



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World Olympians Association reaffirms position on individual rights for clean athletes

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: 12 August 2016

In light of the letter sent by **World Olympians Association (WOA) President Joël Bouzou** to **International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach** on 23 July 2016 (attached), and following the blanket ban imposed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) on Russian Paralympic athletes from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, the WOA has today reaffirmed its belief that the individual rights of clean athletes must be protected and respected.

The WOA has therefore come to the conclusion that the IPC decision is inconsistent and unfair to those Paralympic athletes who have never cheated and who have trained and competed cleanly with hard work and endeavour to achieve their Paralympic dreams.

WOA President Joël Bouzou said:

“The WOA wrote to the IOC on 23rd July in defence of clean athletes across the world and, in line with the principles expressed at that time, believes that the IPC decision to impose a blanket ban on all Russian competitors is not fair to clean athletes.

“The WOA firmly believes that it is right to sanction those who have been shown to be guilty with the full force available to the relevant authorities, but we believe that there needs to be a way to ensure that those who can prove with certainty that they are clean, who have been properly and independently tested and are well documented to be negative, should be able to compete in Rio.

“As stated in July, we believe that establishing global responsibility can’t be fairly done without at the same time examining all individual cases – and if an athlete can prove that they are clean, and this is fully verified, then global responsibility should not apply.

“The WOA supports a three-point plan to root out the cheats forever. The plan would consist of anti-doping testing that is fully independent of countries, sports and event organisers, a permanent mechanism to allow clean athletes to compete even if their country/sport is sanctioned and dramatically increased funding for research into improved anti-doping testing.

“The WOA will continue to work with the relevant bodies to help find the right balance between the most stringent penalties for those who harm the good name of the Olympic Movement and sport by cheating, and the rights of individuals who have trained so hard over so many years to inspire themselves and others by their achievements and have done no wrong.”

-ENDS-

Note to Editors

Please find attached the original letter sent by President Bouzou to President Bach on 23 July 2016

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.

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