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□ □ **“Rio 2016 is ready to welcome the world” according to International Olympic Committee (IOC) Coordination Commission Chair Nawal El Moutawakel . The Olympic champion, who heads the IOC’s Commission that since 2009 has been following the preparations for the Olympic Games Rio 2016, made this statement after her final pre-Games visit to the Brazilian host city.**

After meetings with the Rio 2016 Organising Committee, all three levels of local government (Federal, State and City), and a tour of a number of sporting venues, El Moutawakel said, “Rio 2016 is ready to welcome the world. The Olympians of 2016 can look forward to living in an outstanding Olympic Village and competing in absolutely stunning venues. From views of the Corcovado and Sugar Loaf Mountain to the new state-of-the-art facilities in Barra or Deodoro and the iconic Maracanã Stadium and Copacabana Beach, I cannot imagine more spectacular backdrops for the world’s top sportsmen and women to showcase their talents to a watching world.”

She continued, “I have been visiting Rio regularly since 2009, and I love the Cariocas, and the

Brazilians in general. They are a very warm and hospitable people, who know how to welcome guests and how to live life to the fullest. Spectators visiting Rio this August will be able to fully experience that spirit, as they go to the venues, visit the live sites and discover the city. The Cariocas are going to be celebrating, and this means that Rio de Janeiro will be the place to be this August. The Brazilians have also transformed the city through a legacy vision that they have made a reality. Not just by delivering all the venues and services that the Games require on time, but also by creating a legacy that will benefit local citizens and the whole country for decades. The success of these Games will be their success.”

After successfully hosting 44 test events, the Rio 2016 team and the venues are ready for action, with all the facilities receiving their final Olympic touches before the athletes start to arrive in about two weeks' time. The velodrome and equestrian venues, which were being monitored closely by the organisers, are also in the final stage of preparation, and will be ready for the Games.

The new Metro Line 4, which links Ipanema and Barra da Tijuca, and the Transolimpica Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), linking Barra to Deodoro, will also be fully operational for spectators at the Games. Trains are now running the full length of the metro line, as it enters the final stages of testing. This follows months of work by the Rio State authorities to test the personnel, rolling stock and safety technology of the new line, while the last bits of construction were being completed. The metro will play a key role in a sophisticated transport plan that will see athletes, spectators and local residents take advantage of a number of new pieces of transport infrastructure, such as approximately 150km of new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines that have been built thanks to the catalyst of the Games and which are already, in some cases, changing local peoples' lives for the better.

The subject of Zika was discussed during the visit. It was underlined that the latest advice of the WHO reaffirms that “there should be no general restrictions on travel and trade with countries, areas and/or territories with Zika virus transmission, including the cities in Brazil that will be hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games” (full WHO advice [here](#)), while the local authorities and organisers explained the ongoing work that is being carried out to minimise the risk to visitors. It was also pointed out that the Games will take place during the winter months of August and September, when the drier, cooler climate greatly reduces the presence of mosquitoes and therefore the risk of infection.

On the wider security front, the Brazilian authorities reinforced their commitment to safe and secure Games, with a combined security force of 85,000 people guaranteeing the security of the Olympic Village, the sports venues and key infrastructure, such as the city's airports and

main roads. Security personnel from 55 countries will be involved in securing the Games.

El Moutawakel was also updated on the work that is being carried out ahead of the Games in the Guanabara Bay and Lagoa venues. The new belt of pipes that has recently been put into service around the Marina da Gloria area is showing its effectiveness, with the latest readings presenting much improved water quality levels in that area. Organisers restated their confidence that both areas of water would provide top-level conditions for the athletes.

Rio 2016 President Carlos Arthur Nuzman commented, "Our journey is now entering its most critical phase: Operation of the Games. We are obviously very proud that we are ready to welcome the world and we can also see the transformation of Rio everywhere we go." He continued, "A lot of work lies ahead of us but we have plenty of energy. We will deliver great Games."

With the Games only weeks away, the city of Rio de Janeiro is getting dressed-up, as elements of the Games' Look go up across the city. Organisers and local authorities were keen to underline the Carioca and Brazilian spirit that athletes, visitors and Games spectators will find in the city this August. As well as seeing the world's best Olympic athletes competing in outstanding settings, spectators will be able to take advantage of the Games' live sites, including in the newly revitalised port area; experience the Olympic spirit Carioca style in the Barra and Deodoro Parks; hang out at the beach; and discover a city and people with an important cultural heritage and a reputation for hosting one of the world's number one celebrations every year, the Carnival.

An explanation was also given of the legacy that the Olympic Games Rio 2016 has given to the city, and which is starting to materialise already today. This includes new transport infrastructure, sports venues that will become schools or sports facilities for local communities, around 70 new hotels, improved waste management, training for thousands of workers and volunteers, and investments in the city and local businesses that will make the city even more attractive in the years to come.

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The International Olympic Committee is a not-for-profit independent international organisation made up of volunteers, which is committed to building a better world through sport. It redistributes more than 90 per cent of its income to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of USD 3.25 million goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world.