



THE SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF ATHLETES DURING AND AFTER ELITE COMPETITION

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I am delighted to be here at this breakout session, which addresses a topic of importance to our Olympic Movement, namely “The social and professional life of athletes during and after elite competition”. This subject concerns the intimate duality between the athlete’s professional and social life. It is clear that, in seeking to perform and achieve records, one has to take into account the social factors surrounding the athlete.

We had the opportunity to discuss this issue at the fourth International Athletes’ Forum.

As a member of the IOC Athletes’ Commission, permit me firstly to express my sincere thanks to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and all the members of our dear Olympic Family for their strong contribution to the success of this fourth edition in Marrakech last May.

In his speech at the opening of the 120th IOC Session in Beijing in 2008, the IOC President stressed that “The International Federations (IFs), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the IOC are there to serve the interests of the athletes.”

Indeed, the Olympians are the reason why we are gathered here in Copenhagen. However, these same athletes have to play their roles properly before, during and after their competitions, by respecting the values transmitted by the Olympic Movement.

They must also be worthy ambassadors of peace, tolerance and fair play, and role models for the world’s young people.

The fourth International Athletes’ Forum in Marrakech concluded with several recommendations. The theme we are addressing today is a central one, around which three other themes are based:

1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ATHLETES, THE CLUBS, FEDERATIONS AND THE NOCS

It is by improving the various means of communication between the athletes and their clubs, federations, and NOCs that we will help to perfect the relationship, which can be created only on the basis of respect for the rules and duties of each.

In this way, elite athletes will be best able to promote sport for all.

2. HEALTH PROTECTION IN TRAINING AND COMPETITION

This second theme addresses the cover and protection for elite athletes as they perform their function.

To this end, we have the duty to raise awareness among the various sporting and non-sporting bodies of the need, not to say the obligation, to offer health cover for athletes during their sports career and even beyond, if necessary.

3. THE SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF ATHLETES DURING AND AFTER ELITE COMPETITION

This theme will be discussed during this session, and will, I am sure, take into account the recommendations of the fourth International Athletes’ Forum, by looking at:

- the external factors which influence the professional life of the athlete during his elite competition career;
- the impact of these factors on his social life, and vice versa;
- the current approach to the athlete’s career change. With the athlete devoting a large part of his time to training and the quest for performance during his competition career, it is sad to see how little effort goes into providing psychological support linked to the athlete’s career plan and his vocational development;
- ways we can improve the career follow-up programmes throughout the athlete’s career, during the transition before retirement and after his career change;
- the consideration that needs to be given to the partnerships with sponsors, who contribute not just to the achievement of sporting performances but also to achieving the athletes’ life plans.

We have taken a great step forward by identifying the real situation faced by athletes, so permit me to conclude by inviting everyone to consolidate their efforts and think, during this breakout session, about what the situation of the athlete should be tomorrow for the good of our dear Olympic Movement.