Today 23 June is Olympic Day !



Spurred on by the Olympic Movement, close to six million people across the globe, young and old alike, are reversing the trend away from sport and are moving, jumping, stretching and getting their sweat on to promote a healthy and active lifestyle and celebrate the birth of the modern Olympic Games and its values.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), globally, one in four adults are not active enough and more than 80 per cent of the world s adolescent population is insufficiently physically active. In a bid to reverse that trend, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) called upon the Movement at large from National Olympic Committees (NOCs), International and National Sports Federations to Organising Committees of Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games, National Olympians Associations and Young Ambassadors to help get the couch potatoes off the couch .

The result? Close to 6 million people of all ages and abilities have been joining the movement and taking part in Olympic fun runs and quizzes, trying new sports, competing in school tournaments, contributing to musical and arts exhibitions or chatting with champions. And there is more to come!

People in motion across the continents

From Albania to Antigua and Barbuda, Gambia to the Federated States of Micronesia, or Canada to Sri Lanka, 108 NOCs across all five continents have already heeded the IOC s call to action. In collaboration with National Federations and local authorities and leveraging the power of their Olympians, many have or are staging educational, cultural and sporting activities in their territories to encourage their communities to be active and spread the Olympic values in the lead-up to and on Olympic Day. By the end of the year, this figure should rise to 142 NOCs.

The Serbian Olympic Committee, for instance, garnered the support of national Olympic champions and elite athletes to motivate the more than 3,000 participants taking part in the various races, from relays to family runs, in the capital city of Belgrade earlier this month. Similarly, the Slovenian NOC organised a mini Olympiad event in Ljubljana for local children to discover new sports with the help of its national sporting heroes. In Bhutan, the NOC mobilised national sports federations and several primary schools to engage nearly 1,500 students in an Olympic Day run, sports introductions, meet-n-greets with Bhutanese Olympians and learning the Olympic values. In turn, the Olympic Committee in Nepal kicked off a whole week of Olympic Day activities in which they expect 5,000 participants, including sportspersons and civil society members, to join.

In other parts of the world, such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Ethiopia, NOCs are celebrating Olympic Day by introducing local communities to new sports on the Olympic programme, such as baseball and softball, or to more traditional sporting activities such as tugs of war. They are also using this platform to raise awareness of important local environmental and social issues, and the role that sport can play to face some of these challenges.

Our Young Ambassadors have also been showing their support for Olympic Day. Colombian Young Change-Maker (formerly known as Young Ambassadors) Juan Sanchez decided to focus his attention on seniors and pensioners in his hometown of Bogotá. Concerned by the lack of opportunities they have to exercise, the Young Change-Maker organised yoga and Zumba classes. Met with great enthusiasm and positive results, the 25-year-old is already working on follow-up activities in order to ensure there is greater movement amongst this elderly community.

Athletes driving inspiration on #OlympicDay

In addition to the multitude of activities taking place across the continents, the Olympic Movement s digital platforms have all been in Olympic Day mode in order to reach out to its millions of fans. Olympic medallists Yuna Kim , Justin Rose , Mariana Pajon , Martin Fourcade , Pu sarla Venkata Sindhu and Simone Biles along with football legends Ronaldo and Carles Puyol are among those who have already been busy posting and inspiring their fans to follow their lead and share their photos and videos of their #OlympicDay sporting moments on social media.

With just under a year to go until the next Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, winter athletes are also making the most of Olympic Day to train for their qualification events and build excitement for what s to come next February. For instance, German luger and Olympic champion Felix Loch joined forces with the International Luge Federation to teach kids in his country how to slide.

** - IOC