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Olympic Movement Comes Together at Olympians Reunion Centre by EY in Rio to Honour Women in Sport

IOC President Thomas Bach confirms commitment to advancing women in leadership

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; 10 August 2016:

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach and World Olympians Association (WOA) President Joël Bouzou have outlined the Olympic Movement's shared commitment to advancing women in sport at *Women. Fast Forward*, an event held at the Olympians Reunion Centre by EY in Rio on Tuesday. Co-hosted by the WOA and the **EY Women Athletes Business Network (WABN)**, the event brought together prominent female Olympians, business leaders and dignitaries, to pay tribute to the impact the Olympic Movement has had on empowering and advancing women and to honour some of the world's most accomplished women in sport.

Olympians Thomas Bach and Joël Bouzou were joined on stage by **two-time Olympic gold medallist Donna de Varona**, who is the lead advisor to EY's Women Athletes Business Network (WABN) and a long standing member of the IOC Women in Sport commission and **EY Global Vice-Chair of Public Policy and Leader of the WABN, Beth Brooke-Marciniak**, who gave the keynote address at the event.

In his remarks **President Bach** said:

"Gender equality is not a 'women's issue'. It is a basic human right of profound importance and fundamental principle of the Olympic Charter.

"Olympic Agenda 2020 illustrates our commitment to gender equality. The goal of the IOC and IFs is to achieve 50% female participation at Olympic Games. The Olympic Games is a powerful platform to promote gender equality and empower women. We are moving closer to 50% female participation at the Olympic Games: Olympic Games Rio 2016, we have around 46% female participation."

Bach went on to add: “Gender parity at the Olympic Games alone is not enough, which is why the IOC promotes gender equality outside the field of play: IOC Session in Rio de Janeiro, 4 of 8 new IOC Members elected are women; One-third of IOC Commission Members are now women, a 49% increase since Olympic Agenda 2020 came into effect.”

Olympic champion and EY Women Athletes Business Network Lead Advisor, Donna de Varona, said:

“We have reached a milestone here in Rio as women make up 46% of those taking part on the field of play. It has taken hard work to get to this point but as we all know we have more work to do. Women athletes spend a lifetime nurturing valuable leadership skills. Tonight, we are celebrating how the victories on the field of play for women can translate into success throughout life.”

EY Global Vice-Chair of Public Policy and Leader of the Women Athletes Business Network Beth Brooke-Marciniak, said:

“The world needs more women leaders and we believe that female athletes are one of the best – and often untapped – pools of leadership talent. Ninety-four percent of senior women leaders played sport. That is virtually every woman who has made it to the top in business. Through the EY Women Athletes Business Network, we’re focused on supporting and mentoring female athletes so that the world can continue to benefit beyond the playing field.”

WOA President and Olympian, Joël Bouzou, added:

“We are delighted to welcome Thomas Bach to the Olympians Reunion Centre by EY and hear his remarks on gender equality within the Olympic Movement. The IOC has led the way in empowering women in sport and continues to strive for equality both on and off the field of play.

“Another leader in the area of gender equality is EY and the Women Athletes Business Network (WABN), who continue to innovate and inspire female athletes around the world to reach their leadership potential once they embark on their post-athletic career. We are proud to partner with the EY WABN to support the life transition of Olympians and help develop pathways for future success.”

The WOA’s commitment to advancing women within its own leadership team is enshrined in its newly revised constitution, which was passed in October last year and requires equal representation of male and female Olympians from its five continental groupings within the Executive Committee.

The EY Women Athletes Business Network was established by EY in 2013 to help unlock the potential of sport in the advancement of women. EY recognises the critical role sport plays in preparing women for leadership roles, boosting career opportunities and increasing earning power and works to support elite female athletes in advancing their careers beyond competitive sport.
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Note to Editors

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About the World Olympians Association

The WOA is the member organisation for the more than 100,000 Olympians worldwide. Our remit is to work for the benefit of all Olympians at all stages of their lives and to mobilise Olympians into helping make the world a better place through the daily practice of Olympism. With 146 member National Olympians Associations (NOAs) spread across five continents, the WOA provides support to Olympian-run events and projects based on the Olympic ideals laid down by Pierre de Coubertin.

About the Olympians Reunion Centre by EY

World Olympians Association has joined forces with EY to host the 2016 edition of the Olympians Reunion Centre by EY, a destination hub for Olympians of all ages to gather in the heart of the Olympic action in Rio. The multi-purpose space situated at the iconic Clube de Regatas do Flamengo on the shores of Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas offers Olympians a unique Rio experience, while a packed programme of Olympic Family events is ensuring a vibrant atmosphere throughout the Games.

To engage with the WOA:

Website: olympians.org

Twitter: [@WorldOlympians](https://twitter.com/WorldOlympians)

Facebook: facebook.com/WorldOlympiansAssociation/

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