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Sportausschuss

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Statement for German Parliament by IPC President Sir Philip Craven

Dear esteemed members of the Parliament and attendees to this important hearing on the topic, “Binding political rules in international sport – respecting human rights, protecting the environment and fighting corruption”.

On behalf of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the kind invitation to contribute to this hearing. I also would like to offer my apologies for the fact that I cannot be with you in person. Today I am in Brussels, where I am speaking at the European Parliament on the global success of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

To begin, I would like to tell you a little bit about the IPC, as many of you may be unfamiliar with who we are and what we do.

The IPC is the global governing body of the Paralympic Movement, responsible for co-ordinating the organisation of the summer and winter Paralympic Games.

We also act as the international federation for nine Paralympic sports: Athletics, swimming, powerlifting and shooting all feature in the summer Games whilst alpine skiing, biathlon, cross-country skiing, ice sledge hockey and snowboard all feature in the Winter Games. As the international federation for these sports, we are responsible for all day-to-day activities, the organisation of World and Regional Championships, and related development programmes around the world.

Although the Paralympic Movement’s roots date back to the 1940s, the IPC was only established in 1989 in Düsseldorf and since 1999 our headquarters has been located in West Germany’s former capital city, Bonn.

We are a member organisation with 200 plus members that include National Paralympic Committees, International Sport Federations, Regional Organisations and International Organisations of Sport for the Disabled. Every two years, the membership comes together

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at our General Assembly. Every four years, the membership elects its 12-member Governing Board, which is responsible for setting IPC policies and ensuring that the directions set by the membership at the General Assembly are implemented appropriately.

The IPC's day-to-day activities are run by our Bonn-based management team, a workforce that has tripled in size from 30 to 90 paid members of staff in the last six years. The growth in the IPC's workforce, now representing 23 different nationalities, is testament to the exponential growth that the Paralympic Movement has enjoyed in recent years.

Last spring, after consultation with the IPC membership, we published our latest Strategic Plan covering the period from 2015 to 2018. This plan, which includes three strategic priorities and three strategic drivers, outlines how the IPC will take the Paralympic Movement forward over the next five years.

Central to the Strategic Plan is our aspiration "to make for a more inclusive society for people with an impairment through para-sport" and our four athlete focussed values of courage, determination, inspiration and equality. Indeed, all IPC employees and members of the Paralympic Movement understand how their daily actions empower athletes which, in turn, contribute to making for a better society for millions of people around the world.

The best example of the Movement's global influence is the Paralympic Games, an event held every four years and one that, since 1988, has been held in the same city as the Olympic Games. Since 400 athletes from 23 countries took part in the first Paralympics in Rome, Italy, in 1960, the event has grown into one of the world's biggest sporting events. Most importantly the Paralympics have established themselves as the world's number one sporting event for driving social inclusion.

September's Paralympic Games in Rio will be our biggest Paralympic Games to date involving 4,350 athletes from 170 countries. The Games will be broadcast to more than 125 countries reaching an estimated cumulative audience of over four billion people. In addition, 2,200 representatives of the world's press will be in Rio to cover the Games.

As the Games increase in size and scale, the impact they are having on transforming society is also increasing. Take the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, an event that changed China's approach and attitude to disability forever, as an example. Prior to these Games, China's 83 million people with an impairment were excluded from society. The country was inaccessible and in many ways inhospitable for anyone with an impairment.

Winning the right to host the 2008 Games acted as a trigger for the Chinese government to improve the lives of people with an impairment and protect their rights as equal members of society. New legislation on the building of accessible facilities was passed and in the seven



years leading up to the Games, China spent RMB 1 billion – equivalent to EUR 124 million and the total sum of the last 20 years' investment in accessible infrastructure – on making 14,000 facilities accessible throughout China.

On 1 July 2008, the revised Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of People with a Disability came into force. The law provided that state and society should take measures to improve accessible facilities and promote accessible information, in order to enable equal participation in social life for people with an impairment.

China also was among the first signatories of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – the first international human rights treaty – that came into effect on 3 May 2008.

Thanks to the Paralympic Games, people in China now have a greater knowledge and understanding of physical impairment. People with an impairment now enjoy a better social status; more public attention, respect, improvement of social security, easier access to employment, better education opportunities, and much more.

Today, the Paralympics benefit from more global media coverage than ever before. This is helping to amplify the impact the Games have on transforming societies.

By sharing the performances of the world's best Para athletes with billions of people around the globe, the world's media have ensured that the Paralympic Games have developed a strong track record for transforming attitudes towards people with an impairment.

We consistently present a remarkably positive news story, as was shown with London 2012 when a cumulative global audience of 3.8 billion people watched the Paralympic Games.

In Great Britain, the London 2012 Paralympics were watched by more than 40 million people, two-thirds of the population. Each day, the sporting performances of the athletes were front and back page news, with coverage on multiple pages in between. According to the London 2012 post-Games report, the overwhelmingly positive coverage led to one in three people in Great Britain – equivalent to 20 million people – positively changing their attitudes towards people with a disability.

There can be no argument that London 2012 produced incredibly positive results, not just during the Games, but beforehand and afterwards. The legacy of the Games continues to deliver to this day and will do for many generations to come.

Likewise in 2014 Sochi, Russia staged the Paralympic Winter Games. Whereas the Winter Games routinely are smaller in size than the summer Games, they still provide a wonderful showcase of sport that triggers social change.



Ahead of the Sochi Games, there was lots of talk about sustainability and human rights. The presence of these concerns notwithstanding, the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games helped Russia become a more inclusive society. It needs to be remembered, for example, that ahead of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, Russia turned down the opportunity to stage the Paralympics on the basis of the old USSR government's false belief that none of its residents had a disability.

Sochi's election as host city in 2007 led – for the first time- to Russian authorities and Russian society paying attention to the issue of inclusion, and creating accessible environments for all. In fact, new legislation was passed at the highest levels of government, benefiting people with an impairment, and the Sochi 2014 Organising Committee created a barrier-free infrastructure, ensuring that everything built for the Games was accessible for all. Sochi is now a blueprint for the rest of Russia, with 200 cities already using what was created for the Games as a guide for furthering their own accessibility.

Now, 34 years after 1980, the lives of millions of Russians will be permanently improved and enriched as a result of the Games being held in Sochi.

I hope you can see from what we have achieved in the last eight years, the very nature of what the IPC does is CSR natured; we use sport as a tool to transform and empower society.

The Paralympic Games is not the only sport event to have enjoyed growth in recent years, many others have too. With greater popularity comes greater scrutiny, and a need for greater accountability and transparency.

Sport is now a multi-billion euro industry that reaches and impacts billions of people on a daily basis and employs hundreds of thousands of people.

Sport is under the spotlight like never before; whether it is the actions of an athlete on or off the field of play, the work of an international federation or the awarding of a major sporting event, every aspect is under the microscope, and rightly so.

There can be no denying that the actions of some international sport federations in recent years have tarnished the image of sport. The magnitude and gravity of the allegations against them have been widely reported in the world's media leading to negative headlines.

It must be stressed however that the actions of the minority does not mean that sport is full of corrupt, mismanaged international sport federations. This is far from the case. Indeed, many international sports federations are well run credible organisations who do a tremendous job in developing sport around the world and whose athletes are responsible for generating many positive headlines. Most sport organisations, like the IPC, have evolved



rapidly in recent years resulting in a hybrid of structures and governance models, mixing voluntarism with professionalism.

Sport has come to the realisation in recent years that it is not immune from being accountable for its actions. Nor is it immune from suffering high profile scandals that every other sphere of life experience from time-to-time. Just look at industries such as banking, oil, the media, or even politics; all have suffered major fall outs in recent times due to allegations of corruption, foul practice or mismanagement.

A key component in the fallout from these events is our collective reaction: how can we learn from our own mistakes, or the mistakes of others, in order to improve our business practices, governance and integrity? How can we best share best practice to benefit others?

We must not rely on negative media coverage to act as the catalyst for reform. Sport organisations must be proactive in improving their governance, whilst at the same time maintaining their sense of autonomy.

Over the last 24 months there have been many discussions on how sporting governance can improve and how major sport events can become more sustainable. These discussions, like today's hearing, are critically important to the future of sport and good governance.

Since December 2014, when IOC members unanimously approved Olympic Agenda 2020, we have seen organising committees and bid cities for the Olympic and Paralympic Games increase their efforts to ensure their proposed bid fits their sporting, economic, social and environmental long-term planning needs. As a result, there is a greater focus on legacy and sustainability.

In November 2015, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations formed a Governance Task Force. This body recommended five key governance principles that should be embraced in all their respective activities, decisions processes and regulations. These principles included: transparency, integrity, democracy, sports development & solidarity and control mechanisms.

As a representative of the international sporting community, I recognise that the organisation I represent must be responsible and continually demonstrate good governance in a spirit of openness.

I pledge to continue working closely with the IPC Governing Board and our wider membership to continually improve our governance and to ensure that Paralympic sport enriches people's lives by driving social inclusion, providing opportunity to marginalised members of society, and by openly promoting best and sustainable practices in all we do.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to address you, and for supporting sport for all.



Philip Craven

Sir Philip Craven MBE

IPC President