



TO: Special Olympics Programs
FROM: Mary Davis, CEO
RE: Kazan World Winter Games Postponed to January 2023
DATE: 30 August 2021

Dear Special Olympics Colleagues,

After months of intensive work by our Special Olympics International team and extensive consultation with Special Olympics Programs, athlete leaders, and board members, SOI and the Local Organization Committee for the World Winter Games Kazan have decided to postpone the Games planned for January 2022 to January 2023 because of the global pandemic.

This decision, which involved looking at many possible solutions, was ultimately taken to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved. In addition to internal stakeholder feedback, this decision was driven by extensive consultation over several months with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, and other subject matter experts.

Due to the Delta variant of COVID-19 spreading across the globe, some Special Olympics Programs are hesitant to travel internationally. Many delegations are unable to travel outside their home countries because they don't have access to the vaccine or don't have the resources needed for quarantines.

If the Games were to proceed as planned in January 2022, we risk having fewer athletes participate, lower quality of competitions, and little or no cultural activities or other planned programming.

This would have a negative impact on our plans for the legacy of World Winter Games in Kazan to inspire inclusion in Russia and around the world. It would also take away opportunities to gain worldwide media coverage of this important event.

The Russian Federation, the leaders of the state of Tatarstan, SO Russia President Olga Sloutsker, and the LOC housed within the Russian Directorate of Sport and Social Projects deserve our deepest thanks for all the hard work they have done so far. Special Olympics is committed to working closely with the team in holding World Winter Games in 2023.

Key partners are being notified by SOI. If you have been requesting support from local partners for your delegation's participation in Kazan 2022, please contact your Regional President for guidance on how to manage this delicately.

More information will be shared in the coming weeks and months. Between now and 2023, we will face challenges we've never faced before, and we will face them together.

Thank you for your commitment to Special Olympics and the health of our movement,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Davis', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Mary Davis, Chief Executive Officer

Special Olympics

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