

In a historic breakthrough for global sports leadership, Zimbabwe's Minister of Sport, Arts and Recreation, Kirsty Coventry, has been elected as the new President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The 41-year-old former Olympic swimmer replaces Germany's Thomas Bach, who held the prestigious role since 2013. Coventry's appointment marks a series of firsts: she is the first African, the first woman, and the youngest person to ever lead the IOC.

Born in Harare, Coventry made her name as one of Africa's most decorated Olympians, winning seven Olympic medals, including two golds, during a remarkable swimming career. Her leadership credentials have been rising steadily since her retirement from competition — having served on the IOC Executive Board and chaired the Athletes' Commission before being appointed Zimbabwe's sports minister in 2018.

In her victory speech, Coventry emphasized unity, transparency, and athlete-focused governance.

"Sport has the power to heal, to unite, and to uplift," she said. "As IOC President, I will champion inclusion, integrity, and innovation — ensuring the Olympic movement belongs to everyone, everywhere."

Her election is widely seen as a symbolic and strategic shift, reflecting growing calls for diversity and reform in global sports institutions. Coventry has long advocated for the rights and welfare of athletes, particularly those from underrepresented nations.

Leaders from across Africa and the sporting world have hailed her appointment as a "moment of pride" for the continent and a promising step toward a more equitable Olympic future.

The IOC is preparing for future Games, including Los Angeles 2028, Brisbane 2032, and potential African bids for future editions.