

IPACS High Level Event: Concluding Remarks

Mansion House, 6 December 2018

Annamarie Phelps:

Thank you for this opportunity, it's a somewhat daunting task, but of course an honour, to be asked to wrap up proceedings and try to summarise the complex discussions from the this IPACS forum.

Over the last two days we have seen real practical (and should I say “pragmatic”, it seems to be the buzz word today) progress through the output of the three Task Forces, by the signing of agreements and developing a better understanding of issues and how to begin to approach them collaboratively for the greater benefit not only of sporting community but also – critically - of wider society.

There is no doubt that Olympic and Paralympic success in this country [GB] is a direct result of investment from the National Lottery and public funding via UK Sport and Sport England, and the equivalent bodies in Scotland and Wales: scandals in doping, corruption, match-fixing and vote-buying across the globe at an international level not only risk that investment but have also challenged the public's belief in the integrity of sport more generally. These scandals undermine the immense commitment, achievements and sacrifices made by all our athletes across the world to compete to the best of their ability, on the world stage bringing national pride and unity - and even inspiring peace. As we heard earlier in the panel discussions, our athletes should expect – and deserve – the same level of integrity and fair play off the field of play, from sports administrators, as we expect from them on the field of play.

There is an almost universal acceptance that sport, exercise and the skills and experiences it brings are good, more than good they are desirable, and increasingly essential - we need a healthy, fit population to lower the cost of health provision, to support the development of leaders in industry, politics, academia and ethics. As we have heard in President Bach's message: sport has to live up to its values of excellence, respect and fair play – it has a moral obligation to do the right thing.

In the future sport will be even more complex than now: a multi-national entertainment business; a leisure pursuit; an obsession for some; a medicine for health; an antidote for obesity, and a way to bring generations together as volunteers, coaches, professionals and

fans --- a movement that crosses national borders and socio-economic groupings, amateur and professional structures, making it highly vulnerable to exploitation and corruption.

We know that sport can help build an inclusive society that prioritises cohesive communities at all levels and because of this precious value it needs us to act to protect it - on many levels.

The high-level support for this IPACS meeting [over 15 Countries, more than 20 IFs and more than 10 inter-governmental organisations] bringing sport together with public authorities to protect the integrity and credibility of sport is an important initiative for our global community.

And we need governments from all continents and cultures not only to recognise the value of sport for individuals and society, but to act to help sports organisations across the world, to be better able to mitigate the risk of corruption - by developing robust governance structures and by addressing the risk of criminal interference that threatens its very integrity and existence.

Sport can and must strengthen and improve its practices; International Federations must set high standards, monitor and implement these internally: it must walk the walk, not just talk the talk. But it does not have the expertise, the resource, knowledge or jurisdiction to take on criminal matters and apply sanctions. Governments do have that resource, the capacity, learning and consistency to be able to support at both a local and national level.

This unprecedented opportunity at IPACS to share information, retain ongoing dialogue and to work together will identify solutions for public authorities and sport together that would not happen otherwise.

Today have heard about the work of the three Task Forces [TFs] in developing principles, frameworks, practical solutions and case studies:

1. The first TF looking at reducing and eliminating the risk of corruption in the procurement to major sporting events and infrastructure, studied 67 projects [from across a 10 year period] to draw preliminary conclusions and base their findings. We heard about the loss of institutional memory; potential recommendations around improving analysis of procurement processes and the tendering phase, and the development of toolkits for Organising Committees [OCs] – and to support government oversight.

2. The second TF looked at ensuring integrity and managing the conflicts of interest in the selection of major sporting events; and we heard about the need to support a better understanding of how and when conflicts of interest can corrupt the bidding process; and about plans to develop very practical solutions to help organisations develop a common understanding, to help with recognition and provide guidance on how to act on conflicts when appropriate.
3. The final TF focussed on optimising compliance with good governance principles to mitigate the risks of corruption within sporting organisations. The TF agreed that there is little debate on the three principles of good governance – accountability; transparency and democracy. They have focussed on 3 key indicators to measure governance in sports organisations: financial transparency, conflicts of interest and term limits. We heard from the panel that the implementation of these principles and indicators at all levels through sport is critical: from the amateur club through to IF and NOC level.

Thanks to the work of the TFs and all those who have inputted to the research, future OCs and organisations will be able to take on these learnings and continually improve their vigilance and that of sports’.

We have heard that the fight against corruption requires a global system at all levels - across many disciplines - and that there is an ambition to give IPACS a more public presence to encourage and engage all partners in a coordinated and consistent way to fight corruption and criminal interference.

As a former athlete and Olympian I am delighted that this is a priority for UK Government and that the fight against corruption sits firmly the government’s Sport Strategy. It is great news that our government has today signed the Macolin Convention [on the manipulation of sports competition]. For our athletes, administrators and support staff - and for volunteers in sport at all levels - this is heart-warming news. The news that IPACS has been recognised and included in the output from the recent G20 meeting [in Argentina] should not be underestimated.

But it is also critical for the continued confidence in the public investment that sport receives, and for organisations such as mine [British Olympic Association] – that rely on commercial

and private funding - that our partners and stakeholders are assured that their investment is being well spent, at events that are ethically untarnished. Managing the reputational risk through good governance and by mitigating corruption must be a key area for our NOC here in the UK and for all NOCs across all continents, for International Sports Federations and all sports organisations, in the same way that it is a priority for the IOC and has been embedded in Agenda 2020.

It is important that each of us as stakeholders and all of our organisations recognise the role and responsibility we have to the global society to protect the integrity of sport. The leaders of sport have a responsibility to set the standard [gold standard?]. The autonomy of sport can only be retained if it is earned and if the culture of good governance is embedded in every decision they make.

It has been said throughout the day that this coming together has enabled stakeholders – through IPACS – to make exceptional progress in gaining commitments and developing action plans in such a short period of time.

We finished the day considering some potential future areas of study and challenges for IPACS:

- Beginning to look at being more proactive on prevention of corruption
- Facilitating a better understanding between non-sports organisations and sports organisations in the application of disciplinary procedures, law enforcement, investigations and the application of sanctions,
- Match-manipulation on the field of play
- Information sharing across organisations and jurisdictions with sports organisations about individuals and cases

It has been a long two days for those who have been here from the outset: thank you to all of you for your work in making sport more resilient and in helping to protect the integrity of sport.

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Annamarie Phelps

Vice Chair

British Olympic Association