



GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

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ORIGINAL TEXT IN FRENCH

Before discussing the definition of the key words of the “Good governance and ethics” sub-theme, listing the means currently available to the Movement and what has been achieved, and thinking about the various avenues for future debate, I would like to present a brief historical introduction.

HISTORY

Although the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter have always reflected the philosophy of Pierre de Coubertin, based on the moral virtues of sport, it was in the 1991 edition of the Charter that the reference to respect for universal fundamental ethical principles appeared for the first time.

At the Centennial Olympic Congress in Paris in August 1994, the theme of “The Olympic Movement’s contribution to modern society” included the sub-theme “Olympism and its ethic; the structures of the Olympic Movement”. The ethical ideal of Olympism was strongly reaffirmed, with particular emphasis on the need to prevent doping-related abuses in sport.

The Movement then suffered the painful moments of Salt Lake City, which resulted in the need for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to intervene more strongly in both the standardisation of Olympic ethics and their practical application, firstly to IOC members and then to the different pillars of Olympism.

Since 1999, the IOC has followed the recommendations of the Ethics Commission in order to punish all violations of Olympic ethics, whether committed by IOC members or by other stakeholders, such as International Federations (IFs) or National Olympic Committees (NOCs). It has done so with absolute transparency, with all its decisions available on the website. Moreover, the IOC did not hesitate to suspend its funding of the boxing federation following the Olympic Games in Athens after serious doubts were cast on the quality of judging in this sport. The IOC has therefore applied its policy of zero tolerance towards all forms of corruption and cheating.

Since the Olympic Games in Athens, the IOC has become aware of a new phenomenon that is likely to damage the integrity of sport: betting on Olympic competitions via the internet. The Code of Ethics was amended in 2006, with the introduction of a ban on all forms of participation in or promotion of betting related to the Olympic Games, applicable to all Olympic Games participants and designed to enable the IOC to punish any attitude contrary to sports ethics that might favour punters.

Since the Olympic Games in Beijing, the IOC has monitored betting activity related to the Olympic Games, and it will continue to do so for future editions. The Ethics Commission will continue to pay close attention to the various forms of attacks on the ethics and good governance of the Olympic Movement, and will remain available to support the different members of the Olympic family in their efforts to do the same.

This very brief historical summary is essential if all the participants here in this room and those who consult the Congress documents in the future are to be fully aware of the importance of this issue in the life of Olympism.

DEFINITION OF THE SUBJECT “GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS”

Each one of us may have his or her own personal definition of ethics; like any philosophical ideal, people’s perception of ethics is subject to cultural influences. That is why there is no absolute definition; in the various contributions submitted by members of the Olympic Movement and the general public, this word covers different situations. But speaking very generally, ethics can be described as general principles of life that guide individuals. Since this cultural diversity had to be taken into account, the authors of the first version of the IOC Code of Ethics deliberately drafted a document that served as a reminder of universal fundamental principles, in keeping with the preamble of the Olympic Charter.

In French, the notion of “good governance” originates from a nautical metaphor and represents the act of guiding and directing the smooth running of an institution. It is therefore the practical implementation of certain principles. Since there is no standard definition, the concept of good governance (particularly for the organs of the United Nations, the World Bank, the Millennium Declaration and the European Union) refers to a process of making decisions, which may or may not be respected, aimed at minimising the risk of corruption and ensuring that the views of minorities are taken into account. The following words are often used to describe good governance: transparency, access to information, responsibility, participation, democracy, anti-corruption, efficiency, conformity of expenditure imputation, etc.

CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

The Olympic Charter is mandatory for all members of the Olympic Movement. Even though Rule 26 states that each IF maintains its independence and autonomy in the administration of its sport, each must comply with the Olympic Charter. Similarly, the NOCs must promote the fundamental principles and values of Olympism in their countries, in accordance with the Olympic Charter (Rule 28). Finally, any person or organisation recognised as belonging to the Olympic Movement is bound by the Olympic Charter (Rule 1).

The Code of Ethics is mandatory at all times and in all circumstances, not only for IOC members and staff, but also for all NOCs, Organising



Committees for the Olympic Games (COGs) and cities wishing to organise the Olympic Games. It also applies during the Olympic Games to all Olympic Games participants, particularly the Olympic sport IFs.

The Seminar on the Autonomy of the Olympic and Sports Movement demonstrated the desire of the IFs and NOCs present to see the whole Olympic Movement respect basic rules of ethics and good governance. To this end, the seminar participants recognised the need for minimum rules, and approved a working document entitled “Basic universal principles of good governance of the Olympic and Sports Movement”.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER AND DISCUSSION POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

This morning’s four speeches, made on behalf of the IOC, NOCs, IFs and partners of the Olympic Movement, will give us a variety of points of view on this subject and enable us to begin answering the questions that are on all our minds today:

- Does the Olympic Congress wish to strengthen the need for all the members of the Olympic family to respect the principles of Olympic ethics and good governance?
- Should the IOC play a more active general role in encouraging the different stakeholders to raise the level of respect for ethical principles, and in identifying and defining the tools available to the members of the Movement?
- Should the IOC act as a model and/or source of support for members of the Olympic family?
- Which characteristics would the NOCs and IFs like to see mentioned? How should account be taken of the cultural differences between organisations and of the differences of capacity in terms of the size of the structures and means available to them?
- Faced with these new challenges in terms of training, how can new technologies be used to spread awareness of the principles and the tools for their implementation most effectively, and to share best experiences?

Many other issues may be raised in the forthcoming discussion, including the question of increasing women’s participation in sports organisations and how to change the current situation properly and quickly, and the question of doping, which remains a real challenge despite everything that has already been done; as well as how to maintain and even increase pressure without harming clean athletes.

Sport is a human right, but neither sport nor ethics protects human rights. How can our approach to this issue nevertheless be improved?