

The IAAF Development Congress 'Sports and Athletics for All – Towards One World'

by Björn Wangemann

1 Introduction

The IAAF Development Congress 'Sports and Athletics for All – Towards one World' was held from 25-27 May in Stuttgart, Germany.

The first of its kind to be organised by an International Federation, its aim was to explore the limits and opportunities of Development Cooperation in athletics and to promote communication and understanding.

The 120 Congress participants represented 49 countries and included coaches, administrators, academics and lecturers from around the world.

The Congress, jointly sponsored by the International Athletic Foundation and Daimler-Benz AG, was organised by the IAAF in Cooperation with the Organising Committee of the IVth IAAF World Championships.

The opening of the Congress was attended by IAAF President Dr. Primo Nebiolo and personalities from German politics and economy.

Congress presentations were given by an international panel of experts. Brief summaries of these presentations are given below.

2 Presentations

2.1 Helmut Digel (GER)

Sports and Athletics - Instruments of
Modernisation (Keynote)

Prof. Helmut Digel is President of the German Athletic Federation and Director of the Institute of Sports Science at the University of Darmstadt, Germany.

Digel first discussed the 'modernisation theory' which defines modern societies in terms of a number of basic components such as competitive democracy, market economy, affluence, mass consumption and the welfare state. Important concepts which contribute to modernity are: rationalism, activism, individualism and universalism. Societies that are governed by immobility, in which education is not considered a civil right and in which conflicts are suppressed are considered non-modern.

Digel went on to outline the role of sports in promoting modernity and the argument that sports like athletics are a phenomenon of modernity; whoever promotes them, promotes the modernization of society. Sports can be a helpful means of assisting developing societies and contribute to modernisation because:

- sports are characterised by a specific kind of rationality based on the notion that achievement can be qualifiable;
- sports are characterised by complexity and made up of components and structures that are clearly distinguishable;
- sports demand a practical approach: a problem-solving attitude towards reality prevails;
- sports are characterised by progressiveness;
- success in sports requires long-term planning;
- sports systems are characterised by rules;
- Controlling emotions is important in sports;
- individuality is a desirable characteristic of sports.

Digel concluded that sports play a considerable socio-cultural role and stressed the

development potential of sports development cooperation projects.

2.2 Björn Wangemann (GER)

IAAF Development Co-operation

Björn Wangemann is the IAAF Development Director.

Wangemann's presentation reviewed the world-wide growth in popularity of athletics and the resulting financial success of the IAAF over the last decade. He emphasized that the growth of the 'Family of Athletics' to the present 204 Member Federations brought increased 'family' obligations. The most important of these was to ensure athletics in all Member Federations has a real chance to develop.

The IAAF concept of 'Development Co-operation' stresses that Member Federations, the IAAF and other organisation play an active role in the process of development in the sense of real partnership.

Wangemann referred to the publication 'IAAF Development Co-operation: A Situation Analysis and A Strategy for the world-wide development of Athletics.' He said that athletics development was a dynamic, ongoing process of ensuring all the necessary requirements for a well functioning system of effective, interrelated programmes for both elite and grass roots athletics.

According to Wangemann, the aim of development co-operation was to create the conditions under which each country, given its resources, was able to express its potential in competition, and to derive the maximum benefit possible from the sport.

Wangemann referred to the 'Problem Analysis' as a part of the strategy and outlined the seven problem areas which are the most common faced by the majority of the IAAF's Member Federations. Deriving from this problem areas he gave an overview of the means available and the appropriate programmes the IAAF is implementing worldwide to assist its Federations.

2.3 Pamela Vipond (GBR)

Olympic Solidarity and Athletics

Pamela Vipond is Executive Assistant to the Director of Olympic Solidarity.

Vipond explained that Olympic Solidarity is generally referred to as the sports development department of the International Olympic Committee. She gave an overview of the administration of the Lausanne office and referred to the sources of the budget administered by Olympic Solidarity.

She referred to the OS Scholarship Programme for athletes and coaches, explaining its philosophy as well as conditions and qualifications for obtaining a scholarship.

A further service of OS are the Itinerant Schools of Administration which are offered to participants who are involved in sports administration through an NOC, a National Federation, clubs or government organisations.

Vipond referred to the long tradition of good collaboration between Olympic Solidarity and the IAAF and emphasized that athletics has especially benefitted from the OS Programme in the past. She pointed out that in addition to supporting athletics courses and scholarships, OS also contributes to the financing of the IAAF's Regional Development Centres.

2.4 Herman Salomon (GER)

DLV Development Concept

Prof. Hermann Salomon is a lecturer at the Institute of Sports Science of the University of Mainz, Germany and Head of the Foreign Trainer School, Mainz.

Salomon said the importance the German Athletic Federation (DLV) gives to development co-operation world wide and its development programme is based on the realisation that organised sport can play an important role in the efforts to develop the socio-cultural structure of developing countries. Athletics development should therefore not

only focus on a few elite athletes but should also create a 'multiplier-effect' by educating coaches and sports teachers.

He explained the organisational background of the development co-operation within Germany and referred to the human resources available. In the last 20 years the DLV has carried out over 300 development projects world-wide. In addition, the DLV has also organised training camps for elite athletes from developing countries in Germany prior to major international events.

Special emphasis was given to coaches courses run in conjunction with the University of Mainz. These type of courses started in 1978. Since then 15 study courses with 197 student coaches from 68 developing countries have been organised.

Salomon also discussed the co-ordination and collaboration between the DLV and the IAAF to improve the efficiency of development co-operation.

2.5 Bill Glad (USA)

Education – The key to success (keynote)

Bill Glad is the Assistant Director of the IAAF Development Department.

Glad said that the most important steps in developing sports in a country must be made by qualified personnel from within the particular country. Structures or programmes set by outsiders have only a chance to survive if local specialists have the required knowledge and skills to carry on with their work.

One of the difficulties most often faced by IAAF Member Federations is that personnel in their countries do not have the necessary qualifications for developing or operating the required structures and programmes. Consequently the IAAF's development strategy concentrates on the education of federation personnel from developing countries in order to give them the skills required. If this can be accomplished, resources devoted to other development needs can be used more effectively.

Glad outlined the process used to design and elaborate the first phases of the IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System. Encouraged by and learning from the positive experiences of the world-wide operating Coaches Education and Certification System the IAAF is presently elaborating new education programmes for specialists in areas like officiating, administration, competition organisation, sports medicine and others.

2.6 Abby Hoffman (CAN)

Development of Women's Athletics

Abby Hoffman is a member of the IAAF Women's Committee.

The purpose of Hoffman's presentation was to compare the recent history of women's athletics in developed and less developed athletics nations. She also outlined aspects of a strategy for women's athletics, saying such a strategy must take in account barriers and limitations faced by women generally and sportswomen in particular in less developed countries.

Hoffman demanded that the IAAF Development programme must take into account the social, economic and cultural realities of women.

She said that the social and cultural barriers to involvement of girls and women in athletics in less developed nations are an extreme form of the barriers women in more advanced countries have to overcome. She predicted that if proper strategies are employed, the involvement of women from less developed countries will be as remarkable in the next 25 years as that of men over the past 25.

For this potential to be realized, strategies for the development of athletics for women must recognize key dimensions as ethical responsibility, taking account of gender and social changes.

2.7 Morenike Onanuga (NIG)

Athletics for all

Morenike Onanuga is the Chairwoman of the Africa Amateur Athletic Confederation's Womens Committee.

Onanuga said that athletics covers the fundamental human skills of walking, running, jumping and throwing organised into a variety of sporting events. In primitive times, activities which now make up athletics were necessary for survival. The early history of athletics as an organised activity is vague but it is known that ancient civilisations staged contests of various athletics event.

Because there are more than 20 different events for both men and women athletics offers an opportunity for almost everybody regardless of size, shape or age.

Onanuga said that athletics in developing countries is not yet a sport for all and gave a number of reasons. She demanded that athletics and sports for all programmes should aim for the participation of all people regardless of sex, physical ability, social status, race and religion. The ideals of athletics for all should include fun, good health and harmonious development leading to a life useful both to oneself and the wider community.

3 Workshops

In addition to the presentations there were three workshops covering the main problem areas outlined in the IAAF Strategy which gave those attending the Congress an opportunity for active participation.

Workshop A

Adelmalek El Habil (MAR), P. Solomon (MAS), Brian Roe (AUS)

Elementary Training and Education in Athletics

Workshop B

Lamartine P. Costa (BRA), Klaus Miedzinski/Wolfgang Fecher (GER), John Velzian (KEN)

Basic Facilities and Equipment

Workshop C

Roberto Gesta de Melo (BRA), Stephen Tan (MAS), Abdel malek El Hebil (MAR)

Administration and Competition Systems

4 Exhibition

Michael Preisinger (GER)

Development of Athletics

Michael Preisinger is a Research Assistant at the German Sports Museum Cologne

For the Congress Michael Preisinger prepared an exhibition on the historical development of athletics.

Using 39 display panels showing photographs, diagrams and texts, the exhibition focused on three themes.

'The Evolution of Athletics in Developing Countries' presented athletics as a sport which is bridging the gap between movement traditions in societies and modern sports.

'Development Co-operation in Sports' focused on development concepts, programmes and philosophies of different national and international sporting bodies.

The 'IAAF Development Cooperation' made up the main part of the exhibition by illustrating the seven problem areas defined in the IAAF Development Strategy.

5 Conclusion

The purpose of the Development Congress was to promote communication and understanding by exploring the problems, limits and possibilities of development work in athletics.

Work in this field, including many of the innovative measures pioneered by the IAAF were examined and discussed.

Within the framework of a multi-folded offer of keynote speeches, presentations and problem-oriented workshops the participants had the unique opportunity for an open and critical dialogue and exchange of experiences and opinions.

It was hoped by the Organisers that participants left the Congress with new ideas and an increased commitment to work together with the IAAF in the many fields of sports development.