

IOC asks Taiwan for clarification of name change referendum procedures

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Members of the Social Democratic Party clarify their preferences for the Nov. 24 referendums at a news conference in Taipei on Wednesday. Several signs read “We are called Taiwan.”

Photo courtesy of the Social Democratic Party

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) in a letter to the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee (CTOC) asked for information about Taiwanese referendum procedures ahead of a plebiscite on whether the nation should request to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as “Taiwan” instead of “Chinese Taipei,” the national Olympic committee said on Wednesday.

Citing a report by Spanish news agency EFE on the name-change referendum, the IOC asked about voting procedures, but did not mention whether the referendum might affect Taiwan’s right to participate in the 2020 Games, CTOC secretary-general Shen Yi-ting (申宜庭) said in response to questions from local media.

Ten referendums are to be held alongside the Nov. 24 nine-in-one elections, including one that asks voters whether they agree that Taiwan should apply to participate in all international sporting events, including the Tokyo Olympics, using the name “Taiwan.”

For a referendum to pass, it must gain a majority of votes, with “yes” votes exceeding 25 percent of the number of eligible voters.

Central Election Commission Chairman Chen In-chin (陳英信) has estimated the number of eligible voters this year at 19.8 million, which means that at least 4.95 million “yes” votes would be required for a referendum to pass.

In a May letter to the CTOC, the IOC said that the name “Chinese Taipei” cannot be changed, because it was determined by an agreement between the two committees in Lausanne,

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Switzerland, in 1981.

The Lausanne agreement states that Taiwan must use the name “Chinese Taipei” and fly the CTOC flag at international sports events, an arrangement that has allowed Taiwanese athletes to continue to compete internationally after the People’s Republic of China replaced the Republic of China as China’s representative at the UN in 1971.

The Sports Administration yesterday said it would respect the national Olympic committee’s decisions and the timetable it set for the proposed name change.

Considering that the CTOC is a non-governmental organization, it should be granted full autonomy, Sports Administration International and Cross-Strait Sports Division deputy head Yang Chu-yu (楊朝瑜) said.

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