Since 1996, the IOC’s advocacy action has been supported by the organisation of quadrennial World Conferences on Women and Sport.

The objectives have been to:
- create awareness about women’s role in sport;
- assess the progress made in the area of gender equality in sport; and
- define future priority actions to promote women in sport.
The 1st World Conference on Women and Sport took place in 1996. Several recommendations were made including “that the IFs and the NOCs create special committees or working groups composed of at least 10 per cent women to design and implement a plan of action with a view to promoting women in sport”. Participants also called upon the Olympic Movement to take into consideration the issue of gender equality in all their policies, programmes and procedures, and to recognise any specific needs of women so that they may play a full and active part in sport.
The 2nd World Conference took place in Paris, France, in 2000 with the theme “New Perspectives for the 21st Century”. Participants assessed the progress made over the last four years, shared experiences and best practices and raised concerns about challenges. The resolution adopted by conference participants requested the Olympic Movement to reserve at least 20 per cent of decision-making positions for women within their structures by the end of 2005. The resolution also addressed the need for sports organisations to set their own forward targets for future representation in governing bodies through 2020.
Under the theme “New Strategies, New Commitments”, participants of the Conference established that the progress of women had been slow since the 2nd World Conference and that renewed efforts were needed to keep up a somewhat slow momentum. The outcome document reaffirmed the targets established in 1996 by the IOC, IFs and NOCs to have at least 20 per cent women on their executive boards and legislative bodies by 2005 and consider the period beyond; and encouraged the entire sports movement to correct the gender imbalance.
“Sport as a Vehicle for Social Change” was the theme of the 4th World Conference and reflected the understanding that sport is a powerful tool for addressing societal problems. The Conference identified a number of opportunities on how to move the agenda forward. Participants adopted an Action Plan, which underlined the need for well-researched data upon which strategy could be developed and promoted, and also emphasised that key performance indicators (KPIs) should be set, and a mechanism should be developed to monitor progress.
The theme of the 5th World Conference was "Together Stronger – the Future of Sport", highlighting the need for men and women to work together to break down barriers for women. More than 700 participants from 121 countries took part in the Conference. The Los Angeles Declaration was adopted to guide efforts and projects over the next few years. The L.A. Declaration focused on two main themes:

- The need to bring more women into management and leadership roles;
- The need to increase collaboration and partnerships, especially with UN organisations, to promote gender equality.