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TOKYO 2020 TO BE CRUCIAL TEST FOR FUTURE OLYMPIC GAMES

Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo

- Plan is to make Tokyo 2020 a low-cost model for future sustainability.
- Must prove to taxpayers that money will be spent wisely and effectively.
- Japan's *Mottainai* ("what a waste") spirit will drive efforts to cut costs.

The views expressed in this piece are the author's own and should not be attributed to The Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies.

As the leader of the next city to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games I visited Rio twice this summer, in part to take custodianship of the iconic Olympic and Paralympic flags. Since then, I have been busily involved with preparations for Tokyo 2020, aiming to make this the greatest-ever sporting event for athletes and spectators alike. It is an exciting undertaking, but I am also aware that it comes with a heavy responsibility.

While it is still early, the host city for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be decided next year at the IOC Session in Lima, Peru. Somewhat surprisingly, several candidate host cities have officially withdrawn their names, including Hamburg, Boston and Rome. This must be a disappointing development for the countless masses who find great meaning and inspiration in the Games. The key reasons for the withdrawals are the public financial burden and the need to construct numerous large-scale facilities. The backlash among residents and the greater public led these cities to bow out.

Given this development, I now see the Tokyo 2020 Games as a crucial test for the future course of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

PRIMARY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL GAMES

From an “athletes first” perspective, the definition of a successful Olympic and Paralympic Games is one that enables athletes to exhibit their top abilities. Another key is to fill each venue with spectators to provide the athletes with the feverish support of fans from around the world.

To that end, the host city must ensure that the visiting athletes and spectators feel safe and secure. This means working closely with the national government and other organizations to defuse any possible incident of terrorism or cyberterrorism. We pledge to cooperate fully with such bodies, including by forming a consultative taskforce to identify potential risks, ultimately to maximize our ability to respond quickly and effectively whenever and if ever required.

Having said this, right now it is incumbent on me to gain the understanding and support of our taxpayers — key stakeholders who will surely hold us accountable. Of course, their major concern is cost, so we must prove to them that their tax money will be spent wisely and effectively, and certainly not

on any white elephants. To do this, first we will identify what is truly necessary in the eyes of our citizens, both local and nationwide. Through dialog with them, we will determine what the most promising undertakings are and then clearly explain how we intend to implement them. This will be a critical mission for us.

LEGACY

When I visited Rio, I made an effort to observe as many venues and facilities as possible, as well as learn how the Rio Games were run in terms of transportation, volunteerism and security. I witnessed a number of creative solutions that will provide Tokyo 2020 with valuable lessons. For example, I was particularly impressed that temporary venues I had toured would be dismantled after the Games to provide building materials for four elementary schools.

Over a half-century ago, when the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games were held, the Japanese economy and population both were growing rapidly. The 1964 Games left Tokyo with some marvelous legacies, including the Tokyo Metropolitan Expressway, world-class event facilities and the amazing bullet train, which started running officially just nine days before the Games began.

Today, of course, Tokyo's situation is completely different from 50 years ago. Japan's economy has been saddled with chronic deflation, Tokyo's industrial base has greatly evolved, the population continues to age and fewer children are being born.

Given that issues and values have changed dramatically since Tokyo 1964, it is extremely important for us to determine what could be Tokyo 2020's most enduring legacy for future generations.


THE 3RS

I propose that Tokyo 2020's legacy should be based on not only facilities and infrastructure but also everlasting principles. In particular, I am thinking of the 3Rs—Reduce, Reuse and Recycle—a concept that the Japanese government has championed since the G8 Summit at Sea Island in 2004 when I was Japan's Minister of the Environment. I have greatly admired this concept

since my time at the ministry, and today the 3Rs are part of the Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC's blueprint for the Olympic Movement in the years ahead.

The essence of the 3Rs is expressed in the Japanese word *Mottainai*, which means "what a waste" in terms of extravagance. *Mottainai* has been embraced by Ms. Wangari Maathai, the celebrated Kenyan environmental and political activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, and now I would like to reintroduce *Mottainai* to the world in connection with the 2020 Olympics.

By applying the 3R principles with a strong sense of *Mottainai*, I firmly believe that the costs of Tokyo 2020 could be sufficiently reduced to establish the Games as a model of sustainability for the rest of the world. As preparations for this magnificent sporting event move ahead, I will be asking everyone to consider how to create a truly everlasting legacy for Tokyo 2020 by deciding what to reduce, what to reuse, and what to recycle.

I aim to see the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games celebrate cost reduction and sustainability, and thereby become a highly practical model for future Games. My dream is for Tokyo 2020 to reignite other cities' passion for this supreme sporting event and encourage them to incorporate the Games in their own plans for sustainable long-term growth. 

October 24, 2016

Yuriko Koike

The Governor of Tokyo