welcome message on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> IAKS Congress

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Dear Participants, Dear friends,

Welcome to the 25<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities (IAKS).

This landmark 25<sup>th</sup> Congress gives me the opportunity to congratulate the IAKS for its tireless effort in setting new standards for top-class, functional and sustainable sport facilities all over the world for more than a half of century. Your work is fundamental in creating the fields of play where the sporting dreams of so many people become reality. This is why the IAKS and the Olympic Movement are working towards the same goal of making sport accessible to everyone, everywhere.

The role of sport in society is more relevant than ever. Sport is a powerful catalyst for sustainable development. In this way, sport has a powerful important impact on the lives of people. As acknowledged by the United Nations, sport is an important enabler to reach to the ambitious agenda of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Because of its universality and global reach, sport is a unique tool to support all countries in reaching their social development objectives in health, education, and many other areas.

More than ever, the world of sport needs to respond to this reality by embracing sustainability and delivering positive and long-term benefits for people. The focus of your Congress on how to develop and operate appropriate sport facilities and programmes could not come at a better time. I wish you all a successful Congress with fruitful discussions on this important topic over the coming days.

Thank you for your continued support and shared commitment to making the world a better place through sport.