

## **Lead the Change – Be the Change**

As the IWF's only female Executive Board member and Women's Commission Chair, I had the great privilege of representing the IWF at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Working Group (IWG) World Conference on Women and Sport in Helsinki, Finland in June. The theme of the conference was '**Lead the Change - Be the Change**'. More than 800 participants from 100 nations attended the conference.

The conference was shored up and attended by the IOC, IPC, UNESCO, UNOSDP, WHO, EOC and FISU to name a few, with the Former President of Finland, Ms Tarja Halonen, serving as the conference Patron.

The conference underlined the importance for all of us, as either organizations and/or individuals, to 'Lead the Change – Be the Change' under the conference subthemes of: **Move Me!** *Physical activity, health & well-being for life*; **Buck the Trend** - *Leading the change in sport policy*; **Be the Best Coach** – *Pursuing excellence in leadership and coaching*; **100% Sport** – *Enhancing participation through creativity & innovation*; as well as, **Sport Without Fear** – *Sport as a safe haven & bastion for human rights*.

As participants we celebrated the achievements of positive changes experienced by women and girls in the field of sport and physical activity since the adoption of the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport 1994, of which the IWF is a proud signatory. We also identified the persistent barriers which impede the equal opportunity women and girls experience at all levels of sport, not just as participants and athletes but also as coaches, technical officials and decision makers.

Prior to the Opening Ceremonies, Mr Thomas Bach, IOC President hosted a luncheon for all participants and then joined the festivities on stage for the ceremonies along with Mr Peter Tallberg, IOC Member; Ms Risto Nieminen, President of the Finish Olympic Committee; and, Sir Philip Craven, IPC President among other distinguished guests.

Quite unexpectedly, I was called upon to present a paper at the '**Cracking through the Glass Ceiling**' session. The focus was the examination and the enactment of change with regard to female representation on sport organization boards. As I presented the wide ranging paper across all sport, I seized the opportunity to proudly report on the IWF, under Dr Aján's leadership, in the promotion of both female decision makers and technical officials by way of constitutional and technical rule changes.

After four intense days with 79 abstracts, 251 poster abstracts and multiple discussions, debates and discoveries, as well as plenty of networking, laughter and fun the conference participants adopted, endorsed and committed to the ten principles and the twenty-seven recommendations of the **Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport**.

A few key take-away's for the IWF Women's Commission are to evaluate the IWF's effectiveness as a longstanding signatory of the Brighton Declaration by way of the a process quality assessment rubric, research like minded organizations for tips on sport policy, as well as, based on the Los Angeles Declaration of the 5<sup>th</sup> IOC World Conference on Women and Sport in 2012, continually promote the current minimum target of women in decision making positions from 20% to 40% by 2020.

By 2030, nearly one billion women will enter the economic mainstream; this phenomenon is called the “Third Billion”, with the first and second being the populations of China and India; of that group nearly 95% of the women will be from emerging economies. That said, the 7<sup>th</sup> IWG on Women and Sport is being hosted in Botswana in June 2018; let us determine the future for our sport and be a part of the change.

Moira Lassen

IWF Executive Board Member

IWF Women’s Commission Chair

[moira@golassen.com](mailto:moira@golassen.com)

@moiralassen