

The Starting Line

The *WomenSport International* Newsletter

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(NOTE: This is not the entire newsletter, but most of its contents)



From the Exec's Desk

Libby Darlison,

This issue of *The Starting Line* has a particular focus on the range of initiatives which are happening for women, sport and physical activity on the international scene: the [IOC World Conference on Women and Sport](#), post-Beijing activities by NGOs around the world and a follow-up to the [Brighton Declaration](#).

This is an exciting and challenging time for women in sport and it is important that we do what we can to ensure that the momentum for change which is building up is maintained, maximised and steered in a direction which will be of most benefit to the majority of women.

The best way of ensuring that this happens is for each of us to become an active participant in that change in any way that we can. The maxim "act locally, think globally" is nowhere more apt than in the area of women and sport. While organisations such as **WSI** are advocating and initiating change internationally, the impact of that change will not be fully realised unless it can be shown to be relevant and effective at the national and local level as well.

With respect to the implementation of the Beijing [Platform for Action](#), (<http://www.undp.org/fwcw/dawoff.htm>) the Brighton Declaration and the resolutions from the IOC World Conference on Women and Sport the first step is to ensure that each of those documents and the commitments that governments, national and international sporting bodies, etc., have made to their implementation are well understood by all of the local groups and organisations who are working for greater gender equality in sport, such as women's groups, local and state sport organisations.

How one might then go about developing a strategy to ensure that implementation actually happens will depend on the structure of the sport system in your country. Whatever the system, that strategy will benefit from communication with and input from a range of groups and organisations.

Forging alliances and coalitions with other NGOs and community groups whose core business impacts on but is not totally involved with sport, can be very helpful in devising innovative and effective strategies.

Historically, women in sport have not extended their networks outside sport and physical activity. We have tended to work within our own specific area of interest. As a result our concerns have often remained marginal and outside the central core of policy and of social change. To ensure that our voice is heard and our objectives achieved we need to begin to reach out and build on our strengths with other organisations who are also concerned with advancing opportunities for and increasing the status of women. This is particularly true for women in the developing world where access to resources is most limited and where coalitions have proven to be extremely effective in a range of areas.

This issue of *The Starting Line* identifies some of the initiatives which are being undertaken by a range of NGOs around the world to ensure implementation by government and other agencies to the UN Platform for Action. In addition we have listed the Resolutions from the recent IOC World Conference on Women and Sport.

We are always interested in telling our members about "success stories." If you know of a new initiative, a shift in policy or a new programme which has been developed in your corner of the world, particularly if it is the result of a commitment to any of the documents mentioned above, please let us know so that we can share it with others.

Also in this edition is information about the upcoming elections for membership on the Advisory Board of WSI. Continuing the representation from all 5 continents is important on the Board and we would encourage all readers to nominate someone who you think has knowledge of and who will best represent, your area of the world.

Finally, as 1996 draws to a close it is worth remembering that this is the first year of the Quadrennial which takes us to the [2000 Olympic Games](#). The year 2000 is the centenary of women's participation in the Olympic Games and provides a perfect opportunity for thinking about how we might use these 4 years to encourage greater involvement in sport and physical activity by girls and women at all levels and to celebrate the contributions women have made in all areas of sport.

By setting a series of goals to be achieved over the next four years it may be possible in the year 2000 not only to celebrate the achievements of elite female athletes, past and present, at the Olympics but also the ways in which we have been able to "broaden the base of participation" as well as ensuring greater numbers of women as coaches, decision makers, team managers, administrators, journalists within sport.

Judging by the feedback we have received, *The Starting Line* is achieving its objective of serving as an important international tool through which information can be disseminated and ideas exchanged. We are always pleased to receive any contributions from our readers and would encourage members to send ideas, articles or information that we can publish.

We also depend on your financial support through your membership. Please make sure that your membership is up to date and we would suggest that a good New Year's resolution would be to recruit or to sponsor one new member in 1997.



IOC World Conference on Women and Sport

The [IOC World Conference on Women and Sport](#) was held in Lausanne from 14th to 16th October. Over 220 participants from 96 countries attended the Conference which received messages of support from Mary Robinson, President of the Republic of Ireland, Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, Queen Noor of Jordan and Hillary Rodham Clinton, wife of the President of the USA.

The Conference was opened with three welcoming addresses from the President of the IOC Juan Antonio Samaranch, Chair of the IOC Working Group on Women and Sport and member of the Executive Board of the IOC, Anita De Frantz and the Mayor of Lausanne Yvette Jaggi. The conference was jointly chaired by Anita DeFrantz and the Director of the Department of International Co-operation, Fekrou Kidane.

Many WSI members attended the Conference and two members of the Executive Committee, Kari Fasting and Libby Darlison presented papers. Also attending the Conference were representatives from key United Nations intergovernmental agencies including UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNESCO, (United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation) and WHO (World Health Organisation).

Over the three days of the conference a variety of presentations was given within the following broad themes: women and the Olympic Movement, women's role in administration and coaching, culture and women's sport; education and health for women through sport and physical activity and governmental and non- governmental support for the development of women's sport.

Although there were differences in the experience and expectations of participants, those differences were a matter of degree rather than substance. For example there was general agreement that gender inequality persists in all aspects of sport at all levels, but that this inequality is greatest for women in the developing world who have least access to resources and to power. The need for action was articulated strongly by women from many different cultures, particularly through the identification of ways in which the IOC could begin to develop and implement or to continue to pursue, strategies to bring about gender equality. However there was also strong feeling by participants that for these strategies to be effective they would need to be monitored and evaluated regularly.

A great deal of work was done by participants to ensure that conference resolutions reflected the views of women from all parts of the world. Equally important was the fact that those views be unanimously agreed upon and that this be reflected in the resolutions. Given that conference participants could be said to be representative of the majority of women involved in sport and physical activity, the unanimity provides a strong argument for the implementation of the following resolutions.

Resolutions

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 organisations;

Welcoming the initiative to establish a Working group on Women and sport and looking forward to hearing 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 and sport;

Looking forward to the staging of similar events at appropriate levels 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;

Recognising that the Olympic ideal cannot be fully realised without, and until there is, equality for women in the Olympic Movement;

1. **Calls upon** the IOC, the International Federations (IFs) and the 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 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 for action with a view to promoting women in sport.
3. **Requests** that commissions dealing specifically with the issues of women in sport be set up at the 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 men on the Olympic programme.
6. **Suggests** that within the Olympic Solidarity a special fund be earmarked for the promotion of women's sports 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.
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 programs 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 as a theme for the 1996-2000 quadrennial: "Olympiad for women".



Nominations

WSI Board/Officers Elections - Call for

The first election for membership of the [Board of WSI](#) will be held early next year. The following positions are subject to election by members - each is for a term of three years. President, Vice President, Treasurer, and nine Advisory Board members.

In accordance with the Constitution the call for nominations must be held at least three months before mail ballots are sent out in order to give time for all members to respond. Ballots will therefore will be included in the March issue of *The Starting Line*.

Ballots will be mailed to all Active, Associate and Student members of WSI. This provides a good opportunity for encouraging as many new members as possible to join WSI so that you and your fellow members may vote for the candidate of your choice.

Please make sure that you include the full name and some relevant biographical information about the person you are nominating so that others may be as fully informed as possible before casting their votes.

[Click here for a list of current WSI Board members.](#)

Send nominations to:

[Executive Director](#)
WomenSport International
PO Box 227
Lawson, NSW 2783
Australia



The Brighton

Declaration - Making Sure It Works

The International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) is a government based group established after the 1994 International Conference on Women and Sport. The main aim of the IWG is to encourage the adoption of the [Brighton Declaration](#) in as many countries and sports organisations around the world as possible. **WomenSport International** sits on the IWG as the only non government participant.

The Brighton Declaration is important in that it sets out a series of comprehensive but specific principles which Governments and non-government organisations (NGO) as well as individuals can support and which will assist them in understanding the steps which need to be taken in order to ensure gender equality in sport.

Formally adopting the Brighton Declaration is an important first step in a commitment to working towards gender equality in sport and physical activity. However all too often adopting an international document does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented. For example, each United Nations Conference on Women since the mid 1960's has produced a document setting out needed actions to which over 180 governments have become signatories. However the extent to which the commitments made have been implemented has depended largely on the vitality, advocacy, strength, commitment and often the courage, of non government organisations within those countries.

The enormous worldwide post-Beijing activity amongst women's groups and other NGOs and intergovernmental agencies such as UNDP, WHO etc aimed at implementing the Platform for Action (PFA) to which 196 governments are signatories gives some indication of the need to keep working with and to lobby governments, the corporate sector, etc. to make good their promises. A strong network amongst NGOs and ongoing improvements in communication technology has meant that there can be regular contact, exchange of ideas, and support in these efforts.

The international NGO community is now an influential group of organisations and individuals who are increasingly sophisticated and knowledgeable about the workings of government and international agencies such as the United Nations. NGOs have been responsible for much of the positive social action which is occurring both internationally and nationally.

As a member group of this community **WSI** maintains strong international contacts and is keen to ensure that all of our members are aware of the existence of the [Brighton Declaration](#) and of the [Platform for Action](#) and understand the importance of working to ensure that all countries and key sports organisations not only adopt the Declaration and the PFA but more importantly develop a strategy for its implementation.

WSI was established to advance opportunities for girls and women in sport and physical activity internationally and to provide assistance in practical ways for groups and individuals at the regional and national level in their efforts to do the same. The work that we have been able to do thus far by working with organisations such as the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee fits within the broad principles of the Brighton Declaration and the UN Platform for Action. This work has already had a considerable impact on the advancement for women in sport internationally.

We are keen to know of new initiatives which have been assisted by the adoption of the Brighton Declaration or the Platform for Action in your country and to share with other members any strategies which have been successful in the development of those initiatives.

Thus far of the 212 organisations and individuals on the IWG data base, 52 have adopted the Brighton Declaration - 31 of these are national organisations and 21 are international organisations.

Details of these countries and organisations are:

Countries			
Albania	Egypt	Japan	Papua New Guinea
Algeria	Finland	Lithuania	Portugal
Australia	Germany	Malaysia	Scotland
Bahrain	Ghana	Mexico	St. Vincent
Botswana	Greece	Namibia	United Kingdom
Canada	Hong Kong	Netherlands	USA
Cook Islands	Iceland	New Zealand	Zimbabwe
Cyprus	Indonesia	Northern Ireland	

International Organisations

Arabic Ministers of Youth and Sport
Caribbean Ministers of Sport
Commonwealth Games Federation
Commonwealth Heads of Government Committee for the Development of Sport
Council of Europe Committee for the Development of Sport
European Ministers of Sport
European Sport Conference
Federation Aeronautique International
Federation International de Hockey
International Association of Physical Education and Sports for Girls and Women
International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education
International Council of Health Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance
International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport
International Olympic Committee
International Triathlon Union
Royal Life Saving Society
Sports Association of Arab Women
Supreme Council for Youth and Sport In Africa
Union Cycliste International
World Squash Federation

If your country, or any organisation to which you belong, has adopted the Brighton Declaration and/or the United Nations Platform for Action but has not yet developed any initiatives to promote greater opportunities for girls and women in sport this would be a good starting point for discussing with these groups how they intend to implement their commitments and what role individual women and/or NGO sports organisations in your local region, country or global region might play in assisting them with this task.

WSI is happy to provide advice on advocacy, lobbying and negotiating as well as a range of other skills and information which will help you or your organisation with this process.

To send or to seek information contact:

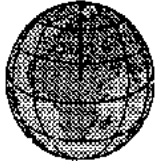
[Executive Director](#)

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From Around the Globe

In addition to the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995) during the 1990s there were a series of important World Conferences and Summits including the Earth Summit (Rio 1992), World Conference on Human Rights, (Vienna 1993), International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994) World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen 1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II (Istanbul 1996).

At each of these Conferences women mobilized and lobbied for a gender perspective and fuller integration of women's issues and concerns. With the exception of Beijing, the majority of women interested in sport and physical activity have traditionally not actively lobbied at such Conferences or Summits, nor developed strong national or international networks with women who have been in areas outside sport.

By not being more actively involved we have often not been fully informed of initiatives in various countries which may impact on women's opportunities to participate in sport, nor have we been able to ensure that our concerns were placed on a broad international agenda or that the connections between women's participation in sport and physical activity and health, nutrition, and a range of other environmental and political issues, were clearly identified to policy makers, researchers, public officials etc.

It is important that the contributions that sport and physical activity make to women's physical well being, as well as the human rights issues involving women's right to play the sport of their choice, not be marginalised or downgraded in terms of the contribution they can make to improving the global status of women.

In an effort to encourage our members to build stronger networks with those working to improve women's health, resources, nutrition, human rights etc. outside sport and physical activity we will be regularly listing some of the relevant initiatives which are happening around the world.

What's been happening

- Identifying Obstacles Faced by NGO's in Implementing Policy Documents:*
The Women, Environment and Development Network (WEDNET) which is based in Kenya at the Environment Liaison Centre International and has a membership of over 1500 individuals and organisations all over the world is carrying out a needs assessment to identify obstacles that NGOs, particularly those working in the field of the environment, are facing in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.
Contact: Cecilia Kinuthia Njenga, WEDNET, Fx. 254 2 56 21 75. E-mail: ckinuthia@elci.sasa.unep.no
- Progress Report on the Platform for Action:*
A one year progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action has been published. It is titled *Beyond Promises* and is available from WEDO, 335 Lexington Ave, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10017-6603. Fx. 1 212 973 0335. E-mail: wedo@igc.apc.org
- Converting Information into Power:*
A publication which demonstrates the ways in which the Beijing Platform for Action can be adapted into visual/useable materials.
Contact: International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC) 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, Ph. 1 212 687 8633, Fx. 1 212 661 2704. E-mail iwtc@igc.apc.org
- Justice, Development and Peace: Implementing the Gains of Beijing:*
This was the title of a two day Seminar held by the Constitutional Rights Project from August 28-30 in Kaduna, Nigeria. The seminar focused on four of the 12 Areas of Concern: Human Rights, Violence Against Women, Women and Health Care and Women and Armed Conflict.
Contact: Josephine Effah, CRP, PO Box 4447, Surulere, Lagos, Nigeria. Fx. 234 1 584 571.
- Women NGOs in the European Region:*
Many initiatives have been undertaken by European women NGOs to follow up the commitments of governments in Beijing. The *Geneva Advocacy Notes*, a newsletter put out by the Geneva NGO Sub-Committee on the Status of Women with the NGO/ECE Working Group on Women, disseminates information about these initiatives.
Contact: Room E2, NGO Lounge, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Fx. 41 22 91 70 181 E-mail: ngoecewomen@gn.apc.org
- Asia Pacific Watch Group:*
APWG was formed in 1995 to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by Governments in the Asia Pacific region. APWG is meeting in November and its first publication concerning the impact of macro-economic changes on women's lives will be out at the end of the year.
Contact: APWG Fx. 66 2 718 0272.
- Thai Women Watch:*
Established in March 1996 to monitor and evaluate activities promoting the advancement of women in Thailand, particularly the implementation of the Beijing Platform. A two day seminar held in September was attended by 12,000 women and men from all over the country.

Contact: Thanpuying Sumalee Chartikavanij, AWPG, 2234 Petchburi Rd, Bangkok, Thailand, Fx. 66 2 718 0372.

- *Centre for Women's Global Leadership:*

The Centre will be holding a two week Global Leadership Institute *Women's Human Rights: Realising our Visions* June 15-20 1997. This will be an intensive working session where approximately 20 women of diverse regions, cultures backgrounds and interests will gather together to work on cross cultural collaboration and learn and exchange leadership skills and organising techniques. Participants will meet with resource people from the UN, non governmental organisations and foundations in the USA.

Contact: For more information about the course or to request an application form contact Susana Fried, Institute Co-ordinator, Centre for Women's Global Leadership, Douglass College, 27 Clifton Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, USA. Ph. 1 908 932 8782, Fx. 1 908 932 1180, E-mail cwgl@igc.apc.org

If you are aware of any other items of interest/information which could be added to the Global Roundup in the next edition of *The Starting Line* please forward them to:

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