



**Berlin, Germany selected to host the 2023 Special Olympics World Games**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – November 13, 2018: Berlin, Germany has won the race to host Special Olympics' flagship sporting event, the World Games in 2023.

In a unanimous vote, Special Olympics International's Board of Directors selected the German capital as the winning bid based on criteria such as: the clarity and compelling nature of mission, vision and legacy; the breadth and depth of supporting partnerships; great venues and event infrastructure; and athlete-driven leadership.

Dennis Mellentin, athlete spokesperson of Special Olympics Berlin/Brandenburg and member of the bid advisory board, captured the mood of everyone associated with the upcoming Berlin World Games: "I am so unbelievably happy, I can't describe it. I am so excited for all the athletes and for Berlin! We have hoped and wished for the Games and for welcoming the athletes from all over the world so hard, and now it is becoming a reality! I will give it my all and work really hard to be able to participate—whether as an athlete or in the organizing team, doesn't matter—it will be a highlight in my life!"

The Special Olympics World Games is one of the largest sporting events on the planet, and inspires, promotes and advances a world of full inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. Taking place every two years and alternating between Summer and Winter Games, the World Games are broadcast globally in more than 150 countries attracting more than 2,500 journalists.

The 2023 Berlin World Games are expected to host around 7,000 athletes and Unified Partners from 170 nations who will participate in 25 various sport disciplines. They will be joined by more than 3,000 volunteers as well as 12,000 family members.

The successful bid was a combined effort led by Special Olympics Germany, supported by the State of Berlin, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, and the German Olympic Sports Confederation. A signature component of the Berlin bid included a Host Town Program that engages the entire nation in hosting delegations from around the world. Driving inclusion in and through sports, the goal is to build a better understanding of intellectual disabilities, cultural diversity and inclusion, and involve sports clubs and schools across Germany.

Many renowned sports facilities in Berlin will provide state-of-the-art competition venues for the athletes, including the Event Center in the Messe Berlin (Convention Center), the Max-Schmeling-Halle sports facilities, the Sportforum and the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn-Sportpark, as well as the meeting place around the Straße des 17. Juni and the Brandenburg Gate. In what is expected to be a truly memorable moment, the Opening Ceremony of the 2023 World Games will take place in the Berlin Olympic Stadium.

“We are very, very happy with the decision, which we also regard as a sign of appreciation for our federation, for Berlin and for Germany,” said Christiane Krajewski, president of Special Olympics Germany. “We are very happy for our athletes who we want to organise remarkable Games with in Berlin in 2023. Our common vision: to celebrate a worldwide visible festival of sports and to send a clear signal for inclusion in society. With the World Games 2023, we strive for a change in the prevalent mindset and for substantial improvements in the daily life of people with intellectual disabilities.”

“Congratulations to Germany and Berlin. Your selection to host the 2023 World Games is testament to a remarkable, insatiable, sustainable and on-going effort for more inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities,” said Dr. Timothy Shriver, Chairman of Special Olympics.

As Berlin celebrates its winning bid, the final countdown to the 2019 Special Olympics World Games has begun. The games will take place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, March 14–21, 2019.

