



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **World Olympians Association to establish the new World Olympians Forum**

**Monaco: Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013** – The World Olympians Association [WOA], the member organisation of all Olympians established to help support Olympians around the world and promote Olympism in the community, has today announced it will establish the World Olympians Forum [WOF] in 2013.

The WOF will bring together all 142 National Olympians Associations [NOAs] to share and discuss best practice schemes and template projects that benefit Olympians and local communities around the world. Representatives of National Olympic Committees, National Federations, Governments and other key Olympic, sporting and non-governmental stakeholders will also be invited to add their experience and knowledge to the Forum.

The WOF, to be held biennially, will aim to host a number of leading figures and opinion formers in the Olympic Family and will offer world class key note speakers, working seminars and executive level networking that will benefit all NOAs and the broader Olympic Movement.

Each edition of the WOF will be held in a different city and the WOA is already in preliminary discussions with a number of cities who have expressed an interest in hosting the inaugural WOF in 2013. The formal bidding process for hosting the WOF will be announced soon.

The launch of the WOF is part of a series of new initiatives and strategies that are aligned to the WOA's new programme for reform and growth. This programme for reform was discussed and ratified at the organisation's recent Executive Committee meeting in Miami, Florida. **Joël Bouzou, the President of the WOA** who has just completed his first year in office, outlined the proposal for reform and stated the main areas that the organisation will also focus on in the next three years [2013 – 2016] under the banner of 'Service to Society – Service to Olympians'.

The key elements announced today, in addition to establishing the WOF, include:

- A more robust organisational structure with improved professional support, including the appointment of a Chief Executive
- The development of a new income generation plan, including a proactive commercial programme to engage partners and establish new strategic alliances

- Growing the WOA overall by increasing the number of member National Olympians Associations
- Ensuring all Olympians are enlisted into the WOA by 2016
- Facilitating programmes that help the WOA's alumni of Olympians transition from competitive sport and take up educational and vocational opportunities
- Helping empower Olympians to promote Olympic ideals in the communities where they live and participate in local social improvement programmes
- Establishing impactful marketing, digital and communications initiatives that enhance the profile of the WOA amongst Olympians, the broader Olympic Family and the public

The WOA also announced that **VERO Communications**, the London based sports communications consultancy led by Chairman Mike Lee OBE, is helping to develop the WOA's new communications strategy so that it can speak more effectively with its members and raise its profile globally.

**Joël Bouzou, President of the WOA**, said:

"The WOA is setting out on a new path as directed by our Executive Committee. On behalf of the whole Olympic Movement, the WOA aspires to connect and support Olympians around the world and help promote the values of Olympism. Establishing the new World Olympians Forum is just one of the ways the WOA will be able to achieve this important ambition.

"We want to improve our direct and online services to Olympians and help facilitate programmes and activities that foster health and fitness, cultural awareness, environmental responsibility and proactive citizenship.

"We are building the organisation to realise these ambitions and empower those Olympians around the world that need our support. I am delighted that the WOA Executive Committee has formulated our new programme of development and my colleagues and I look forward to delivering this new mandate. We will be making further announcements in the coming months on our new plans and other initiatives which are now under discussion."

-ENDS-

Note to Editors:

About the World Olympians Association:

The World Olympians Association [WOA] is an independent, non-governmental international organisation founded in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1995. It was established to unite Olympians and promote Olympism by bringing the Olympians of the world together and encouraging their involvement in public service.

The WOA consists of one National Olympians Association per country with a recognised National Olympic Committee. Currently, 142 countries have affiliated National Olympians Associations, which consist of the Olympians in that country. The WOA has been successful in running Olympian Reunion Centres at both Summer and Winter Olympic Games, as well as many national and international programmes in support of Olympism in the community. The new vision is linked to the development of all year round programmes of activities, particularly using digital media, involving the WOA and Olympians. Further details will be announced in due course.

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