

THE BRIGHTON DECLARATION ON WOMEN AND SPORT

Women Sport and the Challenge of Change

The first international conference on women and sport, which brought together policy and decision makers in sport at both national and international level, took place in Brighton, UK from 5-8 May 1994. It was organised by the British Sports Council and supported by the International Olympic Committee. The conference specifically addressed the issue of how to accelerate the process of change that would redress the imbalances women face in their participation and involvement in sport.

The 280 delegates from 82 countries representing governmental and non-governmental organisations, national Olympic committees, international and national sport federations and educational and research institutions, endorsed the following Declaration. The Declaration provides the principles that should guide action intended to increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles.

In addition, the conference agreed to establish and develop an international women and sport strategy which encompasses all continents. This should be endorsed and supported by governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in sport development. Such an international strategic approach will enable model programmes and successful developments to be shared among nations and sporting federations, so accelerating the change towards a more equitable sporting culture worldwide.

BACKGROUND

Sport is a cultural activity which, practiced fairly and equitably, enriches society and friendship between nations. Sport is an activity which offers the individual the opportunity of self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfilment; personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability; social interaction, enjoyment, good health and well-being. Sport promotes involvement, integration and responsibility in society and contributes to the development of the community.

Sport and sporting activities are an integral aspect of the culture of every nation. However, while women and girls account for more than half of the world's population and although the percentage of their participation in sport varies between countries, in every case it is less than that of men and boys.

Despite growing participation of women in sport in recent years and increased opportunities for women to participate in domestic and international arenas, increased representation of women in decision making and leadership roles within sport has not followed. Women are significantly under-represented in management, coaching and officiating, particularly at the higher levels. Without women leaders, decision makers and role models within sport, equal opportunities for women and girls will not be achieved.

Women's experiences, values and attitudes can enrich, enhance and develop sport. Similarly, participation in sport can enrich, enhance and develop women's lives.

A. SCOPE AND AIMS OF THE DECLARATION

1. SCOPE

This Declaration is addressed to all those governments, public authorities, organisations, businesses, educational and research establishments, women's organisations and individuals who are responsible for, or who directly or indirectly influence, the conduct, development or promotion of sport or who are in any way involved in the employment, education, management, training, development or care of women in sport. This Declaration is meant to complement all sporting, local, national and international charters, laws, codes, rules and regulations relating to women or sport.

2. AIMS

The overriding aim is to develop a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport.

It is the interests of equality, development and peace that a commitment be made by governmental, non-governmental organisations and all those institutions involved in sport to apply the Principles set out in this Declaration by developing appropriate policies, structures and mechanisms which:

- ensure that all women and girls have opportunity to participate in sport in a safe and supportive environment which preserves the rights, dignity and respect of the individual;
- increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles;
- ensure that the knowledge, experiences and values of women contribute to the development of sport;
- promote the recognition of women's involvement in sport as a contribution to public life, community development and in building a healthy nation;
- promote the recognition by women of the intrinsic value of sport and its contribution to personal development and healthy lifestyle.

B. THE PRINCIPLES

1. EQUITY AND EQUALITY IN SOCIETY AND SPORT

a. Every effort should be made by state and government machineries to ensure that institutions and organisations responsible for sport comply with the equality provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

b. Equal opportunity to participate and be involved in sport whether for the purpose of leisure and recreation, health promotion or high performance, is the right of every woman, regardless of race, colour, language, religion, creed, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, political belief or affiliation, national or social origin.

c. Resources, power and responsibility should be allocated fairly and without discrimination on the basis of sex, but such allocation should redress any inequitable balance in the benefits available to women and men.

2. FACILITIES

Women's participation in sport is influenced by the extent variety and accessibility of facilities. The planning, design and management of these should appropriately and equitably meet the particular needs of women in the community, with special attention given to the need for child care provision and safety.

3. SCHOOL AND JUNIOR SPORT

Research demonstrates that girls and boys approach sport from markedly different perspectives. Those responsible for sport, education, recreation and physical education of young people should ensure that an equitable range of opportunities and learning experience, which accommodate the values, attitudes and aspirations of girls, is incorporated in programmes to develop physical fitness and basic sport skills of young people.

4. DEVELOPING PARTICIPATION

Women's participation in sport is influenced by the range of activities available. Those responsible for delivering sporting opportunities and programmes should provide and promote activities which meet women's needs and aspirations.

5. HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT

a. Governments and sports organisations should provide equal opportunities to women to reach their sports performance potential by ensuring that all activities and programmes relating to performance improvements take account of the specific needs of female athletes.

b. Those supporting elite and/or professional athletes should ensure that competition opportunities, rewards, incentives, recognition, sponsorship, promotion and other forms of support are provided fairly and equitably to both women and men.

6. LEADERSHIP IN SPORT

Women are under-represented in the leadership and decision making of all sport and sport-related organisations. Those responsible for these areas should develop policies and programmes and design structures which increase the number of women coaches, advisers, decision makers, officials, administrators and sports personnel at all levels with special attention given to recruitment, development and retention.

7. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Those responsible for the education, training and development of coaches and other sports personnel should ensure that education processes and experiences address issues relating to gender equity and the needs of female athletes, equitably reflect women's role in sport and take account of women's leadership experiences, values and attitudes.

8. SPORT INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

Those responsible for research and providing information on sport should develop policies and programmes to increase knowledge and understanding about women and sport and ensure that research norms and standards are based on research on women and men.

9. RESOURCES

Those responsible for the allocation of resources should ensure that support is available for sportswomen, women`s programmes and special measures to advance this Declaration of Principles.

10. DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Government and non-government organisations should incorporate the promotion of issues of gender equity and the sharing of examples of good practice in women and sport policies and programmes in their associations with other organisations, within both domestic and international arenas.