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Alibaba Brings Cloud and AI to the First Youth Olympic Games in Africa

- *Dedicated cloud infrastructure powers Dakar 2026's operations and will serve as Senegal's national cloud platform post Games*
- *AI capabilities bring Senegal's iconic Teranga spirit to life at the Opening Ceremony*

DAKAR, Senegal, November 2, 2026 – In a historic milestone for African sport, Alibaba Group, in partnership with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Dakar 2026 Organizing Committee, will power the Summer Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026 (Dakar 2026) with its cloud and AI technology. As a Worldwide Olympic TOP Partner, Alibaba will optimize operations and elevate spectator engagement for Dakar 2026, and deliver a lasting digital legacy for Senegal.

Kirsty Coventry, President of the International Olympic Committee, said: "Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games are the first Olympic event taking place on African soil. I'm delighted that our Worldwide Olympic Partner, Alibaba, is helping bring this historic moment to life. Through its cloud and AI technology, Alibaba is helping the Games run more smoothly and bringing fans around the world closer to the action."

Mamadou Diagna Ndiaye, President of the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee (YOGOC), said: "We want Dakar 2026 to feel ambitious, welcoming and unmistakably Senegalese. The right technology will help us run the Games smoothly and give young athletes, visitors and audiences a connected experience from the moment they arrive. It will also leave us with stronger digital capabilities to support future events and public services."

Toby Xu, Chief Financial Officer, Alibaba Group, said: "Sport is now a truly digital experience, and audiences expect more ways to follow and engage with the action. Cloud and AI capabilities are helping the industry respond by making services easier to scale and adapt. As a Worldwide Olympic Partner for nearly a decade, Alibaba has consistently helped drive the Olympic Movement forward-moving from digitalization to intelligence through technological innovation. For Dakar 2026, we look forward to seeing how these technologies continue to shape the future of the Olympic Movement and beyond."

Future-ready digital infrastructure to boost operational efficiency

The Dakar 2026 Organizing Committee will deploy a private cloud built on Alibaba Cloud's Apsara Stack for the Games' digital operations. Serving as the event's digital backbone, this scalable and secure cloud platform will host applications and services such as ticketing and e-visa processing.

Running on this dedicated cloud infrastructure, the ticketing system built by Alibaba Cloud will handle online ticket sales and on-site access control for over one million tickets across all seven venues and the official Festival Site. The highly elastic infrastructure will ensure seamless performance during high-demand sales windows and peak entry periods.

Upon completion of the Games, the private cloud infrastructure will be handed over to Senegal to serve as a national cloud platform, supporting the country's long-term digital transformation and leaving a lasting technological legacy.

After the Games, businesses and developers in Senegal can tap into Alibaba's full-stack capabilities for AI innovation through this cloud platform and Alibaba's **Qwen** open-weight models. As one of the world's most popular AI model families, Qwen boasts 460 open-weight models and over 3 billion global downloads. It supports over 200 languages worldwide, spanning diverse linguistic groups from Niger-Congo languages like Wolof and Kongo, to Indo-European languages such as French and Italian.

Fusing culture and AI at Dakar 2026

At the Opening Ceremony of Dakar 2026, the Organizing Committee unveiled an AI-powered celebration of drum performance created using Alibaba's WAN video generation model. Centered around the iconic rhythm of the African drum, the one-minute video brought together 100 participants from the Dakar 2026 Learning Academy—representing youth from across Africa and around the world who embody the human legacy of the Games—virtually performing drum together.

The experience continues throughout the Games for athletes, spectators, media and the local community. Embracing Senegal's spirit of Teranga, the Wolof concept of hospitality, Alibaba is utilizing technology to foster openness, respect, and co-creation in the host city. At the official Festival Site, visitors can step into a kiosk hosted by Alibaba to generate a short video of themselves playing the Senegalese Sabar Drum. Additionally, an AI agent powered by Alibaba's cloud-based AI technology answers questions about Dakar 2026 and the history of the Youth Olympic Games.

Community empowerment and youth development

Beyond technology infrastructure, Alibaba is collaborating with the Dakar 2026 Organizing Committee to drive local youth development initiatives alongside the Games. Alibaba Philanthropy has expanded its Panda Pack Project to Senegal, providing sports equipment packages to the Jeunesse en Jeux engagement program. Aiming to reach over 350,000 children across 850 schools, this initiative reinforces the long-term legacy of Dakar 2026 by promoting sports accessibility in local communities.

In addition, the Alibaba Cloud Tech Academy provides free online cloud computing training for Senegalese youth under 35, already drawing over 10,000 registrations.

The Summer Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026 is taking place in Senegal from 31 October to 13 November 2026 across Dakar, Diamniadio and Saly. The event brings together 2,700 athletes aged 17 or under to compete across 35 sports.

Alibaba's contribution to Dakar 2026 builds on its proven track record as a Worldwide Olympic Partner at Tokyo 2020, Beijing 2022, Paris 2024, and Milano Cortina 2026. This experience will support reliable event delivery while creating meaningful digital value for Senegal.

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About Alibaba Group

Alibaba Group is a global technology company focused on AI + Cloud and commerce. We empower consumers and enterprises with our full-stack AI capabilities and services, from applications to compute infrastructure. Our AI technology based on the Qwen family of large language and multimodal models powers the intelligence behind our services across enterprise solutions and consumer platforms. Our commerce business puts consumers first and provides the technology and marketing reach to help merchants, brands, retailers and small businesses to engage with customers and operate efficiently.

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