



THE COALITION OF ATHLETES
FOR
INCLUSION IN SPORT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sport leaders request that random gender verification testing of female athletes at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver be prohibited

Toronto, Canada: The Coalition of Athletes for Inclusion in Sport requests that the organizing committee of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games prohibit random gender verification testing of female athletes at the Games, in the best interest of all international female athletes.

"The statements from the IOC following its Gender Summit in Miami in January 2010 do not demonstrate any intent by the IOC to eliminate the inequities and discriminatory impact of gender testing in sport. By classifying gender ambiguities as disorders requiring treatment, the IOC is pathologizing a normal spectrum of humanity. By assuming that the only relevant gender issue is in women's events, the IOC ignores the potential advantage of physical characteristics associated with the female form (flexibility, for example) to men in certain sports. In addition, the IOC policy is excessively discretionary and subjective in that the IOC does not state what criteria are relevant to a determination of "male" or "female". By subjecting only certain women to the policy, the IOC also leaves women open to witch hunts and being requested to undergo body modification. By any standard, the IOC's approach is a violation of international laws prohibiting gender discrimination and the IOC's own commitment to equality and the right to play. We continue to urge the IOC to adopt the proposed gender policy alternative of the Coalition of Athletes for Inclusion."

Gender verification testing is a violation of human rights, specifically the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also violates the Olympic Movement's stated commitments to equality and the right to play.

The Coalition of Athletes for Inclusion in Sport was formed in 2009 to address the IOC Gender Policy. In addition to gender equity, the Coalition seeks a sport system that is open to all people, at all levels of participation, recognizing in particular those previously excluded because of the narrow definition of what is assumed normal human development.

The statements made at the IOC Gender Summit in Miami last week, presented only a few short weeks before the opening of the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver, are unacceptable to many international sport leaders. The Coalition is hopeful that sport leaders will join together to say 'no more' to archaic and discriminatory practices.

Long-time sport advocate and lawyer Ann Peel states, "I am offended by the characterization of differences in sexual development as disorders needing to be treated - this sounds like the old language by which homosexuality was pathologized and often criminalized."

The Coalitions proposed alternative to the IOC Gender Policy outlines the facts, issues and provides recommendations. Based on inclusive values and founded in evidence-based research, the statement is ground-breaking and appropriate for the modern era.

"It is important to consider," says Eli Wolff, Manager of Research and Advocacy at the Center for Sport in Society at Northeastern University, "The Olympic Charter states, any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement."

The Coalition of Athletes for Inclusion in Sport requests that the IOC, in addition to immediately discontinuing its current practice of gender verification testing, work with and listen to international professionals in relevant fields of expertise, international and national sport governing bodies, women's and men's organizations, and athletes who have been marginalized and effected by policies created by the IOC, in the attempt to develop policies that are based on current research and reflective of basic human rights.

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