

# *Pan American flags are flying in Cerrillos*

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Havana, October 18 (JIT) -- The flags of the 41 countries are already flying in the central square of the Pan American Village of Santiago 2023.

They rose all together, this Tuesday, under the chords and lyrics of the Panam Sports anthem, on a hot and colorful afternoon in one of the limits of this Chilean capital.

It is a traditional ceremony that constitutes the official welcome to the main house of the Games, to the home where the athletes live intense and decisive days in their careers.

In attendance were Neven Ilic, president of Panam Sports; Jaime Pizarro, minister of sports and head of the organizing committee; Claudio Orrego, regional governor; Lorena Facuse, mayor of Cerrillos; and Harold Mayne Nicholls, head of the Santiago 2023 Corporation, among other authorities.

When the halyards adjusted the national flags at the top of the flagpoles, it was time for new speeches... Mayne Nicholls thanked those who brought the Games to Chile and those who have built them by working every day. He congratulated the athletes present and invited them to enjoy their new home, a complex of multicolored buildings on the outskirts of the city, about 40 minutes by road from Chile's National Stadium.

The area looks rough, the wind blows strong and raises a lot of dust... In the distance stretches the Andes Mountains, frozen at the top, the favorite landscape of many visitors to this city.

In the middle of it all are the athletes, with their national costumes and the joy of living a sporting and human experience of high caliber. Cell phones capture every moment, such as the overflight of five aircraft known as the Fach Falcons, in the middle of this ceremony, and the rhythm of a local dance show.

Jimena Saldaña, general secretary of Panam Sports, smiles with satisfaction on the podium because the Games are a reality despite the many obstacles faced. She recalls that all athletes leave the village with their dreams on their feet and return with the joy of having participated or won.

The mission leaders and the organizers exchange gifts as a sign of fraternity and mutual respect. Children and teenagers from Cerrillos star in a passage that tries to illustrate the capacity of sport, and of a great event like this one, to transform people and communities.

In a few minutes, the village shines with its flags and the beginning of the biggest sports festival in the continent is getting closer.

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