I particularly welcome the initiative of the Athletes’ Commission, which, by launching its twice-yearly “Athletes’ Bulletin”, shows how far the athletes remain, more than ever, the priority of the Olympic Movement.

The future of the Olympic Games and their success inevitably come through you, the athletes. Through their example, the athletes remain, more than ever, the IOC is listening to you.

Jacques Rogge
President, International Olympic Committee

The Olympics are more than just a two-week championship which takes place once every four years. For the athlete, the moment one Olympics end, preparations are starting for the next. Never before have the Olympic Games reached such a high profile in the world, with more participants from more countries and greater television audiences.

The central figure at any Olympic Games is us, the athlete, and here at the IOC Athletes’ Commission we are determined to ensure you know the latest news and activities taking place to help you in your preparation for the greatest sports show on earth. This Athletes’ Bulletin will be published twice a year and it will inform you of our activities.

Sergey Bubka
Chairman, IOC Athletes’ Commission

I was honoured and humbled to accept the position as Chairman of the IOC Athletes’ Commission, which was formed in 1981 – I said that one of my aims would be to strengthen the role of athletes in the Olympic Movement.

We are here for you.

Yours In Sport,

Sergey Bubka
Chairman, IOC Athletes’ Commission
THE FIGHT AGAINST DOPING – DON’T BE TRAPPED BY SUPPLEMENTS!

One of the key areas agreed upon at the Forum was that athletes should assume total responsibility for the intake of any substance, including food supplements, that may result in a positive doping sample. A study by a German professor in 2000-2001 on 634 nutritional supplements from 215 different suppliers in 13 different countries found that 94 contained substances which could lead to a positive test, such as nandrolone and testosterone, and were not on the label. Therefore, the Forum requested all members of the Olympic Family to work with their respective governments to implement stricter regulations for the labelling of food supplements in order to reduce inequity amongst countries. Efforts must also be focused on the quality control of food supplement production.

The Forum encouraged the Olympic Movement and all its partners to give full support to the acceptance and implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code. Special emphasis should be placed on education and distribution of the new Code to the athletes. Since then, the Code has been approved at the World Anti-Doping Conference in Copenhagen in March and statutory two-year bans will be given to athletes who test positive for a performance-enhancing substance. Over 80 governments have agreed to endorse the Code.

You have a role to play in the fight against doping: in order to show their full support, all athletes were advised that they should sign up for the WADA Anti-Doping Passport. You should also help this initiative by taking part in WADA promotional activities.

2 SELF-MARKETING FOR ATHLETES DURING & AFTER THEIR SPORTING CAREER – LIFE GOES ON WHEN SPORT STOPS

The message from the Forum was clear: “The Olympic Movement needs the athletes”. At the Forum, athletes were told they should be required to give back something to their sport by committing themselves with their National Federation to do at least two-four days of Solidarity work each year within their sport for free and that the National Federations should not take advantage of these days for commercial use.

Many of you are doing so, not only with your National Federation, but also with your International Federation, National Olympic Committee, and other bodies, such as WADA, and this is great. However, there is no coordination between these entities, which could present an issue as you have to manage several similar requests. The second issue of the Bulletin will present some examples of Solidarity activities.

Once they have finished their sports career, athletes were advised that they should participate in the administration and management of their sport, which is another way to give something back. It was also stressed that all athletes should stay in the Olympic Village during the Games. Staying at the Olympic Village is an unforgettable and unique part of the Olympic Games experience.

Villages are built and planned for competing athletes in order to provide high-level services. Olympic bobsleigher Prince Albert of Monaco, an IOC member, has always stayed in the Olympic Village and never sought any special privileges.

At the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney in 2000, the American basketball Dream Team stayed at the Pacific International Hotel with 24-hour room service and extra big beds, while in the Village, athletes ate in a dining hall which seated 5,000.

Australian basketball player Andrew Gaze said: “We respect and admire them [the Dream Team]. The way Australians are, we have a good crack on the court. We give 110 percent, then afterwards we kick back and talk about how great or how stupid we are. We haven’t had that chance with them yet.”

Finally, concerns were raised about agents. Concrete advice and support must be available for the athletes who are negotiating an agreement with an agent. Again, a concept project should be elaborated in this respect, including ethical aspects of the functions of agents.

Olympic Solidarity has helped Jordan’s 13-year-old Zeina Shaban.

3 INTEGRATION OF PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES IN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT – REWARD YOURSELF BY HELPING THOSE WHO HELPED YOU.

The Forum agreed that athletes, especially young ones, should view “transition from sport” as a natural process in their life development and sporting experience, so that their role in society as sportsmen and women can move smoothly beyond the playing field. You should not be forced to choose between sport and education and active athletes should also be responsible for the education of young athletes. An example of that is in England with David Moorcroft, the former 5,000 metres world record holder. He pursued a career in sports administration and progressed to become the chief executive of UK Athletics, the country’s national governing body. One of its main roles is nurturing the athletes of tomorrow.

The Forum said that NOCs and National Federations should recognise that they share the responsibility of assisting athletes in managing life after sport through guidance, education and other means of communication.

Last year, a survey carried out by ‘The Futurist’ magazine found that “a majority of retired Olympic athletes in their prime earning years (ages 45 to 54) claim they have yet to fulfil their career aspirations, according to a Harris Poll… commissioned by Monster.com, the online careers site. More than two-thirds of respondents said that the time they spend preparing for competition creates unique challenges that affect their long-term career prospects, including delaying their education and avoiding planning for their post-Olympic futures. The US Olympic Committee and Monster.com are developing programmes to assist athletes with career planning and skills development.”

It was recommended that IFs must be conscious of scheduling requirements, not only for your health, but also to create opportunities for you to integrate into a post-sporting career life, using coaches, agents and teachers as part of that process.

Resources provided to the athletes should include sharing information from government sources, compiling examples of the “best practices” of other Olympic partners, such as the World Olympians Association, and using elite athletes to assist with and develop athlete transition and education programmes.

A concept project should be elaborated in this field (including concrete proposals for educational programmes, financial needs, technical requirements, etc).