Toward the Realization of "Diversity and Harmony"

—Olympics and Paralympic Games and Human Rights—
Realizing Tokyo as a city where human rights are cherished

In 2020, the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held in Tokyo. We aim to make the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 the best Games ever for the world’s athletes, for those who come to the Games from around the globe, and for us—the residents of Tokyo.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Olympic Charter places special importance on human rights as a fundamental principle of Olympism. The Games, therefore, are to embody these values.

A city where everyone, women, men, children, senior citizens, people with impairments, and members of the LGBT community, can live vibrant and active lives. A city full of warmth and kindness where differences are respected. This is the vision for the “new Tokyo” where the “diversity” I strive to achieve has been realized. Making this “diversity” a reality will be the key to realizing the ideals sought by the Olympic Charter.

In August 2015, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government revised the “Tokyo Metropolitan Government Guidelines for the Promotion of Human Rights Measures.” As changes in socioeconomic conditions intensify, the environment surrounding human rights has become more complicated and diversified, revealing new human rights issues.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government will rapidly and accurately respond to human rights issues, and devote itself to developing effective human rights measures, painting a bright future for Tokyo in 2020 and beyond.

The last Olympic Games held in Tokyo in 1964 showcased Japan’s post-war recovery. Now a highly mature city, Tokyo will welcome the Games again in 2020. This will also be the first time in history for the same city to host the Paralympic Games twice. I hope to make these Games an opportunity to realize communities where everyone can feel “kindness.” Bringing together the strengths of all Tokyo residents to make the Games a great success, let’s make Tokyo a city where human rights are cherished.

October, 2017
Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Olympic Charter shall be secured without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Paragraph 6 of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism from the “Olympic Charter”
Olympics and Paralympic Games and Human Rights

Paralympic Games and Human Rights
The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has also strongly expressed the philosophy of respect for human rights in the IPC Handbook.
We are required to realize these philosophies as the host city of Tokyo 2020 Games.

IPC Handbook “Position Statement on Human Rights” (extracts)
4. The IPC believes in sport as a vehicle to promote peace, which will result in the preservation of human dignity and equality for all.

(From item 4 of “Position Statement on Human Rights”)

Values of the Paralympic Games
The IPC upholds the following four principles as values of the Paralympic Games.
"Courage" "Determination" "Equality" "Inspiration"
The Paralympic Games, where athletes with impairments challenge their limits by making the best use of inventiveness, provide fair opportunities in which diversity is recognized and all competitors can actively participate by exhibiting their individuality and abilities. The Paralympics also make us realize the necessity of reducing barriers in society and of changing our way of thinking.

Do you know about "Olympism"?
It is said that Olympism is the ideal of the Olympic. The Olympic Charter established by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) clearly states that the Olympic Games are a sporting event that “gives consideration to human rights.”

Fundamental Principles of Olympism (extracts)
4. The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.
6. The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Olympic Charter shall be secured without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

From the “Olympic Charter”(2016 edition)
The Games in Tokyo and Human Rights

"Diversity and harmony" upheld as the vision of the Tokyo 2020 Games.

In the Tokyo 2020 Games vision, three core concepts are upheld. “Diversity and Harmony” is one of the three concepts with “Achieving Personal Best” and “Connecting to Tomorrow”.

This concept means that accepting and respecting every aspect of differences in race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, politics, and between those who have impairments and who do not will allow society to continue to develop and flourish.

It also conveys the thought that the Tokyo 2020 Games will lead people in the world to realize the importance of diversity and harmony, and start to nurture an inclusive society.

Guidelines for the Promotion of Human Rights Measures by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government

Taking the opportunity of Tokyo 2020 Games, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is aiming to realize a city where human rights are respected.

To this end, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government aims to promote human rights measures under the following fundamental principles and to become a city where human rights are guaranteed and that is worthy of being called an international city.

Fundamental principles
1. A Tokyo filled with compassion in which people are given recognition and respected for their dignity
2. A Tokyo with widespread awareness of human rights that does not condone any form of discrimination
3. A Tokyo that respects diversity and tolerates all kinds of differences that stem from it

The Tokyo 1964 Games

The Games in Tokyo were the first Olympics held in Asia, which hosted more than 5,000 athletes gathered from 93 countries and regions, the most in history at that time.

After around 50 years, the number of countries and regions that participated in the Rio 2016 Games was “207.”

For the first time in half a century, Japan will host the Tokyo 2020 Games. We will have a chance to experience cultures and values around the world as well as to meet top athletes in Tokyo.

We should make the hosting of the Games a great opportunity for each one of us to deepen our understanding for people from different walks of life such as those with impairments and from foreign countries, and to turn Tokyo into a city where everyone can feel kindness.
Message from an athlete ———— Akiko Suzuki

Never forget that the brighter you shine, the more powerful support you receive

I always felt nervous when I stood on the ice rink under the gaze of a lot of people. However, a figure skater has to perform alone. The Vancouver 2010 Olympics were my first Olympics. During the six minutes of practice before my free skate, I started to feel like “Oh, this is my first and last performance in the Olympic Games.” That put too much pressure on myself and made me too serious, and I felt tension rising. My turn was approaching each and every second. I wanted my coach to do something for me, and I expressed my troubled feeling. But the coach said to me: “Now I can do nothing for you.”

His words might sound like he pushed me away, but actually he reminded me of how hard I had practiced until the day I stood on the ice rink at the Olympics. I have done everything. I said to myself: “The rest, just do what you have to do.”

I prepared myself to face my fate and walked to the ice rink, but just before the performance, I found my left hand trembling. Still, I could continue the performance to its end.

I was able to participate in the Sochi Olympic Games in 2014. What I learned through my competitive career is that the more glorious an athlete is, the more powerful support people give. A figure skater bears the “role” of standing on the glamorous stage under the limelight and of becoming the focus of attention. However, behind the scene, people with various roles, including coaches and choreographers, are supporting the athlete, which enables him or her to give a performance.

I am proud of being surrounded by “very nice people.” I am an only child, so until I finished high school, I was brought up in a sheltered environment like a bioclean room. But after getting out in the world, I met persons who seemed to have negative feelings toward me and I worried about various things. To be honest, I got hurt more than once or twice. However, I came to appreciate people’s kindness all the more for such experiences. And blessed with nice people around me, I was able to continue my competitive career.

Also, I treasure my experience of having learned many things through living in the world of ice skating. Since figure skating is a sport that places a great value on expressive elements, it gave me a place to express myself. Still, the joy of successfully landing jumps, which I was not very good at, was encouraging enough for me to continue my career. Each figure skater has his or her different way of performing. For such differences, I find figure skating more attractive.

Also, in a competition, no matter how many times you may fall, you will not be disqualified. As long as you don’t give up, you can continue. I was afraid of making mistakes. But I was even more afraid of giving up in the middle of performance after a fall.

I learned the importance of taking on challenges without fear from figure skating. There are many other things I learned through continuing my skating career.

Speaking of diversity, Vancouver, the city providing the setting for the Olympic Games, was full of a variety of values. People had different skin colors, but all of them treated me in a positive manner, which seemed to make me energetic. People there love ice hockey, and I cannot forget that as the Canadian team won one victory after another, a feeling of unity arose during the Olympics.

It would be nice if people in Tokyo also can demonstrate Japanese hospitality at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Unlike Canadians, Japanese may not openly express our feeling, but I believe it is important for us to take a “small step” by extending sensitivity to all details and respecting good manners.

Akiko Suzuki
Professional figure skater/Olympian (figure skater representing Japan)

She began skating at the age of six. After temporarily leaving her career as a figure skater due to health issues, she made a glorious come-back in 2004. At the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games, she came in 8th. In the Sochi Olympic Games, she demonstrated her expressiveness and view of the world, and won the 8th place at two consecutive Olympics. Currently, while appearing on ice shows as a professional figure skater, she actively goes on television and gives lectures.

Sports journalist: Jun Ikushima  Photographer: Tomokazu Matsukawa
Message from an athlete ——— Keiichi Kimura

Turning Tokyo into a town where people find it cool to help others without hesitation

In the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, I participated in nine swimming races, and as a result, I was able to win two silver medals and two bronze medals.

I really swam with all my might, or perhaps I should say I put all my energy I had into the competitions, however, unfortunately, I could not reach my goal of winning a gold medal. So it took me some time to accept the result.

Still, I was delighted to receive a greater response at Rio de Janeiro than that at the Paralympics in Beijing or London. I could sense that people watching our races on TV were moved with our performance. Now that the opening of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games has been officially approved, knowing many people watched our races with interest encourages me to make further efforts.

The Paralympics is a sports festival where athletes do their best to become a world champion. Since it is a festival, you can see the Paralympics reflecting the characteristics of its host city. The Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro was like a carnival with a lot of people making a great fuss. I remember that the spectators in London got together to bring a lot of excitement to the races. Well, what will characterize Tokyo? I’m looking forward to it.

I am visually impaired, but I can tell that Tokyo is the most comfortable place in the world. When I patiently speak to people to ask the way in town, there is always somebody to answer me. However, from my experiences of staying in various towns during my time abroad, I can tell many people in Tokyo are in a hurry. I sometimes think if they could make some room in their hearts to take care of others, it would become a more wonderful place.

Also, I kind of feel that there are many people in Tokyo who, for no special reason, hesitate to “lend a hand to help others.” Simply asking “Can I help you?” will do. Personally, I want them to view it as “cool” to help others.

Interestingly, in foreign countries, people speak to me without any hesitation. No doubt, they think that it is cool to help others (haha).

I think that such change will be brought about by the opening of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and I came to hear people give voice to respect for human rights and appreciation for diversity in Tokyo. Of course, I think we are making efforts in the right direction. However, I think it would be desirable if we could aim to create such a society in a more natural manner instead of saying, “we have to show respect.”

It may sound contradictory, but making reading materials like this might be a bit unnatural. But I hope that these activities will open the way for solving problems and issues, leading to people showing kindness and respect for each in a natural manner in the future.

The same can also be said of sports. In Tokyo, an environment where healthy people can enjoy sports has been significantly developed. I think it would be fantastic if some room for people with disabilities were created there. For example, I would be happy if they could swim together at a swimming school, or if one became interested in a training event and became an escort runner, since people with impaired vision need help when jogging.

If we just have a sense of self-composure, it would be possible for us to find many ways to live together, and I believe that will be the first step for creating a society where people appreciate the diversity of others.

I cannot see the goal, so I need a support from a person called a “tapper” who tells me when to make a turn and finish the race with a long pole, which enables me to swim forward.

I still don’t have a clear vision toward the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, but, as for me, I want to show my best performance at my next event, and continue doing that. That’s all I really want to do.

Keiichi Kimura
Competitive swimming/silver and bronze medalist at the Rio 2016 Paralympics

At the age of two, he became blind due to a detached retina from a congenital disease. He started competitive swimming in the fourth grade of elementary school. As a result of practicing very hard, he distinguished himself when he was at the Special Needs Education School for the Visually Impaired, Tsukuba University, and participated in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. In 2009, he entered the College of Humanities and Sciences, Nihon University. At the London 2012 Paralympics, he served as a flag bearer for the national team, and won silver and bronze medals. At the Rio 2016 Paralympics, he participated in 5 events and won two silver medals and two bronze medals. Presently, he works for Tokyo Gas.

Sports journalist: Jun Ikushima  Photographer: Tomokazu Matsukawa
More attention points! Olympic and Paralympic Games

The message incorporated in the Tokyo 2020 Games emblems

Composed of three varieties of rectangular shapes, the design represents different countries, cultures and ways of thinking. The message of “unity in diversity” is incorporated in the design in which various shapes, despite their differences, are connected with each other.

Three different rectangular shapes represent diversity.

Diversity makes the world a vibrant place.

It sets us apart but can bring us together.

With mutual respect and support, diversity becomes unity.

These two emblems are made of the same number of shapes.

They remind us that all people are equal.

That regardless of with or without impairment, we are united in our humanity.

The thrill and excitement of sports inspires us and makes hearts around the world beat together as one.

This is where a dazzling future begins.

From the website of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games

Innovations for gear used in sports for people with physical impairments

Sports gear for athletes with impairments comes with various innovations so that they can maximum use of their abilities.

For example, players in “Para ice hockey,” in which they use a dedicated sledge, play with sticks, each of which has a blade-end for hitting a puck and “ice pick-like” end to propel themselves over the ice. They skillfully handle two sticks by switching from one end to the other, and aggressively compete for a puck to hit it into their opponent’s goal.

Secrets of Paralympic medals

Paralympic medals have “Braille” inscriptions so that visually impaired athletes can read letters on them.

Also, another innovation for the medals at the Rio 2016 Games was the tiny steel balls tucked inside them, which make a unique noise when shaken. This feature allows visually impaired athletes to identify the medal’s hue. A gold medal has 28 balls, a silver medal 20 balls and a bronze medal 16 balls.
Let’s rethink "human rights" through the Paralympics.

Human rights of foreign citizen

Not only athletes but also a lot of tourists will visit Japan for the Tokyo 2020 Games. The quality of Japanese hospitality is highly praised around the world. On the other hand, discrimination and prejudice against foreigners have been observed due to the lack of understanding of differences in their languages, cultures, religions, and life habits. The Olympic and Paralympic Games are a worldwide sports festival, which is also called a “celebration of peace.” When we see world-class athletes demonstrate their excellent performance across nationalities and races, let’s think about how important it is for both foreigners and Japanese to respect each other and accept diversity among people.

Respect for diversity

In recent years, “diversity” has been emphasized in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This is based on the concept that the Olympic Movement* is promoted through the participation of a wide variety of people in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Let each of us rethink the “human rights” issue around us so that we will be able to make the Tokyo 2020 Games a successful event where everyone can participate and enjoy, and to realize an inclusive society where diversity is respected now and in the future.

*The movement to nurture human health in mind and body, cultivate a spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play and understand one another mutually through sports so that people in the world join hands and realize world peace.
(Reference information)

Website of the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC)
http://www.joc.or.jp/
http://www.joc.or.jp/olympism/charter/ (Olympic Charter)

Website of the Japanese Paralympic Committee (JPC)
http://www.jsad.or.jp/paralympic/jpc/

Website of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games
https://tokyo2020.jp/jp/

Human Rights Division, Bureau of General Affairs, Tokyo Metropolitan Government

Official website: “Jinken no tobira (A Door Leading to Human Rights)”
http://www.soumu.metro.tokyo.jp/10jinken/tobira/

Official Twitter of the Human Rights Division
https://twitter.com/tocho_jinen

Official YouTube channel of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government: “Tokyodouga” (List of movies on human rights)
https://tokyodouga.jp/100000/100300/100301/list.html

Tokyo Metropolitan Human Rights Plaza (Special exhibition on the Olympic and Paralympic Games is presently being held)
http://www.tokyo-hrp.jp/

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8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku 2-chome, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163-8001
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