



## **Brighton plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport**

Adopted during the 6th IWG World Conference on Women and Sport  
in Helsinki, Finland from June 12–15, 2014

### **History: 1994 to 2014**

The first international conference on women and sport brought together policy and decision makers in sport at both national and international level, in Brighton, UK from 5 – 8 May 1994.

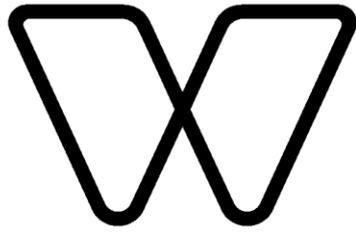
It was organised by the British Sports Council and supported by the International Olympic Committee. The conference specifically addressed the issue of how to accelerate the process of change that would redress the imbalances women faced in their participation and involvement in sport.

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 Brighton Declaration, which provided the principles to guide the action intended to increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles.

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

During the following two decades (1994 – 2014), the International Working Group on Women and Sport was established to monitor the response to the Brighton Declaration, provide support to those working at the national and regional level, and to establish an international network of activists and advocates working to deliver the aims and principles of the Declaration. International Conferences were held in Windhoek (1998), Montreal (2002), Kumamoto (2006) and Sydney (2010), each focusing on the means of progressing the Declaration. During those 20 years, there has been significant growth of evidence and understanding of the barriers and dynamics which prevent girls and women from full participation and achievement in sport and physical activity; and growing evidence of the positive effect of participation in sport and physical activity on girls' and women's health, well-being, social capital and educational engagement and achievement.

June 12 – 15, 2014, more than 800 delegates from close to 100 countries attended the 6th IWG World Conference on Women and Sport, in Helsinki "Lead the Change, Be the Change". Reaffirming the Brighton Declaration, the Conference also approved an updated version "Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport", which embraces physical activity as an essential extension of organised sport, especially for girls and women. Hence, the Declaration includes reference to physical activity as well as sport, throughout.



**IWG**  
**Women & Sport**

## **Background**

Sport is a cultural activity which, if practiced fairly and equitably, enriches society and friendship between nations. Sport is an activity which offers individuals with whatever background, race, religion, sexual orientation or ability the opportunity of self-knowledge and confidence development, self-expression and fulfillment; personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability; social interaction, enjoyment, good health and well-being. Sport and physical activity promote involvement, integration and responsibility in society and contribute to the development of the community. There is increasing evidence of the positive contributions of participation in sport and physical activity to health, well-being, human capital and educational and social achievement.

Sport and physical 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 and physical activity varies between countries, in almost every case it is less than that of men and boys.

Despite growing participation of women in sport and physical activity 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 and physical activity has been slow to follow. Women are significantly under-represented in management, administration, coaching and officiating, particularly at the higher levels. Further women continue to be discriminated in sport and are subjects to gender based violence.

Many factors, external to sport, can affect women's levels of participation and other involvement in sport. These include the situation at home, legal status in society or the role of physical education at school. However, there are many aspects at play within the sport sector itself which can hamper the participation of women.

Without women leaders, decision makers and role models and gender sensitive boards and management with women and men within sport and physical activity, equal opportunities for women and girls will not be achieved.

Women's experiences, values and attitudes can enrich, enhance and develop sport and physical activity: the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the Post 2015 Development Goals (and Sustainable Development Goals), and other development strategies all depend on significant progress towards increasing women's and girls' opportunities and involvement in all spheres including sport. Similarly, participation in sport and physical activity can enrich, enhance and develop women's lives.

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## **A. Scope and aims of the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration**

### **1. Scope**

This 2014 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 and physical activity or who are in any way involved in the employment, education, management,



training, development or care of women in sport and physical activity. Since 1994, the international policy landscape has developed significantly. This 2014 Declaration is designed to benefit from and complement all local, national and international charters, laws, codes, rules and regulations relating to sport and physical activity, which impact on women's and girls' opportunities and experiences.

## **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 and physical activity.

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

- mainstream the values and principles of equity and diversity into all international, regional, national and local strategies for sport and physical activity;
- ensure that all women and girls have opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity in a safe and supportive environment which preserves the rights, dignity and respect of the individual;
- recognise the diversity of women's and girls' needs, especially those with disabilities through delivery of Article 30 of the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and those living and working in cultures and contexts which may be hostile to female participation and performance;
- increase and support the involvement of women in sport and physical activity, at all levels and in all functions and roles;
- ensure that the knowledge, experiences and values of women contribute to the development of sport and physical activity;
- promote the recognition of women's and girls' involvement in sport and physical activity as a contribution to public life, community development and in building healthy nations;
- promote the recognition by women of the intrinsic value of sport and physical activity and its contributions to personal development and healthy lifestyles.
- increase cooperation between women and men and ensure support of men in order to promote gender equality in sport and physical activity.

## **B. The Principles**

### **1. Equity and equality in society and sport**

a. Every effort should be made by state and government to ensure that institutions and organisations responsible for sport and physical activity comply with the equality provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Declaration of Berlin (UNESCO MINEPS V) and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

b. Equal opportunity to participate and be involved in sport and physical activity, whether for the purpose of leisure and recreation, health promotion or high performance, is the right of every woman, whatever



her race, colour, language, religion, creed, sexual orientation or identity, age, marital status, ability/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 or gender, but such allocation should redress any inequitable balance in the benefits available to women and men.

## **2. Facilities**

Women's and girls' participation in sport and physical activity is influenced by the extent, variety and accessibility of facilities, especially spaces which are safe and secure. The planning, design and management of these should appropriately and equitably meet the particular needs of women and girls in the community, with special attention given to the need for child care provision, safe transport and safety during participation and performance.

## **3. School and youth sport**

a. Research demonstrates that girls and boys approach sport from markedly different perspectives; and that quality physical education (QPE) is particularly important for girls to learn the skills, knowledge and understanding they require for lifelong participation. 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 literacy and basic motor skills of young people.

b. In particular, the provision of QPE should be guided by the UNESCO Guidelines on Quality Physical Education and the ICSSPE International Position Statement on Physical Education.

## **4. Developing participation**

a. There is growing evidence of the health benefits of active participation in sport and physical activity and strategies should embrace the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) for adult and young people's activity levels.

b. Women's participation in sport and physical activity 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 during their whole lifespan from childhood to elderly women.

## **5. High performance sport**

a. Governments and sports organisations should provide equal opportunities for 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, and that these are built into sustainable infrastructures for developing sports performance.

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 for both women and men.



## **6. Leadership in sport**

Women remain 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, mentoring, empowerment, reward, and retention of women leaders.

## **7. Education, training and development**

Those responsible for the education, training, and development of female and male coaches and other personnel, as well as managers and leaders in the delivering sport and physical activity should ensure that education processes and experiences address issues relating to gender equity and the needs of female athletes, including a safe and secure environment, equitably reflect women's role in sport and physical activity 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. Research on women and sport be initiated and data and statistics broken down by sex be systematically collected by governments and sport organisations, and efforts be taken to include gender-balanced data gathering on sport and physical activity as an assignment for institutions compiling statistics on social developments at international and regional levels.

## **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 and physical activity policies and programmes in their associations with other organisations, within both domestic and international arenas.

The IWG, together with relevant partners, regularly collect and share information on the adopted policies and achievements, and a progress report of the developments (based on the Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport) be presented at the IWG World Conferences on women and sport.

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