



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

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INTRODUCTION

We have come a long way since the last Congress in Paris in 1994. There have been two essential developments:

- The removal of the distinction between professional and amateur athletes. Nowadays, all athletes can participate in the Olympic Games.
- The development of structures within the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The IOC 2000 reforms were key. The new composition of the IOC provides a more accurate reflection of each constituent of the Olympic Family.

Regarding the relationship between athletes, clubs, federations and National Olympic Committees (NOCs), several ideas come to mind:

- Athletes must be considered in all their dimensions.
- Through my responsibilities, I have often observed the relationships between athletes, clubs, federations and NOCs. These relationships are rich and complementary.
- The interpretation of these relationships varies considerably sometimes even among the stakeholders concerned (i.e. athletes, clubs, federations and NOCs), as well as between the initiated and the general public. We need to think carefully about these differences in interpretation.

The various contributions demonstrate that the public finds these relationships difficult to understand.

Even though the sports system has an overall coherence and is well organised, certain specialised stakeholders have noted a lack of clarity.

- Athletes are supported by a structure composed of several bodies, such as clubs, National Federations (NFs), International Federations (IFs), and NOCs. Each component of this overall structure has

key roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis athletes and vice versa. The Olympic Movement needs to examine whether its various components are still satisfied with the existing sports structures or whether adjustments need to be made in order to best protect the interests of athletes, as well as those of the different bodies concerned.

- Outside its constituent bodies, the Olympic Movement maintains relationships with various sports and non-sports organisations. It works in close cooperation with governments, media and different commercial and non-commercial partners.
- Are current relationships satisfactory? Are there areas where improvements may be possible?

The numerous contributions to this Congress from within and outside the Olympic Family are of high quality.

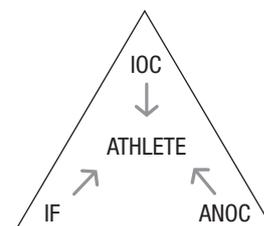
These contributions reveal an impression that qualification systems are complex, resulting in a lack of transparency and a sense of inequality among different sports and NOCs.

My speech will therefore be based on two main ideas:

- I will describe the relationship between athletes, clubs, federations and NOCs, stressing this sense of apparent complexity that is often felt, particularly by the public and sometimes by the stakeholders themselves.
- I will explain how this feeling is linked to the large number of stakeholders. The system is not complex in practice. Its components know where they fit in. But some areas for improvement, emanating from the contributions, appear pertinent.

1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATHLETES, CLUBS, FEDERATIONS AND NOCS ARE OFTEN PERCEIVED AS COMPLEX, PARTICULARLY BY THE PUBLIC.

I would like to begin by introducing my perspective on these relationships, which are represented in the triangle below. This diagram illustrates perfectly the fact that each constituent of the Olympic Family, while respecting its particular remit, is in the service of the athletes.



The themes we will be debating are clearly identified:

- **Athletes, in all their dimensions**
What are athletes' roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis clubs, NFs, IFs, NOCs and the sports events in which they participate?
- **The roles and responsibilities of the different structures**
In what areas do clubs, federations and NOCs have a responsibility towards the athletes? Should these areas of responsibility be more clearly identified and defined? Are athletes sufficiently represented and listened to within the management structures of clubs, federations and NOCs? What sort of reception is given to people who



practise physical activities without any competitive objective (sport for all)?

- **Communication between athletes**

To what extent should communication between athletes be improved? Why?

- **Difficulties and dangers**

These problems relate to athlete retraining, doping, violence and other types of misbehaviour. In order to counter these dangers, we must instil into young athletes a sense of responsibility and public-spiritedness.

2. IN REALITY, THE OUTWORKING OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS IS LESS COMPLEX AND ALL THE CONTRIBUTIONS HELP TO PROPOSE SOME IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

The reality is probably less complex than comes across in certain contributions.

- I have learned from experience that, although the stakeholders are numerous, their role is now clear and well defined.
- The current structure is a source of progress. It is the sum of the commitments and abilities of each stakeholder with their respective budgets, funded if necessary by Olympic Solidarity.

Having read the different contributions, I have drawn out the following key points:

- For the sake of fairness, equality and solidarity, all athletes should be able to join a structure in order to benefit from a minimum level of supervision.
- The creation of a fund for athletes is recommended.
- It is necessary to clarify the roles and responsibilities of clubs, federations and NOCs vis-à-vis athletes. There should also be greater synergy among the different bodies with regard to support for athletes.
- There is sometimes a lack of consistency in terms of the number of qualification places for athletes from different countries and in different sports.
- Athletes should be better informed about their rights and obligations. They should have access to better legal protection.
- The disparity between different national governments' policies on athlete assistance is too great.
- There is too big a gap between NOCs in "rich" countries and those in developing countries. This disparity inevitably affects the relationship between different NOCs and their athletes.
- The inequalities between athletes remain too great (economic and financial inequalities, sexual inequality, lack of clarity surrounding the status of disabled athletes).

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by explaining my interpretation of the moderator's role.

- After my speech, I will give the floor to the representatives of the IOC, IFs, NOCs and other stakeholders. They will each have five minutes.
- Then, we will have 60 minutes for a debate, in which everyone present may participate. Generally speaking, I will make sure that the discussion goes smoothly and that speaking times are

respected. I will ensure that every Congress participant who wishes to speak is able to do so. I will also make sure that the different contributions are fairly spread between the different constituents of the Olympic Family.

- Contributions will be limited to two minutes, in order to enable as many participants as possible to speak.
- Finally, my understanding is that the moderator, with the rapporteur's help, will present the main points of the debate to the Congress Editorial Committee so that they can be included in the draft recommendations.