

The Starting Line

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IOC Regional Seminar on Women in Sport for European National Olympic Committees

As a part of IOC's policy on women in sport a regional seminar for European National Olympic Committees took place in Zagreb, Croatia on September 9th and 10th, 1998. According to Ms. Katia Mascagni Stivachtis, chief of the IOC Section for Women's Advancement, the IOC strives through informative seminars to raise awareness among the national Olympic committees of the various issues that need to be tackled concerning women in sport. One major area is the exchanging of women's experiences and knowledge in sport. A second major issue is to encourage the implementation of strategies of actions at the national level to increase women's participation, visibility and contribution to sport.

Fifty-four women representing 37 different European countries participated. WSI's vice president, professor Kari Fasting, was invited to give three speeches on the following topics: *Women and Sport in International and European Organizations*; *Links between Physical Activity and Social Empowerment of Women*; and, *Women, Sport and the Media*. Other themes and speakers included: *Overcoming Political, Cultural and Structural Barriers* by IOC's Vice-President and Chairwoman of the IOC Women and Sport Working Group Ms. Anita L. DeFrantz, *Women Athletes: Issues and Supports* by Ms. Nawal El Moutawakel Bennis, IOC member and Olympic champion and *Promoting Women's Health and Well-being Through Sport and Physical Activity* by Dr. Heidi Haapasalo from Tampere Research Centre of Sports Medicine, Finland. The President of ICSSPE, Prof. Gudrun Doll-Teppe, talked about *Developing Research on Women in Sport*, and on *Women Sports Leaders: Issues and Strategies for Change*.

Female leadership and female coaches were also the focus of other speakers. Ms. Doris Valasek, Director of Competition of the International Football Federation Association and by Ms Ilse Bechtold who is chairperson of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) Women's Committee both spoke of these issues. The summary discussion of the seminar was focused on the necessity of getting more women involved in coaching. Research projects that could or would focus on female coaches' experiences were suggested as a means to get more relevant knowledge which could be put into practice and into policies directed at recruiting more female coaches.

The Windhoek Call For Action

a Report by Carole Oglesby, WSI President

A great deal was accomplished at the Windhoek, Namibia Conference this past summer. Our members can be proud of the part played by **WSI** leaders who had many roles within the conference. Libby Darlison, **WSI** Secretary General, is our representative to the International Working Group which sponsored the conference and played an active role in the planning of the program and selecting speakers. Libby was also the keynote speaker at the final session. Kari Fasting, **WSI** Vice-President, and I also were invited to give talks. In addition, I was privileged to give a workshop on women's sports organizations (WSO).

Although there were many concurrent sessions on organizations such as national Olympic Committees, sports federations, and government agencies, by far the largest number of women came to the WSO session. The large numbers and the energy and quality of the participation made it clear that women realize that the growth of women's sport and exercise programs are in OUR hands. We need to redouble our efforts to build **WSI** membership so we can be a force in advancing international efforts and to stimulate the growth of local/regional advocacy group in nations, cities, and the smallest villages.

The success of the "blueprint" for action - the Brighton Declaration and the Windhoek Call For Action - will depend on women's sports organization like **WSI** and the newly constituted African organization. Structure lends institutionalization to advocacy efforts plus the endurance to continue the work until it is done - no matter how long that may be. If there is no women's sport advocacy group in your region or country, form one. As a member of **WSI** you can count on advice and support from our leaders who have successfully worked with other women forming similar groups. By renewing your membership and bringing other women into **WSI** you are part of an international effort, one which is determined to be successful!

Task Force Reports

Sexual Harassment: Sandi Kirby (Canada) spent three weeks with in Cheltenham in July with Celia Brackenridge (UK), mainly working on setting up an international database of cases of sexual abuse in sport. We have over 240 variables and are now ready to receive items from anywhere in the world to enter. All contributions gratefully received.

Jan Toftegaard (Denmark) has the results from his masters study on sexual harassment in sport and hopes to make the data public in the next few months. He has some very interesting findings about the proportion of coaches who are sexually involved with/or interested in their athletes, both

before and after the age of consent.

Kari Fasting (Norway) continues her survey and interview work on elite female athlete as part of a larger study with Jourun Sundgot-Borgun (Norway) and Celia Brackenridge

(UK). She was on sabbatical in New Zealand during the Fall of 1998 and will recommence in-depth interviews with athletes early in 1999.

Trisha Leahy (Australia) is about to submit a PhD proposal for clinical psychology research into sexual abuse in sport via the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra.

Mariah Burton Nelson (USA) has toured the US to promote her new book EMBRACING VICTORY: Life Lessons in Competition and Compassion (William Morrow).

Karin Volkwein (USA) is planning to set up international comparative research on perceptions of sexual harassment amongst female students following her work in the US. She is in negotiation with colleagues in Germany, the UK and Israel.

In the UK the first award for personal injury has been won by a victim of sexual harassment from a sports coach. The maximum sum allowable (£7,500) was awarded by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. This now opens the way for other survivors to come forward and press for damages.

Details of the Sexual Harassment Task Force and copies of the Task Force brochure on sexual harassment in sport, which have been widely distributed at international conferences, may be obtained from: Celia Brackenridge, Leisure & Sport Research Unit, Cheltenham 7 Gloucester College of HE, Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ, UK or by e.mail: [brackenridge @chelt.ac.uk](mailto:brackenridge@chelt.ac.uk)



From the SG's Desk

There are many things to talk with you about. Carole Oglesby and I have been developing a strategy for getting the right of women to a healthy life through physical activity 'up' as a human rights issue on the UN agenda. This is a really exciting and, as you would imagine, a very challenging project.

Another thought that has been playing around in my mind is how to get the message about the value of physical activity and sport, its intrinsic worth and unique contribution to a range of areas of human development, recognised and acknowledged by institutions, governments and non governmental organizations, and by influential decision makers. This is particularly important with respect to gender equity where physical activity and sport have traditionally been undervalued.

Clearly physical activity is able to deliver on so many government/corporate sector outcomes with respect to health, economic development, and 'well being' of communities and nations as well as individual attributes such as self-confidence, self-esteem, etc. Given that the global shift is away from government/state support, especially for non-economic activities and towards more free market economic approaches, perhaps we should be looking more closely at the idea of rewards contingent on achieving outcomes more closely. For example, organisations, whether they be schools, community centres, or sports organisations receive support when they deliver physical activity and sport in ways which deliver social justice or health outcomes. This could also happen with the private sector. The Nikes and Reeboks of the world want to be good citizens as well as selling lots of running shoes. They would respond to lobbying about how they could support organisations who deliver on social justice outcomes which also meet the companies social goals.

This may all sound a little strange but it has major potential for ensuring that physical activity and sport gets the support it deserves and maximises its potential to provide unique benefits for citizens which may or may not be able to be 'economic' but can nevertheless can be measured. The principle works well in both developed and developing societies and it ensures that potentially all people have an opportunity to participate. It is a win/win situation instead of the traditional win/lose model to which sport traditionally adheres and it incorporates many ways of achieving outcomes.

Women and Sport: New Horizons

March 15-16, 1999

Singapore's first women and sport conference will examine ways to bridge the gap between the sexes in the number of women and men who actively participate in competitive and recreational activities.

Among the objectives are identifying the barriers to participation faced by women and how to overcome them, increase the awareness of the benefits of physical activity, and increase the awareness of local and global trends in women and sport.

Anita DeFrantz, Vice-President of the IOC and Chair of the IOC Women and Sport Working group will be a keynote speaker. *WSI* member, Lynn Embrey of Australia will give two talks: *Myths and Misunderstandings* related to participation constraints and *Recreation and Increasing Affluence* as we move into the 21st Century.

How to reach us by e-mail:

Carole Oglesby, President: reds@astro.ocis.temple.edu

Kari Fasting, Vice President: karifa@brage.idrettshs.no

Celia Brackenridge, Secretary: brackenridge@chelt.ac.uk

Barbara L, Drinkwater, Treasurer: bldrink@aol.com

CANADA TO HOST CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN SPORT IN 2002

The Canadian Minister of Sport, Ms Sheila Copps announced that Canada will be hosting a world conference on women and sport in 2002. Canada was chosen as the next conference site at the Second World Conference on Women and Sport that was held this year in Windhoek, Namibia. "The Government of Canada is committed to gender equity in sport," explained Minister Copps. "Hosting this conference in 2002 will help advance sport for women both nationally and internationally. I am hoping this conference will encourage and inspire Canadian women to

become involved in sport and will demonstrate the power of sport as a tool to achieve social objectives in the non-sport sector."

At the First World Conference on Women and Sport held in Brighton, England, in 1994, a Declaration on Women and Sport was approved and an International Strategy was developed. Delegates to the 1998 Conference agreed to convert the principles of the Brighton Declaration into a "Call for Action." This Windhoek Call for Action outlined priorities for the women and sport movement from now until 2002.

Some 400 delegates from 74 countries participated in the 1998 Conference designed to advance sport as a strategy for addressing global issues affecting women, to exchange good practices, to strengthen international, national, and regional networks, and to build action plans for effecting change.