

World conference on women and sport

by Katia Mascagni

It is well known that women account for over half the world population, but their representation within society by no means matches this proportion. This also goes for the world of sport, which reflects the society from which it stems and is confronted with the same problems in achieving a balance between women and men. This observation is the basis of several actions undertaken by the International Olympic Committee in recent years so as to understand and improve women's role in the Olympic Movement.

It is precisely in this context that the IOC organized at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne from 14th to 16th October the first world conference on women and sport so that all parties concerned could get together to pool ideas and identify objectives with a view to achieving an ever more important role for women in

the world sports movement. Over 220 delegates from 96 countries representing the Olympic Movement, the United Nations system, international and non-governmental organizations as well as research centres and universities participated in three days of intense discussions.

The themes addressed by the conference covered many aspects of the women's question: women and the Olympic Movement: the role of women in administration and training; culture and women's sport; women's education and health through sport and physical activity; governmental and non-governmental support for the development of women's sport.

At the opening ceremony, the Mayor of Lausanne, Yvette Jaggi, reiterated the

commitment of the Lausanne authorities to greater equality between men and women within the communal administration and stressed the important role of the conference in improving through dialogue and understanding the role of women in the world of sport and in society in general. Furthermore, Anita De-Frantz, in her capacity as member of the IOC Executive Board and chairperson of the IOC working group on women and sport, and the IOC President both emphasized the challenge it is the IOC's duty to take up in order to encourage greater sports activity among women and support their advancement within national and international sports organizations. This initiative was supported by a number of personalities, among them Mary Robinson, President of the Republic of Ireland, Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Gro Harlem Brundtland.

The participants.



former Prime Minister of Norway, and Hillary Rodham Clinton, first lady of the United States, whose messages were read out on the occasion of the conference. The successive speakers over these three days presented the chosen themes on the basis of their personal experiences and their contribution to women's advancement in the world of sport. The discussions that followed provided an opportunity for a genuine exchange of views, experiences and methods among women and men from different backgrounds and generations. They also shed

light on the cultural, economic and political fundamentals to be taken into account before working out any policy for the advancement of women. The principal outcome of these discussions was the adoption of a resolution including the main points on which the participants consider that considerable progress remains to be made if women are to be given their rightful role in the world of sport and, by extension, in society at large.

It is on these practical and representative elements that the IOC, through its

working group, and the Olympic Movement as a whole - International Federations, National Olympic Committees, continental associations and national and local sports organizations - will have to concentrate in order to draw up a more balanced, more egalitarian and fairer policy for the development and promotion of sport, so as to enable women and men to take up together the challenges with which the Olympic Movement is confronted on the eve of the third millennium.

RESOLUTION

The Conference.

Congratulating the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on its initiative to stage a World Conference on Women and Sport with representatives of many countries and non- and inter-governmental organizations;

Welcoming the initiative of the IOC to establish a working group on Women and Sport and looking forward to hearing continued positive recommendations therefrom;

Also welcoming the evidence of cooperation between sectors of the sports community and government, both at national and international level, in promoting issues relative to women in sport;

Looking forward to the staging of similar events at appropriate intervals to further promote the advancement of women:

Recalling that the aim of the Olympic Movement is to build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal, without discrimination of any kind;

Recognizing that the Olympic ideal cannot be fully realized without, and until there is, equality for women within the Olympic Movement;

1. Calls upon the IOC, the International Federations (IFs) and the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to take into consideration the issue of gender equality in all their policies, programmes and procedures, and to recognize the special needs of women so that they may play a full and active part in sport;

2. Recommends, that all women involved in sport be provided equal opportunities for professional and personal advancement, whether as athletes, coaches or administrators, and that the IFs and the NOCs create special committees or working groups composed of at least 10% women to design and implement a plan of action with a view to promoting women in sport;

3. Requests, that commissions dealing specifically with the issue of women in sport be set up at national and international level;

4. Recommends the establishment by NOCs of athletes' commissions including women, as a way of training women as leaders;

5. Encourages the IOC to continue working toward the goal of attaining an equal number of events for women and for men on the Olympic programme;

6. Suggests, that within Olympic Solidarity a special fund be earmarked for the promotion of women's sport at all levels as well as for the training of women administrators, technical officials and coaches with emphasis on developing countries;

7. Requests, that the IOC organize each year, and on the five continents, a leadership training course for women in one of the following areas: coaching, technical activity, administration or media/journalism;

8. Proposes, that one of the criteria of assessment of cities bidding to host the Olympic Games be their demonstrated ability to serve the needs of women in sport;

9. Endorses and encourages the increased production of research and statistical data on subjects relating to women and sport and the dissemination thereof to all parties involved in

the sports movement, including success stories on advancements made in sport for women and girls;

10. Urges the IOC to discontinue the current process of gender verification during the Olympic Games;

11. Calls upon the national and international sport federations to facilitate and promote sport for women with disabilities, in light of the fact that women with disabilities face a double challenge in the world of sport;

12. Encourages the IOC, in its relations with non- and inter-governmental international organizations, especially those that have as their focus girls and women: to cooperate in efforts that have as their aim the creation of global programmes of physical education in schools and in the community in order to promote health and quality of life;

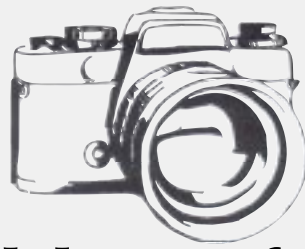
13. Recommends, that the IOC advise governments of its technical assistance to developing countries;

14. Requests, that the IOC direct its working group on Women and Sport to consider issues specific to the needs of women and children in sport, taking into account the importance of family support in the development of young female athletes.

15. Recommends, that the IOC working group on Women and Sport be given the status of an IOC commission;

16. Encourages the IOC to continue to develop educational materials to assist in advancing opportunities for women in sport;

17. Recommends, that the IOC identify a theme for the 1996-2000 quadrennial: "Olympiad for Women".



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(First row), Flor Isava Fonseca, Yvette Jaggi, the IOC President, Anita De Frantz and François Zweifel.



Yueling Chen, Shengrong Lu and Jin Xia Dong.



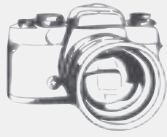
Myriam Gross-Traverso and Josefina Borra.



Wayne Wilson, Jennifer Hargreaves, Anita White, Anita DeFrantz, Fekrou Kidane, Faezeb Hasbemi, Josefina V. Bauzon and Natalia Arriaga.



Françoise Zweifel and Gunilla Lindberg.



Pirjo Häggman.



Oreib Aref.



Arlette Law Kwan and Sue Neill.



(First row) Jennifer Hargreaves and Kari Fasting.



Ilona Kickbusch.



Faezeb Hasbemi.



(First row) Clemencia Anaya and Nour El-Houda Karfoul.



Elizabeth Ferris.



Nkalimeng Makhube.



Yael Arad and Clea Hadjistefanou.



*Walter Bush, George Killian
and Mustapha Larfaoui.*



Anita DeFrantz.



Naval El-Moutawakel Bennis.



Doris Corbett.



Caroline Garoes.



Elizabeth Darlison.



Nadia Lekarska.



Some of the participants...

