

IWF Women's Commission Report
Moira Lassen, Chair
Lima, PER – April 2015

A few short weeks ago the world once again celebrated International Women's Day, with the 2015 theme of 'Make It Happen' and once again, the most influential bodies in the world declared that gender equality is an important step in the development of sound decision making, good governance and, quite simply, humanity.

The return on investment for each authority advancing gender equality has skyrocketed, most recently with the United Nations and its agencies in partnership with the International Olympic Committee and its Women and Sport Commission. As a fundamental sport member of the Olympic Movement, the International Weightlifting Federation has, at its fingertips, the potential to be a key contributor to the Olympic Agenda 2020 due in part to our sports multiple demographic and global reach. The Olympic Agenda 2020 reaffirms the IOCs commitment to work with all International Federations and National Olympic Committees *"to achieve 50 per cent female participation in the Olympic Games and to stimulate women's participation and involvement in sport by creating more participation opportunities at the Olympic Games."* It also endeavours to *"foster dialogue with society"* and *"enter into strategic partnerships"* thus advancing its collaborative approach with major world influencers, such as the UN and UN Women.

The power of sport is a tangible commodity most noticeably with the effect sport has on gender equality. Society has strong willed, resilient minded, robust leaders due to sport and as sport shifts with society we will see more diversity in those leaders, most notably, the diversity will be in gender. The IWF and the sport of weightlifting have both the aptitude and the muscle to be on the forefront of creating innovative partnerships targeting the empowerment of girls and women through sport.

In 1995, the UN World Conference on Women recognized sport and physical education as a tool to promote women's health, to fight discrimination and to empower women and girls. Twenty years later the UN is calling the world to "Step it up" for gender equality. The IOC has committed to 'stepping it up' and the IWF and the sport of weightlifting has the ability to do the same. By the continuation of developing role models, both male and female; the adaptation of policy, procedures and rules; and, as well, the engagement of our predominantly male membership to publically state they believe in gender equality. Budget neutral and easily achievable, the IWF can participate in social media driven initiatives such as the UN #HeForShe campaign which aims at engaging men and boys as agents of change to achieve gender equality, or in other ways, such as an illustrative campaign, like 'This is what a feminist looks like' promotion. Imagine the impact of one of our male Olympic champions, or one of our male Executive Board members, together with females within the sport (athletes, coaches, technical officials and administrators) donning t-shirts that say 'This is what a feminist looks like'. The IWF will have impact. The IWF will create an impression. The IWF will be 'stepping it up.' The IWF can 'Make It Happen.'