The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has enthusiastically welcomed South Africa's proposal to initiate preliminary discussions on hosting the 2036 Olympic Games. Presented at a meeting at the Olympic House in Lausanne, the proposal could see South Africa become the first African country to host the world's largest sporting event.

Led by South Africa's Sports Minister Gayton McKenzie, the delegation included South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) President Barry Hendricks and CEO Nozipho Jafta. The project has strong backing from South African IOC member Anant Singh and honorary member Sam Ramsamy, signaling a united front among key stakeholders.

A Continental Vision

IOC President Thomas Bach highlighted the significance of South Africa's interest, stating, "The IOC welcomes this proposal and the united commitment of SASCOC, the South African government, and our representatives in South Africa. This project is not only about hosting an Olympic Games in South Africa but is intended as a project for the whole of Africa."

Minister McKenzie echoed the sentiment, calling the potential bid an opportunity to showcase the best of Africa. "We are at the beginning of an exciting process that could see South Africa host the 2036 Olympic Games. This vision brings us together as a nation and has the potential to show the world the best of Africa," he said.

Global Competition for 2036

South Africa is not the only nation eyeing the 2036 Games. Other countries in early discussions with the IOC include Chile, Egypt, India, Mexico, Qatar, and Turkey. Under the IOC's new flexible venue selection model, these preliminary talks focus on aligning the Games with local needs and promoting sustainability.

SASCOC President Barry Hendricks emphasized the benefits of the IOC's evolving approach, noting, "The old prescriptions of how a Games should be organized no longer exist. An Olympics in South Africa could showcase all the wonders of our country and inspire a new generation of athletes not only in South Africa but across the continent."

A New Era in Olympic Hosting

The IOC’s updated selection process allows potential host countries to develop tailored projects that reflect their unique circumstances. Discussions are ongoing with more than a dozen stakeholders across four continents, reflecting a commitment to broadening the geographic diversity of Olympic venues.

South Africa’s bid represents a historic milestone for the Olympic Movement, aiming to bring the Games to the African continent for the first time. If successful, it would symbolize unity, progress, and a new era for global sports.