

International Working Group on Women and Sport

THE WINDHOEK CALL FOR ACTION

The 400 delegates from 74 countries present at the 2nd World Conference on Women and Sport held in Windhoek, Namibia, 19-22 May 1998 called for action throughout the world to further the development of equal opportunities for girls and women to participate fully in sport in its broadest sense. This call reflected an overwhelming desire on the part of all delegates to seek greater co-operation and co-ordination between the many agencies and organizations responsible for women's issues, and recognized and stressed the importance that sport can and should play in the advancement of girls and women.

The Conference recognized the need for linkages into existing international instruments, in particular the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, that impact directly and indirectly on advancement of girls and women.

The Conference celebrated the successes achieved by and for girls and women since the endorsement of the Brighton Declaration in 1994. These success stories demonstrate clearly the potential of sport to impact positively on lives of girls and women.

This Call for Action is addressed to all men and women in those national and international sport organizations, governments, public authorities, development agencies, schools, businesses, educational and research institutions, women's organizations, who are responsible for, or who directly 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 girls and women in sport.

In addition to re-affirming the principles of the Brighton Declaration, the Conference delegates called for action in the following areas:

1. Develop action plans with objectives and targets to implement the principles of the Brighton Declaration, and monitor and report upon their implementation.
2. Reach out beyond the current boundaries of the sport sector to the global women's equality movement and develop closer partnerships between sport and women's organizations on the one side, and representatives from sectors such as education, youth, health, human rights and employment on the other. Develop strategies that help other sectors obtain their objectives through the medium of sport and at the same time further sport objectives.

3. Promote and share information about the positive contribution that girls' and women's involvement in sport makes, inter alia, to social, health and economic issues.
4. Build the capacity of women as leaders and decision-makers and ensure that women play meaningful and visible roles in sport at all levels. Create mechanisms that ensure that young women have a voice in the development of policies and programmes that affect them.
5. Avert the "world crisis in physical education" by establishing and strengthening quality physical education programmes as key means for positive introduction to young girls of the skills and other benefits they can acquire through sport. Further, create policies and mechanisms that ensure progression from school to community-based activity.
6. Encourage the media to positively portray and significantly cover the breadth, depth, quality and benefits of girls' and women's involvement in sport.
7. Ensure a safe and supportive environment for girls and women participating in sport at all levels by taking steps to eliminate all forms of harassment and abuse, violence and exploitation, and gender testing.
8. Ensure that policies and programmes provide opportunities for all girls and women in full recognition of the differences and diversity among them - including such factors as race, ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, culture or their status as an indigenous person.
9. Recognize the importance of governments to sport development and urge them to develop appropriate legislation, public policy and funding monitored through gender impact analysis to ensure gender equality in all aspects of sport.
10. Ensure that Official Development Assistance programmes provide equal opportunities for girls' and women's development and recognize the potential of sport to achieve development objectives.
11. Encourage more women to become researchers in sport, and more research to be undertaken on critical issues relating to women in sport.

Windhoek, Namibia
22 May 1998