

ACTION PLAN FROM COMMONWEALTH SPORTS MINISTERS MEETING, 12 AUGUST 2004, ATHENS.

Commonwealth Sports Ministers met in Athens on 12 August 2004 on the eve of the Olympic Games. At the conclusion of their meeting, they made the following recommendations:

1. Anti-Doping

Commonwealth Sport Ministers recognised the importance of upholding the values of friendship, solidarity and fair play in international sport, and the significant role that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) plays in the fight against doping in sport. Mindful also of the need for effective implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code by sports organisations and governments, Ministers affirmed their commitment and support in the fight against doping in international sport and agreed that the following actions should be undertaken in preparation for the next meeting of Commonwealth Sports Ministers in Melbourne in March 2006:

1.1 Commonwealth Sports Ministers

Sports Ministers of Commonwealth governments resolved to affirm their commitment to WADA and the WADA Code by:

- i. signing at the earliest opportunity, if they have not already done so, the Copenhagen Declaration on Anti-Doping;
- ii. engaging fully in the UNESCO process to develop a new global anti-doping Convention for signature and ratification before the Turin Winter Olympics in 2006; and
- iii. nominating a designated official in their country as the liaison person for anti-doping and providing their contact details to the Commonwealth Secretariat and WADA.

1.2 WADA

WADA, in partnership with Commonwealth countries which have a high level of anti-doping capacity, will help to build capacity in anti-doping among members of the Commonwealth by:

- i. making available anti-doping education material through the WADA Education programme;
- ii. undertaking their anti-doping development pilot project in the Oceania Region;
- iii. evaluating the Oceania pilot project and promoting anti-doping development pilot projects in other regions where applicable; and
- iv. working with strategic partners to hold anti-doping symposiums to address specific issues and challenges both globally and regionally.

1.3 Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat will work with WADA to provide, where possible, technical assistance to Commonwealth member countries in the implementation of the World Anti-doping Code by:

- i. supplying, through the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), technical experts on anti-doping to provide advisory and expert support to Commonwealth countries;
- ii. developing, in collaboration with WADA, a strategy for placing and utilising these technical experts effectively; and
- iii. assisting member countries through the Commonwealth Education Programme to address issues of drug free sport through school curricula provisions.

2. Women in Sport

Commonwealth Sports Ministers expressed pride in the knowledge that ten years ago, Commonwealth countries took the lead in partnership with European sport networks in establishing the global women and sport movement by signing the Brighton Declaration. Ministers recognised, however, the need for continued collective leadership and support from Commonwealth countries. As a result, Ministers expressed the intention that Commonwealth countries should re-assume the lead they took in 1994 by continuing their work to promote Women in Sport in the following ways:

2.1 Commonwealth Sports Ministers

Commonwealth Sports Ministers will underline their own commitment to promoting the role of women in sport by:

- i. encouraging the full participation of female athletes in their national teams at the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.;
- ii. ensuring that the role of women in sport is fully taken into account in the development of domestic sporting programmes; and
- iii. leading by example by encouraging mainstreaming gender equality in sport policy and programmes.

2.2 Commonwealth Games Federation

The Commonwealth Games Federation will continue to provide a lead by:

- i. endeavouring to build on its current commitment to 20% female representation on its Executive Board; and
- ii. continuing and strengthening the Women in Sport Forum which will convene at each CGF General Assembly meeting.

3. Major Events

Commonwealth Sport Ministers recognised the importance of major events as a means of delivering results in wider agendas such as international influence, health, education, tourism, social inclusion and regeneration. Mindful that successful bidding for and staging of major events is an integral part of investment in sport within the local, national and international community, Ministers agreed that the following actions should be undertaken in preparation for the next meeting of Commonwealth Sports Ministers in Melbourne in March 2006:

3.1 Commonwealth Sports Ministers

Commonwealth Sports Ministers will:

- i. identify suitable opportunities for bidding for major events that are compatible with their own capacity and expertise;

- ii. seek to use the opportunity of bidding for major events as a means to help build the capacity of their domestic systems; and
- iii. maximise the opportunities for making use of volunteers in the staging of major events, in view of the transferable skills and expertise that volunteering can bring to individuals.

3.2 Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat will work with Commonwealth member countries to:

- i. ensure that knowledge transfer occurs from one Commonwealth Games organiser to the next;
- ii. identify opportunities for sharing the broad range of knowledge and experience that exists with Commonwealth countries, with a particular emphasis on events starting at the community development level; and
- iii. facilitate initiatives such as secondments and scholarships between individual Commonwealth countries to help build capacity.

Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport

In view of the need for continuing co-operation between Commonwealth countries on sport, Commonwealth Sports Ministers endorsed the mandates for the new Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS).

Funding of Sport in the Commonwealth Secretariat

Sports Ministers recalled that Commonwealth Heads of Government endorsed, at their meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, in December 2003, the importance of sport as an effective instrument for development in Official Development Assistance and agreed to promote increased sports participation, recognising the benefits of sport, particularly as it relates to youth and youth at risk. They noted, however, that there is currently no funding provision for sport in the Commonwealth Secretariat's budget and that ad-hoc arrangements had to be made for the Secretariat to provide support for sport. Ministers therefore urge that sport be brought into the Secretariat's Strategic Plan and requested that necessary financial provisions be made in this regard.