



**For Immediate Release**

## **WOA calls for swift action on Olympic Summit proposals**

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World Olympians Association fully supports the proposals agreed at the 5<sup>th</sup> Olympic Summit in Lausanne concerning the full review of the WADA anti-doping system and calls on governments to back the reforms by investing significantly more money into anti-doping research and practice. However, it continues to call for further measures to be put in place to support the rights of individual athletes to compete if proven clean and believes there remains a need for additional oversight.

WOA agrees that during these challenging times the protection of clean athletes must remain an absolute priority and it was pleasing to see these bodies working together to develop sustainable solutions to the existing system, namely more independence, better harmonisation, more transparency and better governance, increased security and financing.

We support the need for the establishment of an intelligence gathering unit as previously agreed at the 129<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Rio de Janeiro and also feel that more can be done to encourage and protect whistleblowers.

These proposals, in line with recommendations from Olympic Agenda 2020 and WOA's own proposed three-point anti-doping plan, demonstrate the strong desire from those within the Olympic Movement to support a more robust, efficient and effective WADA anti-doping system. But WOA believes further steps need to be taken to strengthen oversight and to develop a permanent mechanism that allows clean athletes to compete even if their International Federation, National Olympic Committee or country have been sanctioned.

**WOA President, Joël Bouzou, said:**

“World Olympians Association fully supports the reforms proposed at the 5<sup>th</sup> Olympic Summit in Lausanne and will continue to work closely with the IOC and other Olympic organisations to help ensure they are implemented.

“We believe the proposed changes are a positive step forward in the fight against doping in sport and are gratified to see two pillars of the WOA’s proposed three-point plan strongly supported at the summit, namely the need to develop anti-doping testing that is fully independent of countries, sports and event organisers and dramatically increased funding for research into improved anti-doping testing.

“But, we feel this could go further. We believe good governance, transparency and proper practice dictates two separate anti-doping organisations: one which carries out the global testing programme and one which has oversight of the testing organisation to police the rules and their practical application and to ensure the highest possible standard of testing is achieved in order to provide a level playing field for all athletes.

“Where we feel there remains a further gap is in the approach towards protecting the rights of individual athletes and we continue to ask for a permanent mechanism to be developed so that if a country or sport is sanctioned their athletes can be quickly and efficiently tested in an uncompromised system and if proven clean can compete at the Olympic Games and other major competitions. Consensus on the best way to address this issue must be urgently sought so that clean athletes are not unfairly punished in future.

“We also want to ensure that the voices of experienced athletes who have significant knowledge of the system are heard through the WOA, as they are in a position to add additional insight and perspective to the discussion going forward.”

-ENDS-

**For more information**

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