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# Gwangju 2019 kicks off with festival of water and light

FINA Communications Department

The 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the FINA World Championships is finally on, after the spectacular Opening Ceremony of the FINA showcase today in Gwangju (KOR). The event was officially launched at the highest level, when the President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in declared open the two-week Aquatic Festival. At his side, the FINA President Dr Julio C. Maglione wished all the participants in the competition “the best luck” and thanked the 194 National Federations – a new record in the history of the Championships – for sending their best representatives to “this dynamic city”.



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“The great venues here in Gwangju will be the privileged scenario for thrilling results, and will show to the world the popularity and universality of our Aquatic Sports”, said the FINA President. “The set-up is ready for our Aquatic

athletes to compete in the spirit of FINA – Excellence, Friendship, Respect and Fair-Play. Gwangju will be an excellent host of FINA’s greatest Aquatic Festival! Thousands of people on site and millions of TV viewers and digital users around the world will witness an outstanding competition”, considered Dr Maglione.

The highlight of the Opening Ceremony was naturally the parade of the participating countries. Over 16 days, until July 28, around 2500 athletes will compete in six aquatic disciplines, fighting for medals in the 76 events of the Championships.



FINA President, Mayor of Gwangju and President of the Republic of Korea - Photo by gettyimages

The Mayor of Gwangju, Lee Yong-sup, was visibly happy to welcome the aquatic world in his city. “We hope you can live one of the greatest emotions of your life here in Gwangju. Our 1.5 million citizens are also ready to live an unforgettable experience”, said Mr Lee.

The 90 minute-show included many interesting moments, namely traditional Korean music, acrobatic choreographies, mixing light and water. The anthem of the Republic of Korea was interpreted by a children choir, while both the national and FINA flag were brought on stage by former Korean sport stars.

The performance of K-Pop music band Momoland was the great finale for a apotheosis that gave the tone of the Championships – modern, dynamic and diverse.



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## **Diving and Artistic Swimming**

Before the Opening Ceremony show, preliminaries in Diving and Artistic Swimming took place during the day – respectively the men’s and women’s 1m springboard, and the solo and duet technical prelims.

The first finals of the competition will be held this Saturday, with the Open Water 5km Men, the Solo Technical in Artistic Swimming, and in Diving the Mixed 10m platform synchro, women’s 1m springboard, and men’s 3m springboard synchro.

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