

"Challenging the gender order"

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Check against delivery

Your Imperial Highness,
Governor Shiotani,
Mayor Kohyama,
Mr Takeda, President of the Japanese Olympic Committee,
CoChairs, Sue Neill and Etsuko Ogasawara and colleagues on the organizing committee,
All distinguished participants

I am honoured to make the opening keynote speech and to represent the United Nations at this Fourth World Conference on Women and Sport in Kumamoto, Japan. I congratulate the Kumamoto Prefecture and the Kumamoto City for hosting the conference. Previous International Conferences on Women and Sport - held in Brighton, UK in 1994, in Windhoek, Namibia in 1998, and in Montreal, Canada in 2002 - brought together key actors from both national and international levels and furthered the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in sport. I am sure that this conference will also make a significant contribution.

As the title of my speech suggests, I will focus on ways to challenge the existing gender order in sport. The 'gender order' could be very simplistically defined as the way society is organized around the roles, responsibilities, activities and contributions of women and men, in other words, what is expected, allowed and encouraged in relation to what women and men do in different contexts. An important starting point is the fact that the 'gender order' is not set in stone – it is possible to challenge and change.

I will begin by providing a brief overview of the key lessons learned and good practices identified in challenging the gender order and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women in other policy areas. I will then highlight some of the achievements that have been made and the gaps and challenges that remain in the area of sport, as well as suggest some areas for further action.

I. Achievements, gaps and challenges in challenging the gender order – the broad global context

Gender equality and empowerment of women is a development goal in its own right and is essential for the achievement of other goals in all socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental areas. The positive links between gender equality and empowerment of women and effective and sustainable development are very clear. Women represent half the resources and half the potentials of families, communities and nations. The Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, once said that there was no development tool more effective than the empowerment of women. Heads of State attending the 2005 World Summit at the United Nations last September stated that progress for women was progress for all.

Global goals on gender equality and empowerment of women, endorsed by the Member States of the United Nations, are found in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, and in many other outcomes of important intergovernmental processes, including in particular in the context of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The actions required to ensure the fundamental rights of both women and men, have been clearly elaborated over the past three decades through the world conferences on women organized by the United Nations. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted in 1995, involved a major breakthrough in several respects. It clearly established the responsibility of governments for promoting equality between women and men and endorsed an explicit human rights perspective and a strong focus on the empowerment of women. There was also evidence of a shift from viewing equality between women and men as a 'women's issue', and increased focus on the need for changes in attitudes and behaviour of men and boys.

In addition, 182 Member States of the United Nations have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was adopted by the United Nations in 1979. The Convention addresses the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women, in both public and private spheres of life. Both direct and indirect discrimination is prohibited in the convention, including laws, policies or programmes and conduct which may appear to be gender-neutral, but nonetheless have disproportionate detrimental effects on women. The Convention requires not only the development of an adequate legal framework but also attention to its effective implementation.

Achievement of the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women requires systematic and sustained priority attention in all policy areas. Gender mainstreaming was identified in the Beijing Platform for Action as a major strategy, alongside targeted activities for women. It requires that the contributions, priorities and needs of women as well as men are considered through gender analysis in the beginning of planning processes, in order to influence the direction of development so that both women and

men can be involved and benefit. Gender mainstreaming is the means by which policies, strategies, plans and resource allocations in all areas - political, economic, socio-cultural, environmental - can be influenced from a gender equality perspective, and it is therefore a critical strategy. Gender mainstreaming ensures that the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is the responsibility of all actors across all sectors, rather than the sole responsibility of gender specialists. It is important to note, however, that gender mainstreaming does not mean that there is no need for specific activities focused on women. Such specific actions remain very critical, given the remaining gaps and challenges to gender equality and empowerment of women in many areas.

In 2005, the ten-year review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was carried out in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Governments reported on many important achievements, but also pointed to serious obstacles and challenges in every area. The ten-year review indicated a huge gap between policy and practice which must be explicitly addressed. New recommendations are not needed in most areas; the actions required are already well known. The challenge is ensuring effective implementation of existing commitments.

A number of lessons learned through the review process can be important to consider in relation to gender equality and empowerment of women in sport. Positive developments reported include the fact that, in almost all countries around the world, policies and strategies for gender equality have now been developed and important human rights mechanisms, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), have been ratified. A broad range of mechanisms have been established at national level to promote and monitor gender equality (such as women's ministries, gender equality commissions, ombudspersons offices and parliamentary networks). Increasing efforts are being made to engage men and boys in the work for gender equality and empowerment of women.

However, even though significant gains have been made in these areas, there is still much room for improvement. Policies and strategies on gender equality and empowerment of women are only useful, and human rights instruments can only be effective, if there is systematic and effective implementation. This requires political will, resources and mechanisms for following-up and securing accountability. The establishment of specific mechanisms to work on gender equality and empowerment of women can only have a positive impact if these mechanisms are provided with clear mandates, adequate resources and appropriate political support. Efforts to involve men and boys will have little effect unless they explicitly identify and address areas of continuing male privilege which hinder gender equality and empowerment of women, which is extremely important in the world of sport and physical education.

One important positive development highlighted was the significant increase in women's specific organizations and networks over the past decade. Women have developed a relatively powerful political voice in this manner in many contexts. However, it is important not to accept that women should only be heard through their separate organizations. Women should also be equitably represented in and have access

to decision-making within all organizations. Evidence seems to suggest that in many NGOs in all parts of the world, women are under-represented at decision-making levels, and gender equality concerns are often neglected.

The separateness or “marginalization” of work to promote gender equality and empowerment of women remains a major problem. A lot of excellent work has been done on women and gender equality in different areas, such as health, education, and employment, which remains on the margins and has limited impact on important processes of policy development, resource allocation and programme design and implementation. As result, they have limited success in effectively bringing about needed changes in policies and programmes, and thus limited impact on the ground. Greater efforts are needed to bring the work on gender equality and empowerment of women to the centre of attention. An important first step is to carry out gender analysis. No decisions should be taken, or resources allocated, without analysis of the existing roles and contributions of women and men, and of the potential impact of planned actions on both women and men. Capacity to effectively utilize this analysis must be developed as required competence at all levels in organizations.

I will outline a number of critical gaps and challenges identified in the review process which also have implications for women and sport. These include the persistent, and in some cases increasing, incidence of violence against women, the under-representation of women in decision-making in all areas and at all levels, and the unequal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men. Discussions at this conference will certainly highlight why these issues have strong implications in the area of sport.

Gender-based violence is a serious development constraint that inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. The Secretary-General's study on all forms of violence against women currently under preparation highlights the enormity of the problem in all regions of the world. It cuts across all geographic, class, wealth, age, racial, ethnic and political divides. Violence against women requires a comprehensive response, which includes actions to prevent violence, prosecute and punish perpetrators and provide remedies and relief to victims.

Unequal sharing of family responsibilities has implications for women's access to education, employment, training opportunities and participation in voluntary activities. It also has implications for women wanting to take on public office, particularly where election processes require candidates to devote a significant amount of time to campaigning, which may involve traveling outside of their home areas for extended periods of time. In many contexts, this disadvantages women, who are constrained by inadequate sharing of family responsibilities and cannot devote as much time to these activities as their male counterparts. In some cases, significant financial resources are also required. In addition, the environment of institutions is not always conducive to women's participation, because meeting and activity schedules, and lack of child care facilities, cause conflicts with family obligations.

Another important challenge identified is particularly relevant in the context of this conference. Government responses illustrated that attitudes towards the gender equality and empowerment of women among the general public and within bureaucracies have not changed at the same pace as policy, legal and institutional frameworks. This is one of the main reasons why practice does not match rhetoric. Stereotypical attitudes and practices are working to the disadvantage of women and girls in all areas of society – in families, educational institutions, religious institutions, cultural institutions, sporting organizations, workplaces, political bodies and in the media. Such stereotypical attitudes and behaviours can be difficult and/or sensitive to identify and address.

Experience has shown that even if leadership in organizations make clear statements about the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women, without changes in attitudes and practices at lower levels, little positive change will result. Explicitly addressing persistent stereotypical attitudes and discriminatory practices requires significant awareness raising efforts and development of mechanisms for holding people accountable for what they do.

Addressing stereotypes will require an explicit focus on men and boys. Women and girls will also need to be specifically targeted since many stereotypes have been internalized through upbringing, education, and the media. Negative attitudes and practices are often accepted as the norm by both women and men. As a result, women and girls can have negative or low expectations and self-images. Change will require significant efforts and take time. Media has a critical role to play. Good practices have been developed which can be replicated in other contexts.

The increased understanding that gender equality is not only important for women and girls but should also be a concern for men and boys, is an important achievement of the past decade. Promotion of gender equality cannot be done by women alone and in a vacuum – men and boys are affected and must be involved in the process of change. The attitudes and behaviour of men and boys can have significant impact on the lives and well-being of women and girls. In many areas of the world, these impacts are far from positive, including in relation to violence, harassment in the workplace and other areas, and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

Awareness of this has led to increased efforts to reach and involve men and boys in positive ways. Programmes aim to change negative attitudes and behaviours that compromise the health and safety of women and girls, and to encourage men to develop egalitarian and consenting sexual relations and take responsible roles in relation to pregnancy, birth and childcare. In many countries around the world, men have mobilized in groups and networks to support, for example, campaigns to eliminate violence against women. Men are increasingly taking greater responsibility for child care, and indeed in some countries have come to demand the opportunity to do so. In some contexts, there has been a significant positive shift in involvement in family life over one generation, with benefits for women and children and men themselves.

There are many win-win situations with significant gains for men as well as women in promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. Creating a more gender-equal world will, however, involve some changes which men will not find easy. Involving more women in decision-making, for example, does mean that some men will not be able to take on these roles. However, it has to be kept in mind that for centuries women have not even had this possibility. There will be a transitional period, but attitudes will change and it will be accepted that both women and men should have equal opportunities and benefits, without this being seen as a loss for men.

An important element in reaching this level of gender equality is research on the gains for men from gender equality, including the emotional and social benefits from greater involvement in day-to-day family life, as well as from new forms of interaction with women, based on partnership within marriages, workplaces and communities.

The lessons learned from the work on increasing women's participation in political decision-making are particularly relevant for discussions at this conference. I would, therefore like to share some of them with you. For example, many of the gains that have been made in increasing the representation of women in public life can be attributed to affirmative action, such as quotas, established in constitutions, by legislation or through temporary special measures. Affirmative action, such as quotas, are not accepted by all. Experience nevertheless shows that targets do work; although incentives as well as sanctions for non-compliance, are often needed to ensure their effectiveness.

Experience has also shown that broader participation of women at local levels of decision-making may be an important first step toward women's meaningful participation at the national level. It is important to note, however, that the local context is not always inherently more democratic or more open to women's involvement than national or international levels. A related learning is that considerable specific support is required to ensure that women can participate effectively. Where such support is provided, the benefits can be great. Studies of women's political participation at local levels have indicated the empowering effects for the women themselves, as well as the positive impact of women's presence – making organizations more responsive to the priorities and needs of all stakeholders, improving the effectiveness of programmes and contributing significantly to women's empowerment.

Another important lesson is the fact that increasing the numbers of women in organizations is not enough to bring about changes in how organizations do business. Increasing women's impact on policy formulation and implementation, through explicitly advancing an agenda for gender equality and promoting the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into policy development is critical. Efforts have to be made to provide women with real opportunities for influencing the agendas, institutions and processes of decision-making. Values, norms, rules, procedures and practices, can restrict women's potential to make real choices and to give explicit attention to gender perspectives. Traditional ways of working in organizations can discourage women, through, for example, discriminatory attitudes and practices and lack of attention to mechanisms

which support a balance between family and work responsibilities for both women and men.

Training and leadership development are crucial to support women to acquire the necessary skills to reach and retain decision-making positions. Gender-sensitive training is also required for men to introduce them to gender equality issues, and develop their commitment to promoting increased participation of women in decision-making, including through identifying practical ways to support women's candidacies.

II. Women/gender equality and sport

Let me now move to discuss the topic of this conference – women and sport – and identify ways to challenge the gender order, building on the learnings from the broader global gender equality context. I should begin by explaining that, while I have long experience of working on gender equality and empowerment of women in many different areas, I am very new to the area of women and sport. In preparing for this conference I have done quite a lot of reading and have noted strong parallels between sport and many other areas, in terms of gaps and challenges in relation to gender equality and empowerment of women.

In introducing myself to the women and sport world, I began to read the sports pages and I was struck by the almost complete invisibility of women and girls in media coverage. If one did not know better, one could think that women and girls did not play sport at all.

Sport and human development

Over the past decade, there has been a growing understanding that sport can be used to promote a number of important development goals, such as human development in the areas of health, education and employment; social inclusion, including community-building and tolerance; and political development and peace and security through facilitating democratic principles, leadership development and tolerance and respect.

In November 2003, United Nations resolution 58/5 called on Governments to use sports as a means to promote education, health, development and peace, and 2005 was established as the International Year for Sport and Physical Education. The International Year aimed to facilitate better knowledge-sharing among different key stakeholders, raise general awareness, and create conditions for the implementation of more sport-based human development programmes and projects. It highlighted the power of sport to allow individuals to experience equality, freedom and empowerment, noting that *“the control over one's body experienced while practicing sport is particularly valuable for girls and women, for people with a disability, for those living in conflict areas and for people recovering from trauma.”* Goal Three of the International Year was to *“promote a culture of peace, social and gender equality and advocate dialogue and harmony through*

collective work promoting sport and physical education-based opportunities for solidarity and cooperation”.

In 2005, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/9, “*Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace*”. It also considered the contribution of sport and physical education towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and the broader aims of development and peace. It acknowledged that sport and physical education can present opportunities for solidarity and cooperation in order to promote tolerance, a culture of peace, social and gender equality, adequate responses to the special needs of persons with disabilities, dialogue and harmony.

The Beijing Platform for Action addresses the issue of women and sport in the critical areas of education, health, decision-making and the girl-child. Under education, the Platform calls for accessible recreational and sport facilities, gender-sensitive programmes for girls and women of all ages in education and community institutions and support in all areas of athletics and physical activity, including coaching, training and administration, at the national, regional and international levels. In relation to health, the Platform calls for programmes in the education system, workplace and community to make opportunities for girls and women of all ages to participate in sport, physical activity and recreation on the same basis as men and boys.

In the critical area of concern on power and decision-making, the Platform notes that the under-representation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and the law have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions. In relation to the situation of the girl-child, the Platform calls for promotion of the full and equal participation of girls in extra-curricular activities, such as sports, drama and cultural activities.

Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls for States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure equal rights with men in the field of education, and in particular to ensure, inter alia, the same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education. Article 13 calls for States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure the same rights for women and men, in particular, inter alia, the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

Gender equality perspectives on sport

Existing social constructions of masculinity and femininity - or socially accepted ways of expressing what it means to be a man or a woman in a particular socio-cultural context - play a key role in determining access, levels of participation and benefits from sport. Sport has often been associated with men and masculinity. This has had negative implications for both men and women. It can, for example, result in sport being considered inappropriate for women and can lead to the outright exclusion of women or

to varying levels of inequalities in access and opportunities to some types of sporting activities. Coaching, management and leadership is often dominated by men, even within women's sports, and this can reinforce traditional notions of gender hierarchy and power relationships, and lead to economic dependence and the risk of harassment and violence.

On the other hand, men who are not athletic and are uninterested in sport can face negative impact from these stereotypes by being labeled as unmanly and can experience social exclusion. In recent weeks I heard of examples of young boys being told not to be 'wimps' or 'sissies' and not to 'play like girls', which raises concerns about the types of gender stereotypes being projected.

It is sometimes claimed that men are innately more competitive than women in the area of sports. It is difficult to know how much of the more aggressive competitive attitude of some men to sport should be attributed to the socialization process which reinforces the existing gender order. Attitudes to sport can vary considerably among individuals, both women and men. Some individuals are focused on the competitive aspects of sport while others are more driven by the social interaction aspects.

The treatment of men and women in sport may also differ, often mirroring gender stereotypes and reinforcing gender inequalities. The Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya, for example, initially followed gender norms in the division of labour by making girls responsible for washing the football shirts and looking after younger children, while assigning boys the responsibility for equipment and maintenance. Following a series of gender training workshops, the organization made concerted efforts to redefine the responsibilities of girls and boys and share tasks equally.

In this context I would like to raise the importance of moving beyond an exclusive focus on women and sport. A women and sport focus remains critical but would be more effective if it was informed by a deeper understanding of the gender perspectives on sport, through systematic gender analysis in all areas. Women's access to, involvement in and benefits from sport can only be fully understood through comparison with men's access, involvement and benefits. A thorough gender analysis can provide critical information and statistics on the status and situation of women and men and girls and boys in relation to sport and physical education. Such information and statistics are essential for effective advocacy, awareness raising, policy development and changes in resource allocations required to change the status and situation of women and girls in sport.

There can be a risk in focusing exclusively on women of inadvertently accepting existing gender inequalities and creating strategies around these, rather than working to eliminate them. For example, perceiving the lack of child-care as only a problem for women in sporting activities can be based on an implicit acceptance that women are solely responsible for child-care. In a gender-equal world men would be equitably involved in caring responsibilities and would also need and benefit from attention to family and child-care aspects in planning and provision of sporting activities.

While it is important to focus on specific targeted activities on women and sport, particularly where there are significant gaps and barriers to women's equitable participation and benefits, the overall goal should be to promote equality through ensuring attention to both women and men as an integrated part of all activities. Women cannot promote gender equality and empowerment of women in sport by acting alone, and should not be expected to. Men, particularly those in positions of power, have to be involved in the process of change and take on leadership roles.

Benefits for women and girls of increased participation in sport and physical education

There is increased understanding of the important role sport can play for gender equality and empowerment of women. While perhaps overstating the issue somewhat, the American suffragist, Susan B. Anthony, highlighted the importance for women and girls of participation in sport by noting in 1897 that: that "*Bicycling has done more to emancipate women than any one thing in the world*". It fires the imagination to consider the kinds of changes being able to bicycle must have meant for women 100 years ago – in terms of getting outside the household, increasing avenues for social interaction, allowing a whole new range of physical movements for women and even changing dress codes.

Sport today clearly also provides a myriad of benefits for women and girls and can be a powerful tool for women's empowerment and gender equality. Sport promotes the physical and mental well-being of women and girls. Sport offers the opportunity for developing self-knowledge, self-expression, self-fulfillment and self esteem, and for demonstrating ability and skills acquisition and personal achievement, through a process of social interaction. Sport can facilitate development of the sense of ownership of women and girls of their own bodies, which can enable them to make better choices in their reproductive lives.

Other benefits include building skills in communication, teamwork, leadership and negotiation. Sport also serves as a vehicle to improve women's participation in decision-making in all areas of life. Through sport, girls acquire new interpersonal networks and access to new opportunities, allowing them to become more engaged in school and community life.

Given that sport has been traditionally perceived as a male domain, women's and girls' participation in sport also challenges gender stereotypes, and has thus potential for reducing discrimination and breaking down entrenched attitudes. Sport can offer an important space for renegotiation of the gender order and the evolution of constructions of masculinity and femininity to the benefit of both women and men. The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace has noted that by directly challenging misconceptions about women's capabilities, integrated sports programmes help to reduce discrimination and broaden the roles prescribed to women in the existing gender order.

Sporting events and arenas have also been effectively used to get important gender equality messages across to both men and boys and women and girls. This includes information for women and girls on their reproductive rights and health. Sport has also been an effective channel for information to men and boys on gender equality, including on equitable sexual relations and on violence against women. The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace found that sport can be a vehicle to help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and that the groups most at risk of contracting the disease - women and young people, especially girls - are highly responsive to sports targeted initiatives. Sport has also proven an effective means to promote reconciliation in post-conflict contexts, bringing together girls and boys and women and men from differing ethnic, socio-cultural and political backgrounds.

Participation in sport and physical activity during childhood and adolescence can have particularly important gains for girls and young women. Girls who participate in sports and physical activity at this stage in the life-cycle are more likely to be physically active at later stages in life. The skills and values learned through sport are considered to be especially important for girls, given that they have fewer opportunities than boys for social interaction outside the home and beyond family networks. In many countries, it is during adolescence that social interaction outside the home becomes considerably constrained. In such contexts, successful sports programmes can be a potential entry point for reaching girls and young women on a variety of important issues.

Girls' participation in sport can also have a significant effect on the attitudes of boys and young men towards gender equality. The Population Council's analysis of the programme implemented in Kenya by the Mathare Youth Sports Association found that, although boys expressed stereotypical attitudes to the girl soccer players, for example, that they did not learn as quickly and that they are fragile and give up easily, actually seeing girls succeed in soccer, which had previously been considered a male domain, can lead to boys reconsidering their perceptions of the roles and capabilities of girls.

Benefits for sports of women's increased involvement

In addition to benefits for women and girls themselves, women's increased involvement can promote positive development in sport - through providing alternative norms, values and attitudes, knowledge, experiences and capabilities. Women's involvement in sport can make a significant contribution to public life, community development and to building a strong and healthy nation.

There are also clear benefits from women's increased participation in decision-making in sport. It diversifies the talent pool among coaches and managers, administrators, and other officials. Increased numbers of women in key positions can, as well, enhance outreach to women and girls by providing positive role models and mentors.

I believe this is an area where we could benefit from considerably increased research and documentation. Awareness of the benefits for sport of the involvement of women and girls should be significantly increased.

Equitable access and participation

The Brighton Declaration in 1994 called for a sporting culture that values and enables the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport. Sport is an integral aspect of culture and covers a wide range of activities, including both for recreation and for competition. Participation in sporting activities involves attendance at events, participation in events - including competitive events, and participation in sports organizations. The equal opportunity to be involved in sport and physical education in its broadest sense - for leisure and recreation, promoting of health and wellbeing, or for competition, is the right of all women and men, girls and boys.

Both horizontal and vertical segregation persist, however, in sporting activities and sporting bodies. Horizontal segregation or discrimination exists because women and girls do not have access to the full range of activities available to men and boys. Vertical segregation is experienced when women and girls do not participate in management and leadership roles to the same extent to men and boys.

Generally around the world women have less access and opportunities to participate in and benefit from sporting activities than men. Women's involvement in sport varies, however, in different socio-economic and socio-cultural contexts. Women are not a homogenous group. Some groups of women and girls may have additional constraints as a result of, for example, factors of race, religion, language, and disability. These could include physical constraints in terms of restricted mobility or dress codes in some contexts. In developing sport policies and programmes, it is important to recognize the diversity and difference among women.

Women's and girls' access to and participation in sports have, however, increased over the last few decades. It is important to recognize and celebrate the gains and achievements that have been made. Many important barriers have been broken down and doors have been opened, largely through the persistent efforts of women and girls themselves, many of whom are probably represented in this room today. In the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, for example, women competed in 26 of 28 sports and 135 events (45 percent). Women represented 40.7 percent of the total number of athletes competing, setting a historical record for women's participation in the Olympic Games.

Despite progress made, there are still significant gaps and challenges in relation to the access and participation of women and girls in sport which must be clearly identified and addressed. Women continue, for example, to face discrimination in official regulations in some international competitions and sporting facilities. In the United States, the Augusta National Golf Club, which hosts the annual Masters Tournament, continues to uphold its men-only membership policy. This has led to strong opposition by national women's organizations. However, important achievements in this area are also being made. For example, the 250-year-old Royal & Ancient Club in Scotland, considered the world's leading authority on golf, lifted a long-standing ban on women playing at the Open Championship in 2005.

Participation of women and girls varies across time and space and although some barriers are common across the world, many are also context-specific. Gender norms and stereotypes, including notions of femininity and masculinity, affect the attitudes of both men and women towards sports and towards women's participation in sports. For example, in sports which are seen as male domains, women may have little incentive to become involved; women's physical capabilities can be perceived as inferior; and, accepted norms of behavior for women may exclude them from participation in some sporting activities.

While both men and women can suffer from a lack of safe and appropriate sport facilities, resources, training opportunities, technical support and access to incentives and rewards, these constraints are often exacerbated for women. For example, the unequal sharing of household and family responsibilities limits their free time. The risk of sexual harassment and abuse makes appropriate timing and location of activities critical. In addition, the lack of female role models and mentors is a significant constraint for women and girls.

Because of the lower status and valuing of specific sporting activities for women and girls, they do not have the same variety of opportunities and facilities as men. The range of opportunities provided for girls and young women does not always address and accommodate their aspirations, attitudes, and experiences and provide them with opportunities to develop physical fitness and basic sport skills.

The attitudes of men to women and their roles in sport – including among athletes, coaches, managers and officials, broadcasters, sponsors and the general public - is also a major constraint. A recent example in USA was the derogatory remarks made by a prominent New York Mets broadcaster about women's presence in the dugouts – including “I won't say that women belong in the kitchen, but they don't belong in the dugout”. A positive outcome was the criticism that his remarks drew from a wide variety of sources, and the attention given to the fact that the woman in question was the first woman to be employed full-time in a big league club's training room.

The attitudes of women and girls may also need attention, since women and girls may not have developed adequate understanding of the intrinsic value of sport and its contribution to personal development and well-being, or of their rights and potential in this area. Women and girls may have internalized many negative perceptions.

Participation of disabled women and girls in sport has increased in recent years but nevertheless remains lower than participation by able-bodied women and girls. For example, in the 1996 Paralympic Summer Games in Atlanta, only 24 percent of the athletes were women as compared to 34 percent in the 1996 Olympic Games. 47 percent of the nations competing in the Paralympic Games brought no women athletes, as compared to 13 percent of nations that brought no women athletes to the 1996 Olympic Games. Women participants in the Paralympic Games increased only 1 percent by 2000. The barriers in access to sport are daunting for disabled women, and include the lack of

access to technologically appropriate facilities and aids, such as sporting wheelchairs and prostheses.

A number of programmes and initiatives are being implemented to improve this situation. The Sport Technical Department of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) introduced a number of successful initiatives for the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games. The IPC Governing Board has also approved targets for gender representation at the 2008 Beijing Olympics - 65 percent men and 35 percent women. Much more needs to be done to increase participation and access at the grassroots and recreational level, which in turn will allow more women with disabilities to proceed to national and international competitions.

Access to decision-making

Although women's participation in sporting activities has increased in recent years in local, national and international contexts, women are still significantly under-represented in decision-making and as leaders in sporting bodies and institutions. Further efforts are needed in this area since it is critical for the theme of this conference – participation in change. Women in management and leadership positions can play a key catalytic role in promoting much-needed change.

Women are under-represented at all levels, including in coaching, management, media, commercial sporting activities such as sales and marketing, and also in bodies responsible for local, national, regional and international level events, including the International Olympic Committee. In response to this, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to increase women's representation in sports leadership and decision-making. I want to mention one initiative in particular, since it well illustrates both the achievements and challenges in promoting greater leadership roles for women.

In 1997 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) established targets for women's membership of National Olympic Committee (NOC) Executive Committees. Women should hold at least 10 percent of executive decision-making positions at national level by December 2001, rising to at least 20 percent by December 2005. The Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy at Loughborough University and the International Olympic Committee carried out a joint research project to evaluate progress in the implementation of the IOC policy on women's leadership. The research investigated the processes of recruitment, the support provided, the career paths, the roles played and the impact of women recruited into executive decision-making positions.

The project found that the introduction of targets in the IOC had a positive impact on the proportion of women in the Executive Committees of National Olympic Committees (NOC) and 62 percent of NOCs had achieved the targets. It was noted that 64 percent of NOCS had taken special measures to recruit women. The study noted that the targets were limited to only one part of the Olympic decision-making structure, the NOCs, and more work is needed to increase women's participation at other levels, including local levels.

The benefits cited from the initiative by the women themselves included the increases in women's influence in the NOCs, in participation of women in leadership training; in appointment of women to other committees, and in the general profile of women in sport. The Secretary-Generals of the NOCs indicated that women were among the most active members of the Executive Committees. The study found that 49 percent of these women also served on Women's Committees.

Among the constraints identified was the structural issue of getting women nominated and elected from a constituency of National Federations whose representatives were predominantly and traditionally male. There was concern that, despite the IOC initiative, the structure of National Federations might remain untouched. There was a recognition that successful implementation of the targets will not necessarily lead to policy changes in support of women's increased participation in decision-making. The critical importance of the IOC initiative in setting an example and providing moral leadership to the world of sport on equitable representation of women was, however, noted.

While the establishment of targets in the world of sport is very positive, it should be noted that these are lower than the 30 percent target set for all decision-making bodies by 1995, as well as the 60/40 percent targets set for local authorities. It is also critical, as recognized in the evaluation report on the IOC initiative, not to view the targets as "ceilings" for women's participation, but as minimum requirements for women's representation.

Other important initiatives have been taken to support women's participation in decision-making in sport. The International Olympic Committee, in cooperation with Olympic Solidarity, has established a programme of regional seminars for female administrators, coaches, technical officials and journalists in the national and international sports movement. Through these practical seminars, the IOC strives to evaluate progress made for women in sport; share experiences and identify challenges; consolidate and expand existing networks and partnerships; encourage the development of strategies and projects for girls and women; and, provide participants with up-to-date information about IOC policies and activities for women in sport. Similar programmes for male coaches, administrators, technical officials and journals would, however, also be very useful.

In order to raise awareness of the impact of female leadership in sport, Kennesaw State University, in association with the US Olympic Committee and the International Labour Organization (ILO), hosted a two-day conference on "*Effecting social change through women's leadership in sport*", in Atlanta, Georgia, in October 2005 as part of the International Year on Sport and Physical Education. The conference included programmes such as fostering socio-economic improvement through the perspective of women's leadership; the role of media in shaping society's perception of women; and facilitating women into leadership positions that make an impact on society.

Efforts have also been made to improve the leadership roles of girls in sport. A sports programme in Cote d'Ivoire supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and

Cooperation ensures that girls are represented among peer leaders who provide support to other members of the group. Similarly, in the Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya, at least one girl is appointed to each of the councils and committees that serve as decision-making bodies for the organization.

As more women serve in leadership and decision-making positions, their influence as role models has the potential to encourage women to participate at all levels in the sporting world. A research project, “This could be you!”, was carried out in Austria as part of the International Year on Sport and Physical Education. It presented female athletes in top sports as role models for girls and women. Long-term mentorship has also been identified as an important means of providing the encouragement and moral support necessary for developing an enabling environment for women’s and girls’ increased participation in sport and sport-leadership.

Inequality in resources, wages and financial incentives

Women and girls face discrimination in a number of other critical areas. These include access to top quality facilities, training and other resources. Competition opportunities, rewards and incentives, promotion and sponsorship and recognition are also not provided equitably to both women and men. This applies to both contexts involving elite or professional athletes and local contexts involving amateur athletes.

The value placed on women-specific sports is generally much lower than for men’s sports. The resources provided to women athletes and women’s teams are often less than those provided to their male counterparts. When existing resources are shared, such as equipment or playing fields, men’s teams may often be given priority. For example, a study on the Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya found that boys were given priority in access to opportunities and resources, such as preferred schedules and playing fields. This type of practice occurs even at the highest international level, such as the Wimbledon Tennis Championships.

Inequalities between male and female professional athletics also exist in relation to wages and other financial compensation. For instance, the average salary in the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) is only 2 percent of the all-male National Basketball Association’s (NBA) average. Professional women athletes also usually attract fewer and lower-paying commercial endorsements and other financial incentives. Rewards and prizes for women’s sports are also commonly lower than for male events at all levels. A recent local bike riding competition in North-Eastern Australia, for example, advertised a prize of AUS\$ 5,000 for the men’s race and AUS\$ 1,000 for the women’s event. The rationale for this difference in prizes was that there were fewer women competitors, leading to less interest in the women’s event, and, as a consequence, less incentive for private sector sponsors to provide prizes. However, some international competitions have achieved equity in prize monies. In tennis, the French, Australian and US Opens now offer men and women competitors equal prize money, leaving Wimbledon as the only major tennis tournament with prize money inequity.

Women's sports and the media

Despite the call for media to positively portray and significantly cover the breadth, depth, quality and benefits of girls' and women's involvement in sport in the Windhoek Call for Action in 1998, there is still very far to go before women's sports are given equitable treatment in the media, both general media and speciality sports media. The exclusive promotion of male sports idols in the media can create or exacerbate unequal perceptions of the value of male athletes and male-dominated sporting activities compared with women athletes and women's sport. Media coverage can also disseminate negative gender images and perceptions of women projected by some male sports idols. In addition, one can question the role models for boys and young men being projected.

The multi-billion dollar sports-media industry is primarily focused on men's sport, with little attention paid to women's sporting events. While many local, national and international competitions include both men's and women's events, the men's events invariably dominate in media attention at all levels. For example, in the United States, the media coverage ratio between male and female professional sports in 2004 was 95 to 1 in US television and 20 to 1 in US print media. Women's and other "alternative" sports remain marginalized from the mainstream sporting industry. A study conducted by the Australian Sports Commission in the 1990s found that in Australia coverage of women's sport was just 2 percent of total sports broadcasting in television, 1.4 percent in radio and 6.8 percent in sports magazines.

The Australian Sports Commission has also noted that the language used in media reporting is different for men and women. Women are frequently portrayed as girls, no matter what their age, and described in terms of their physical attributes and emotional responses, often in ways that stress weakness, passivity and insignificance. The marketing and promotion of women's sports can also be highly sexualized – which puts women athletes at a greater risk of harassment and undermines efforts to encourage equitable participation in sports. Media coverage of women's sports not only needs to be increased and prioritized, but the quality and style of reporting must also be addressed.

To address the inequalities in media coverage, Austria, Norway, Lithuania, Italy and Iceland participated in a cross-European research project initiative, "Sport media and stereotypes – women and men in sports and media". The project explored similarities and differences in representations of women and men in sports. It promoted change in the gendered stereotypes in sports by raising awareness on the impact of representation of male and female athletes, including creating and maintaining stereotypical images of women and men.

Violence against women, exploitation and sexual harassment in the context of sports

Women and girls who engage in sports may face the risk of gender-based violence, exploitation and harassment. The general situation with regard to violence against women in societies can create risks. In such contexts, practical logistical aspects of location, timing and transport can be critical. The location of practice areas or competition sites may, for example, involve travel and scheduled practice or competition times may put

women and girls at risk of violence if they have to travel after dark. Affordable and reliable transportation, appropriate hours for events and safe sporting locations are all important criteria for increasing women's and girls' participation in sports.

The risk of violence may also stem from resistance to the challenging of gender boundaries and the asserting of independence that women's and girls' participation can represent. Women and girls may face physical and social punishment from family or community members who see their involvement in sport as inappropriate. Women and girls may also risk verbal harassment, including of a sexual nature, from male players or spectators because their participation is seen as a departure from accepted gender roles. For example, girls playing football as part of the Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya spoke of the taunts and jeers of the boys who teased them as they walked in the community and of the risk of being harassed by street boys near the playing field.

The dominance of men in coaching and management also reinforces traditional patriarchal power hierarchies. The abuse of power by coaches and managers may lead to exploitation and physical and verbal sexual harassment. To address this issue, the NGO, Women Sport International, has taken an important step in encouraging all sports organisations to establish codes of ethics and conduct for coaches; foster a climate of open discussion about sexual harassment and abuse; incorporate these issues into coach education programmes; introduce reporting and mediation systems; and adopt rigorous screening procedures for the appointment of all personnel. This is an issue which other organizations, such as the IOC and NOCs should directly address and show the same leadership as in the issue of targets for women's participation.

Issues of violence, exploitation and abuse of women in the context of male sports are also of increasing concern. Male sports traditionally enhance a notion of masculinity based on men's dominance and physical strength. With this notion comes power and privilege. Sexual violence committed by male athletes has remained unquestioned in some contexts. An American sports commentator, Frank Deford, has, for example, commented:

“Hardly a week goes by it seems without some pro or college star being hauled up on some brutal charge against a woman. It is risky to try to explain this simply, but certainly part of this sorry trend can be accounted for by the fact that athletes are now given so much, and forgiven so much, and from so early on, that they become imbued with a sense of entitlement previously only found with royal princes of the realm. After a while it is hard to believe that anybody will turn you down, particularly any woman. Yet while there is a lot of bemoaning about the athletes' violence towards women, has it affected the popularity of any sport, especially the NBA (National Basketball Association) where misconduct of all kinds appears most abundant? ... Until we see evidence to the contrary, we can continue to assume that how pro-athletes treat women is simply not germane so long as they treat the games we love with respect and devotion.”

Another growing issue of concern is the link between international sporting events and prostitution. For example, an increase in prostitution was identified during the

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Confederations Cup in 2005. This issue is of concern to many in the context of the World Cup 2006 in Germany. Organizers are expecting about 3 million, mainly male, spectators. This concern on the linkages between sport and the demand for prostitution is increased by the risk of the use of human trafficking to fill the demand. Interpol has noted that *“prostitution networks set up specific organisations to take advantage of major sporting events”*. In the run-up to the World Cup 2006, NGOs are preparing a number of initiatives, such as multilingual hotlines, shelters for victims of trafficking and outreach activities to women in their home countries. A number of NGOs, including the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW), have launched campaigns to ask football players and teams to make a public stand on the sexual exploitation of women linked to sport, but to date have had little success in mobilizing support.

Other important efforts for women and sport

Efforts have been made within sports organizations at different levels to promote women’s access, involvement, and benefits. This is reflected in the current Olympic Charter, adopted in 2004, which states that one of the roles of the IOC is to *“encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women.”*

Institutional mechanisms have been put in place to support this work. In 1995, the IOC established a Working Group on Women and Sport, which was elevated to the status of a commission in 2004. The Commission on Women and Sport, which meets once a year, monitors the participation of women in the Olympics as well as their representation in decision-making. On the basis of its recommendations, an action programme was developed. The Commission also conducts a number of promotional activities, for example, the IOC’s Women and Sport Trophy, introduced in 2000, which is awarded annually.

Conferences and meetings have been used effectively over the past decade. Since 1994 World Conferences on Women and Sport have assessed the progress made, and defined priority actions to increase the involvement of women. The declarations of principles and calls for action emanating from these conferences have provided important guidance. The conferences have also provided critical space for sharing of case studies and success stories on how sport has impacted positively on the lives of women and girls, as well as how involvement of women and girls makes positive contributions to sport development. Women's roles in sport have become more visible as a result. The conferences have provided positive and powerful role models through participation of outstanding women leaders from around the world.

The women and sport movement has made major efforts to redress the imbalances women and girls face in their involvement in all areas and at all levels of sport, and to accelerate the process of change, in particular through advocacy, research and data collection, monitoring and reporting progress, and the development of specific targeted programmes for women and girls.

Sports activities are increasingly supported by development agencies, including the United Nations and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations. Initiatives include, as well as projects and programmes, research, data collection, advocacy activities, conferences and workshops and support to networking. It is critical that gender perspectives are fully integrated into these activities. This requires developing a deeper understanding of the barriers women and girls may face in accessing, participating in and benefiting from sporting activity and identifying ways to address them.

III. Conclusions: What more should be done to move forward

Through the inequalities described, a negative cycle can be established: that is, the low level of interest in the participation of women and girls in sporting activities does not stimulate equitable investments in terms of facilities, resources, opportunities, attention in the media and distribution of incentives and rewards, which can in turn lead to lessened interest of women and girls to participate. This negative cycle can only be broken with increased awareness, political commitment to bring about positive change, significantly increased investment of resources, and development of accountability mechanisms for all actors in key positions in the world of sport.

A number of critical elements for challenging the gender order and establishing an enabling environment for gender equality and empowerment of women have been identified, which also apply to women and sport. These include improving women's *capabilities*, including through education and health; increasing their access to and control over *opportunities and resources*, such as employment and economic assets; enhancing their *agency and leadership* roles; as well as protecting and promoting their *human rights*; and ensuring their *security*, including freedom from violence.

The foundations of a sound action framework for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in sport are already in place, thanks in large part to the earlier world conferences on women in sport. There are a number of areas in which this framework can be significantly strengthened and expanded. I will briefly outline some areas where the focus could be enhanced.

- The focus on targets for women's participation in decision-making and leadership should be increased and targets raised further where possible. Follow-up of targets should be strengthened. Concrete targets should be set for local levels. Development of databases could be considered for different levels to provide a resource for those seeking women for leadership positions.
- Efforts should be made to move beyond increasing numbers of women participating to enhancing the effectiveness of their participation through increased voice in shaping policy decisions, resource allocations, and programme development, including through strengthened leadership development for women and girls. The types of support mechanisms required should be identified.

- Greater attention should be given to influencing organizational cultures – ensuring that values, attitudes and procedures within organizations are more conducive to women’s equitable participation in change. Increased attention to work-life balance would be important – through ensuring appropriate meeting times and provision of child-care facilities for both mothers and fathers.
- Identifying male allies among athletes, coaches, managers, and other leaders, including in the media, and establishing strategic partnerships in promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women will be an important strategy for the future. Since much power and authority currently remains in the hands of men, men in leadership positions have a special responsibility to work for constructive change. Men must be encouraged to play a more visible supportive role. Training for men on gender equality issues in sport and practical ways to address them will be an important strategy. Men should also be encouraged to develop positive role models for boys and young men.
- Further developing secure and supportive environments for women and girls in sport should continue to be a high-priority issue. In particular efforts should be made to ensure that men with positions of power in women’s sport – such a coaches and managers - do not abuse their power and the trust placed in them. Effective accountability mechanisms must be put in place.
- Collaboration in pursuit of the important goals outlined will be essential. There are of necessity many different actors involved in this important work – men as well as women. The impact of efforts of all actors will be increased through close collaboration , sharing of experiences and lessons learned, and where appropriate, coordination of efforts.

The International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005 provided potential for increased systematic attention to gender equality and empowerment of women in sport. While gender perspectives were not systematically incorporated into processes, important opportunities have been created. The International Year has generated considerably increased attention to the issue of sport at all levels, and there will be important follow-up processes which should be more systematically and effectively influenced from a gender perspective. Concerted efforts should be made to build on the momentum created by the International Year to move positions forward on women and sport.

The Division for the Advancement of Women, where I work, for example, will collaborate with UN colleagues, including the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport and Development, to ensure that follow-up work incorporates significantly more attention to gender equality and empowerment of women. The Division will also produce a publication on women and sports which will be widely disseminated to Member States, NGOs and other stakeholders to raise awareness and

commitment to the issue. The publication involves collaboration with key actors in the women and sports movement, including, among others, the International Working Group on Women and Sport, WomenSport International, the International Association of Physical Education for Women and Girls, and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education.

In conclusion, as the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has emphasized time and time again, gender equality is not the responsibility of women, it is the responsibility of us all, men as well as women. Moving forward is dependent on all actors at all levels working consistently to keep attention on the issue. The contributions of individuals are very important. At the very least, we should be clear about the vision of gender equality and empowerment of women in the world of sport. We should also refuse to accept the discrimination and inequalities that we experience ourselves or see around us. These inequalities are often subtle and insidious and it can require considerable courage to confront them, particularly in contexts where taking a stand for gender equality and empowerment of women can lead to ridicule or harassment. Only if individual women and men are prepared to make a stand will real change be possible.

As Ghandi once said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world”.

I thank you all for your efforts in this area and look forward to future collaboration.