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INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE POLICY ON HIV/AIDS

PREAMBLE

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has taken the lives of millions of people like never before in the history of mankind. It is estimated that at least 25 million people have died from AIDS since 1981 when the HIV/AIDS virus was first identified. In total, some 70 million have been infected by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS while 42 million are currently living with the HIV/AIDS. Millions more are affected by the epidemic.

According to UNICEF, some 33 per cent of those living with HIV/AIDS are under the age of 25 making it the biggest contributor to significant decline of economic development and the collapse of social structures and cohesion in many of the affected societies. It should be noted that societies depend on that age group for economic development and competitive sport.

The United Nations predicts that although the epicentre of the epidemic is Sub-Saharan Africa, indications are that it is now shifting to Asia and Eastern Europe unless decisive action is taken. One of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals adopted by the 55th Session of the General Assembly has as its target the halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

It is recognized that confronting the HIV/AIDS pandemic will require a wide range of co-ordinated actions spanning all sectors, including governments and civil society.

Therefore, the fight against HIV/AIDS is one that the Olympic Movement must of necessity address by joining international partnerships to boost up the global response to this catastrophe. Furthermore, the IOC is unique in that it is one organization that brings together the largest number of disparate international sports federations and youth from around the world and organizes the biggest and most popular sports festival on earth.

INTRODUCTION

Millions of young people have died without realizing their full potential, including that of participating in organized sport. The Olympic Movement is aware of the social and economic impact the epidemic has had on the sporting community. It is therefore time that it mobilized its constituents to add to the global effort. There is indeed a need for innovative actions and partnerships to scale up the global response to the epidemic. A new powerful and vibrant voice must be heard in order to scale up the global response to the epidemic. This voice is that of the Olympic Movement.

The IOC acknowledges that the economic decline and the collapse of civil structures in some affected countries inevitably affect sport. It is acknowledged that sports organizations will increasingly be confronted with the fact that athletes, coaches, administrators and volunteers will become ill and die.

There is widespread feeling that the HIV/AIDS catastrophe is one that the IOC must of necessity help address by joining the international community in fighting by lending its vast network, its credibility and some of its resources.

1. THE ROLE OF THE IOC

The IOC has a moral obligation, as indeed it is required by its own Charter to place sport at the service of mankind. The world of sport is not separate from the rest of the world. Sport teaches life skills, builds self-esteem and confidence, all of which can be used in tackling the spread of HIV.

The IOC will play a leading role in the Olympic Movement's contribution to the global fight against HIV/AIDS by committing effort and mobilising resources. It will encourage its constituents to participate fully in the effort.

From time to time, the IOC will participate in HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. It will also as a policy issue statements of support for the fight against HIV/AIDS on such symbolic occasions as the World AIDS Day.

The IOC endorses the International Labour Organisation's "Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work." The code, among others, requires that there be no discrimination or stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS.

2. IOC RELATIONSHIP WITH UN AND OTHER AGENCIES

The IOC is neither a health organization nor an institution that traditionally addresses social issues. The IOC will, therefore, collaborate with existing expert structures of major organizations which are already in the field, in particular UN agencies with which it already has agreements of co-operation. It will also seek

new partnerships with multi-lateral organizations such as the World Bank in this regard.

3. OPPORTUNITIES OPEN TO THE IOC

The IOC will take advantage of the two Olympic Games, the Olympic Youth Camp and the Olympic Day Run, among others, to carry and pass on important themes and messages on HIV/AIDS information and advocacy by publishing pamphlets and other educational materials for athletes. The Olympic Youth Camp brings together youths from all parts of the world while the Olympic Day Run is uniquely the only global sporting event for ordinary persons.

The IOC will encourage ANOC and Continental Associations to incorporate HIV/AIDS education in their activities.

The IOC will urge NOCs and their structures to work hand in hand with international and national HIV/AIDS control organizations in this regard. It is particularly noted that in all the target countries, national organizations, which include government and non-governmental organizations as well as multi-lateral bodies, have already established programmes to co-ordinate the fight against HIV/AIDS.

4. THE ROLE OF NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES

The IOC will actively urge NOCs and their structures to place their networks and organizational and other resources at the disposal of national efforts that are aimed at reducing and eventually reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. To that end, the IOC urges NOCs and their structures to include in their training programmes for coaches, administrators and athletes, HIV/AIDS awareness sessions.

NOCs are urged to particularly encourage high-profile sports personalities to be involved in anti-HIV/AIDS campaigns as role models.

The IOC encourages NOCs, their structures and their constituents to participate in capacity building to give them the necessary confidence and tools in order to effectively contribute to the fight against the pandemic. The NOCs are encouraged to actively participate in activities marking World AIDS Day and other such symbolic public occasions.

5. PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

The IOC identifies poverty, lack of education, ignorance and gender inequality as some of the major contributing factors to the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the IOC shall make special efforts to promote education and develop poverty alleviation programmes for youth and women in developing societies and

will encourage its partners and sponsors to join the Olympic Movement in these initiatives.

The IOC shall collaborate with partners, sponsors and relevant international agencies to develop special tool kits specifically designed for use in training programmes for young people and sports persons and sports personnel.

CONCLUSION

The HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a real and serious threat to human existence, development and security. The fact that it mainly targets and incapacitates the youth, who form the backbone of Olympic Movement programmes, raises the concern of the IOC. The IOC is therefore obliged not only by this concern but also by its own Charter, which requires that sport be placed at the service of man, to participate in the global fight to halt and reverse the HIV/AIDS epidemic

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