



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

FACTSHEET

WOMEN IN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

UPDATE – JUNE 2020

MISSION

Sport is one of the most powerful platforms for promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls. As the leader of the Olympic Movement, the IOC has an important responsibility to take action when it comes to gender equality – a basic human right of profound importance and a Fundamental Principle of the Olympic Charter.

The [Olympic Charter](#) states that one of the roles of the IOC is “to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women” (Rule 2, paragraph 7).

The IOC’s commitment extends well beyond balancing women’s participation in the Olympic Games. The IOC also recognises that gender equality is a critical component of effective sports administration and continues to support the promotion of women and girls in sport at all levels and in all structures off the field of play. Great progress has been made in appointing women to key decision-making positions both within the IOC administration and its governing bodies. Olympic Agenda 2020, the strategic roadmap for the Olympic Movement, reaffirmed the commitment and priority of gender equality.

Many Olympic Movement stakeholders have also implemented significant gender equality initiatives so that girls and women around the world are being given greater access and the opportunity to participate in sport

HISTORICAL MILESTONES

In 1979, the right of women to participate in sport was formally included in an international convention for the first time; the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#).

In 1994, the International Working Group (IWG) on Women & Sport was established and held its

inaugural World conference on Women and Sport in Brighton (UK). This important conference gave rise to the [Brighton Declaration](#): an international treaty to support the ongoing development of a more fair and equitable system of sport and physical activity. The IOC supported the initiative and became a signatory of the Declaration. The following year in 1995, the United Nations organised the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace in Beijing (China). The resulting [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), included for the first time a specific reference to sport as a tool for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Building on these international developments, in 1996 the IOC took the historic step of amending the Olympic Charter to include an explicit reference to the IOC’s role in advancing women in sport for the first time:

“The role of the IOC is to lead the promotion of Olympism in accordance with the Olympic Charter. For that purpose the IOC: (...)

strongly encourages, by appropriate means, the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, particularly in the executive bodies of national and international sports organizations with a view to the strict application of the principle of equality of men and women.”

Olympic Charter, 1996

That same year, the IOC also held its first World Conference on Women and Sport. The objectives of these conferences were to:

1. create awareness about women’s role in sport;
2. assess the progress made in the area of gender equality in sport; and
3. define future priority actions to promote women in sport.

Following this inaugural conference, the IOC session accepted the recommendation to set a



target of at least 10% women in decision-making positions by 2000 and 20% by 2005.

From 1996 to 2012, the IOC's advocacy action was supported by the organisation of quadrennial World Conferences on Women and Sport. The 5th and last conference was held in Los Angeles in 2012.

In 2014, under recommendation 11 of Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC undertook to:

1. *work with the International Federations to achieve 50 per cent female participation in the Olympic Games and to stimulate women's participation and involvement in sport by creating more participation; and, opportunities at the Olympic Games.*
2. *encourage the inclusion of mixed-gender team events.*

In 2016, following the recommendation of the IOC Women in Sport Commission, the IOC Executive Board approved a revised gender equality target to 30% for the Olympic Movement constituents:

"Members of the Olympic Movement are advised to set a minimum target of 30 per cent for women's representation in their governing bodies by 2020, and to adopt accompanying measures that will help them to reach this goal."

Minutes, IOC Executive Board, 8 December 2016

IOC Gender Equality Review Project

In March 2017, the IOC launched the [Gender Equality Review Project](#) with a mandate to review the current state of gender equality in Olympic Movement and "push gender equality globally" with "action-oriented recommendations for change". A joint initiative of the IOC Women in Sport and Athletes' Commissions, the project was led by an 11-member Working Group chaired by Marisol Casado (IOC Member) and comprised of IOC Members and representatives of NOCs and of IFs from every continent. The working group undertook a comprehensive

review of the state of gender equality throughout the Olympic Movement under five themes: Sport, Governance, Portrayal, Funding and Human Resources, Monitoring and Communications. The result was 25 bold and action-oriented recommendations, [approved by the IOC Executive Board in February 2018](#), to forge a new path in advancing gender equality in the sporting arena and beyond. The IOC is leading the implementation of the recommendations with support from NOCs and IFs.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE IOC

IOC Members

Venezuelan Flor Isava Fonseca and Finnish Pirjo Haeggman were co-opted as the first two female IOC members in 1981. As of 10 January 2020, the IOC reached its goal of having a minimum of 30% women in decision-making positions with 36 out of the 100 active IOC members being women. A further two women are honorary members.

Executive Board

Flor Isava Fonseca was elected as the first woman on the IOC Executive Board in 1990. Seven years later, Anita DeFrantz became the first female IOC Vice-President, holding the position from 1997 to 2001. Since then, the IOC has had a further two female Vice Presidents: Gunilla Lindberg (2004-2008) and Nawal El Moutawakel (2012-2016). In 2020, four women (26.7%) are members of the Executive Board: Anita L. DeFrantz (Vice President), Nicole Hovertsz, Kirsty Coventry and Nawal El Moutawakel.

IOC Commissions

As of May 2020, women chair 11 of the 30 IOC Commissions (36%). In 2020, the IOC has reached its target for gender balanced participation within the IOC commissions, with 47.7 per cent of the positions currently held by women (in 2013 women held 20 per cent of the positions)



IOC Women in Sport Commission

Created in 1995, the IOC's Women and Sport Working Group served as a consultative body composed of representatives of the three constituent bodies of the Olympic Movement (the IOC, IFs and NOCs), plus an athlete representative and independent members. In 2005, the Women and Sport Working Group became a fully-fledged Commission chaired by Anita DeFrantz.

Currently chaired by Lydia Nsekera (IOC Member), the IOC's Women in Sport Commission advises the IOC President and the Executive Board on which policies to adopt in order to be a catalyst for positive change in the following priority areas:

1. Encouraging women's participation in the Olympic Games and in sport generally;
2. Empowering women to have access to decision-making positions in sports;
3. Raising awareness on the benefits of Gender Equality;
4. Providing support to NOCs and IFs;
5. Prevention of harassment and abuse in sport.

In 2020, the IOC Women in Sport Commission is comprised of 33 members, 30% of which are male, including the Vice Chair of the Commission HRH Prince Feisal Al Hussein (IOC Member). In order to ensure that the Gender Equality agenda is integrated into all aspects of the IOC's work, members of the Women in Sport Commission also sit on key IOC Commissions.

IOC Administration

As part of its People Management 2020 strategy a number of policies have been put in place to ensure an inclusive and diverse workforce.

Partnerships

Partnerships are paramount for the spread of positive social change and gender empowerment. The IOC policy for women's empowerment through sport has been developed and implemented through numerous partnerships with sports

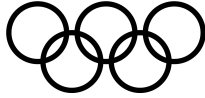
organisations, UN agencies and programmes, NGOs and other members of civil society. In March 2020, the IOC joined the UN Women Sports for Generation Equality Initiative to accelerate progress on a set of common principles and aligned objectives that will harness the power of sport in making gender equality a reality within and through sport. The IOC is encouraging Olympic movement stakeholders to follow suit. More information can be found [here](#).

GENDER EQUALITY AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Women first took part in the Olympic Games in Paris in 1900, four years after the first Olympic Games of the modern era in Athens. Despite the reticence of Pierre de Coubertin, 22 women out of a total of 997 athletes competed across five sports: tennis, sailing, croquet, equestrian and golf. But only golf and tennis had women-only events. Female participation has increased steadily since then, with women accounting for more than 45 per cent of the participants at the 2016 Games in Rio (5,176 women out of 11'444 athletes), compared with 23 per cent at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles and just over 13 per cent at the 1964 Games in Tokyo. In the last 20 years, the IOC has also increased the number of women's events on the Olympic programme, in cooperation with the International Federations (IFs) and the Organising Committees. With the addition of women's boxing, the 2012 Olympic Games in London were the first in which women competed in every sport on the Olympic programme. Tokyo 2020 is predicted to be the most gender equal yet with female participation of 48.8% expected.

In March 2020, the IOC Executive Board took two key decisions relating to gender equality at the Olympic Games:

- All NOCs should be represented by a minimum of one female and one male athlete at all editions of the Olympic



- Summer Games, starting with Tokyo 2020; and,
- the IOC protocol guidelines to be changed to allow NOCs to nominate a female and a male athlete to jointly bear their flag at the Opening Ceremony.

Beyond athlete participation, the IOC, in collaboration with its stakeholders, continues to implement the IOC Gender Equality Review project recommendations pertaining to closing the gender gap in coaches and technical officials and designing the competition schedule to ensure fair and balanced exposure of all athletes.

INTRODUCTION OF WOMEN SPORTS

Year	Sports or disciplines
1900	Tennis, Golf
1904	Archery
1908	Tennis*, Skating
1912	Aquatics
1924	Fencing
1928	Athletics, Gymnastics
1936	Skiing
1948	Canoe
1952	Equestrian
1964	Volleyball, Luge
1976	Rowing, Basketball
1980	Hockey
1984	Shooting, Cycling
1988	Tennis*, Table Tennis, Sailing
1992	Badminton, Judo, Biathlon
1996	Football, Softball
1998	Curling, Ice Hockey
2000	Weightlifting, Modern Pentathlon, Taekwondo, Triathlon
2002	Bobsleigh
2004	Wrestling
2012	Boxing
2016	Golf*, Rugby
2020	Baseball/Softball, Karate, Skateboarding, Sports Climbing, Surfing

* Sports which were re-introduced within the Olympic Programme.

GENDER EQUALITY AT THE YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES

The 3rd Summer Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires blazed a trail for equal participation on the Olympic stage, with 2,000 women and 2,000 men competing. The 3rd Winter Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne followed suit, with 936 women and 936 men participating. But this is not the only important contribution that the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) have made to gender equality in sport. Mixed-gender events have also featured at the YOG since the inaugural event in Singapore in 2010. These mixed events have been a combination of events where men and women compete separately in a combined team and events in which they go head-to-head in direct competition. Many of these events have since being included in the Olympic programme.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

While the participation of women in physical activities and the Olympic Games has steadily increased over the years, the percentage of women in governing and administrative bodies of the Olympic Movement has remained low.

The IOC Executive Board took the decision in December 2016 to advise members of the Olympic Movement to set a minimum target of 30 per cent for women's representation in their governing bodies by 2020, and to adopt accompanying measures that will help them to reach this goal. To date, several NOCs and IFs have achieved gender balance and many more are making steady progress to close the gender gap in the upcoming Olympiad.



OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY PROGRAMMES

Olympic Solidarity offers NOCs a series of assistance programmes for athletes, young hopefuls, coaches and sports managers, and these benefit a growing number of women. In the 2017-2020 Olympic Solidarity plan, all major programmes have special incentives encouraging women participation. Furthermore, a special “Gender Equality and Diversity” programme is dedicated to promoting initiatives creating preconditions for women to take on leadership roles in sport, both in terms of coaching and sports administration. NOCs can also apply for funding for projects aimed at raising sports participation levels among girls and women through a programme dedicated to Sport for Social Development.

WOMEN AND SPORT AWARDS

Since 2000, the IOC Women and Sport Awards have been awarded to women, men or organisations who have made remarkable contributions to the development, encouragement and reinforcement of women and girls’ participation in sport on an annual basis.

The winners of the 2020 awards were as follows:

- World Award – Skateistan,
- Africa - Salima Souakri (Algeria)
- Americas - Guylaine Demers (Canada)
- Asia - Kim Jin-Ho (Republic of Korea)
- Europe - Else Trangbæk (Denmark)
- Oceania - Kitty Chiller (Australia).

For information regarding the awards can be found on our [website](#).

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TABLE A: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE GAMES OF THE OLYMPIAD

Year	Sports	Women's Events*	Total events	% of women's events	Women participants	% of women participants
1900	2	2	95	2.1	22	2.2
1904	1	3	95	3.1	6	0.9
1908	2	4	110	3.6	37	1.8
1912	2	5	102	4.9	48	2.0
1920	2	8	156	5.1	63	2.4
1924	3	10	126	7.9	135	4.4
1928	4	14	109	12.8	277	9.6
1932	3	14	117	12.0	126	9
1936	4	15	129	11.6	331	8.3
1948	5	19	136	14.0	390	9.5
1952	6	25	149	16.8	519	10.5
1956	6	26	151	17.2	376	13.3
1960	6	29	150	19.3	611	11.4
1964	7	33	163	20.2	678	13.2
1968	7	39	172	22.7	781	14.2
1972	8	43	195	22.1	1,059	14.6
1976	11	49	198	24.7	1,260	20.7
1980	12	50	203	24.6	1,115	21.5
1984	14	62	221	28.1	1,566	23
1988	17	72	237	30.4	2,194	26.1
1992	19	86	257	33.5	2,704	28.8
1996	21	97	271	35.8	3,512	34.0
2000	25	120	300	40	4,069	38.2
2004	26	125	301	41.5	4,329	40.7
2008	26	127	302	42.1	4,637	42.4
2012	26	140	302	46.4	4,676	44.2
2016	28	145	306	47.4	5,059	45

*: including mixed and open events

TABLE B: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

Year	Sports	Women's Events*	Total events	% of women's events	Women participants	% of women participants
1924	1	2	16	12.5	11	4.3
1928	1	2	14	14.3	26	5.6
1932	1	2	14	14.3	21	8.3
1936	2	3	17	17.6	80	12
1948	2	5	22	22.7	77	11.5
1952	2	6	22	27.3	109	15.7
1956	2	7	24	29.2	134	17
1960	2	11	27	40.7	144	21.5
1964	3	14	34	41.2	199	18.3
1968	3	14	35	40.0	211	18.2
1972	3	14	35	40.0	205	20.5
1976	3	15	37	40.5	231	20.6
1980	3	15	38	39.5	232	21.7
1984	3	16	39	41.0	274	21.5
1988	3	19	46	41.3	301	21.2
1992	4	26	57	45.6	488	27.1
1994	4	28	61	45.9	522	30
1998	6	32	68	47.1	787	36.2
2002	7	37	78	47.4	886	36.9
2006	7	40	84	47.6	960	38.2
2010	7	41	86	47.7	1,044	40.7
2014	7	49	98	50.0	1,121	40.3
2018	7	53	102	52%	1,169	41

*: including mixed and open events