

PROPOSED LETTER TO OUR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS

TO:

FROM:

RE: **REQUEST TO TAKE A POSITION ON THE ELIMINATION OF OLYMPIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND ADVOCATE FOR REVERSAL OF SUCH DECISIONS**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has taken action to eliminate a net of 126 participation opportunities for women in the Olympic Games in two separate actions occurring after Athens:

- Loss of twelve (12) in women's double-trap shooting,
- Loss of one hundred eighteen (118) in women's softball
- Gain of four (4) in cycling from the elimination of the women's 500m time trial (-12) and the addition of women's BMX (+16)

All decisions concerning disciplines, events and quotas are taken up by the IOC Executive Board. The next meeting of the IOC Executive Board is in November 2005.

These actions are in direct contradiction to the IOC's stated goals of increasing the participation of women in the Olympic Games and represent a serious setback in efforts to achieve gender equity in Olympic participation. It behooves the international women's sports community to consider taking action to object to and request that the IOC reconsider and rescind such actions.

Please consider taking the following actions:

- 1) If you are the member of a sports organization, ask that organization or the Olympic Committee in your country to take formal organization action to adopt the following or a similar resolution to be formally transmitted to each of the members of the International Olympic Committee, the IOC Women and Sport, Commission, each of the presidents of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the presidents of the International Sport Federations (ISFs).
- 2) Ask your friends and players you know in other countries to write to their respective NOC Executive Board members and the IOC members representing their countries or regions to transmit their support for this or a similar resolution with copies of such letters also being sent to the President of the IOC and the members of the IOC Women and Sport Commission.
- 3) If you are the member of a sports organization that has a convention or meeting, or are members of a team, have the meeting attendees or your teammates sign the resolution as a petition and send to the IOC President and the IOC Women and Sport Commission.

Lists of members of the International Olympic Committee, the IOC Executive Board and the IOC Women and Sport Commission with mailing addresses are provided for your convenience. Lists of countries participating in cycling, shooting and softball are also provided.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Whereas the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has cited their remarkable achievement in moving “gender equity” to a higher level in Athens, 2004;

Whereas the IOC has consistently acted to increase opportunities for women to compete in the Olympics and participate as leaders on National Olympic Committees;

Whereas women are significantly underrepresented in the Olympic Games, comprising 4,306 or 41% of the 10,568 participants in the Athens Games;

Whereas, women’s sports numbered 26 compared to 27 for men in the Athens Games and with the action to eliminate softball and baseball from the 2012 program will now number 25 sports for women compared to 26 for men;

Whereas, women’s medal events in the Olympic Games number 125 compared to 166 for men (43%) and 10 coed events and, with the actions taken following the Athens Games, will now number 123 events for women compared to 164 for men;

Whereas IOC actions after the Athens Games to change the 2008 and 2012 Olympic programs have resulted in the elimination of 3% or a net loss of one hundred and twenty-six (126) opportunities for women to participate [loss of twelve (12) in double-trap shooting, loss of one hundred eighteen (118) in softball and a net gain of four (4) from the elimination of the 500m time trial and the addition of BMX in cycling, in direct contradiction to the IOC’s stated goals;

Whereas 136 countries participate in shooting and 113 countries participate in softball and there are sports with fewer countries participating that remain on the Olympic program (Pentathlon (102) and Triathlon (97) and many sports with similar country participation numbers remain on the Olympic program (i.e., rowing-116, fencing-115, hockey-114);

Whereas, IOC concerns with the sport of baseball, specifically with regard to the lack of proper doping controls and the absence of the most highly skilled from the Games, do not apply to the sport of softball which is not women’s baseball;

Whereas, softball and shooting are sports that can be played in discrete dress and are therefore particularly important to increasing Olympic participation opportunities among Muslim women;

Whereas the host countries for the 2008 and 2012 Games have already committed to having facilities, accommodations and resources necessary to support the women’s participation opportunities that have been eliminated;

Whereas decreasing opportunities for women in the Olympic Games is inconsistent with the IOC’s efforts to increase gender equity for women in the Olympic Movement;

Whereas the addition of participation opportunities in both numbers of sports and numbers of events is required to achieve gender equity;

Whereas, any action to decrease opportunities for women in the Olympic Movement sends a depressing message to those female athletes who are trying to overcome participation barriers in their respective countries and sports; and

Whereas, the elimination of equal numbers of men's and women's participation opportunities in an effort to reduce the cost of the Olympic Games to a host country discriminates against women because women are already significantly underrepresented as participants.

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the IOC consider this respectful request to reconsider and rescind its previous actions to reduce women's participation in the Olympic Games;

Further Be It Resolved that the IOC consider adopting a policy of transparency in all voting on Olympic matters, specifically prohibiting the use of secret ballots;

Further Be It Resolved that the IOC consider this respectful request to adopt a policy that no Olympic participation opportunities for women be eliminated until such time as gender equity in participation numbers is realized;

Further be it resolved that the IOC consider adding women's sports and women's events until such time as gender equity in participation opportunities is achieved; and

Finally Be It Resolved that the IOC be applauded for its past and future efforts to achieve gender equity in the Olympic Movement.

Signature