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**Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance of the Olympic  
and Sports Movement**



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

## **Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance of the Olympic and Sports Movement**

Seminar on Autonomy of Olympic and Sport Movement, 11- 12 February 2008

**“All members of the Olympic Movement should adopt, as their minimum standard, the Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance of the Olympic Movement, as proposed by the IOC”  
(Extract of the Olympic and Sport Movement Congress Recommendation 41)**

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## 1. VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY

Theme		Elements to be considered
1.1	Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The vision and overall goals of the organisations have to be clearly defined and communicated</li></ul>
1.2	Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The mission should include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Development and promotion of sport through non-profit organisations</li><li>○ Promotion of the values of sport</li><li>○ Organisation of competitions</li><li>○ Ensuring a fair sporting contest at all times</li><li>○ Protection of the members and particularly the athletes</li><li>○ Solidarity</li><li>○ Respect for the environment</li></ul></li></ul>
1.3	Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The strategy is to be aligned with the vision and regularly adapted to the environment</li><li>➤ The strategy of sporting organisations should be elaborated at the highest level of the organisation</li></ul>

## **2. STRUCTURES, REGULATIONS AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS**

<b>Theme</b>		<b>Elements to be considered</b>
2.1	Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All sports organisations in the Olympic and Sports Movement should be based on the concept of membership within entities established in accordance with applicable laws</li> <li>➤ The sports organisations should include as members legal or physical persons who constitute the organisation and contribute to form the will of the organisation</li> <li>➤ The stakeholders of the organisation encompass all members who make up the organisation as well as all external entities who are involved and have a link, relation with or interest in the organisation</li> </ul>
2.2	Clear regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All regulations of each organisation and governing body, including but not limited to, statutes/constitutions and other procedural regulations, should be clear, transparent, disclosed, publicised and made readily available</li> <li>➤ Clear regulations allow understanding, predictability and facilitate good governance</li> <li>➤ The procedure to modify or amend the regulations should also be clear and transparent</li> </ul>
2.3	Governing bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The size of the governing bodies should be adequate and consistent with the size of the sports organisations</li> <li>➤ The tasks and responsibilities of the governing bodies should be clearly defined in the applicable regulations and should be adapted and reviewed as necessary</li> <li>➤ Governing bodies should be entitled to create standing or ad hoc committees with specific responsibilities, in order to help them in their tasks</li> <li>➤ The organisation should set out and adopt reliable and appropriate criteria for the election or appointment of members of the governing bodies so as to ensure a high level of competence, quality and good governance</li> </ul>
2.4	Representative governing bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Members of the organisation should be represented within the governing bodies, particularly women and athletes.</li> <li>➤ Special care should be taken for protection and representation of minority groups</li> </ul>
2.5	Democratic processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Democratic processes, such as elections, should be governed by clear, transparent and fair rules</li> </ul>

2.6	Attributions of the respective bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A clear allocation of responsibilities between the different bodies such as general assembly, executive body, committees or disciplinary bodies, should be determined</li> <li>➤ There should be a balance of power between the bodies responsible for the management, supervision and control of the sport organisations</li> <li>➤ Principle of checks and balances</li> </ul>
2.7	Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All members of the sports organisations shall have the right to express their opinion on the issues on the agenda through appropriate channels</li> <li>➤ Members shall have the right to vote and be able to exercise that right in appropriate form as defined in the regulations of the governing body</li> <li>➤ Decision-making bodies should be fully aware of all relevant information before taking a decision</li> <li>➤ Bodies of the organisation should meet on a regular basis taking into consideration their specific duties and obligations (e.g. the holding of an annual General Assembly is recommended where possible)</li> </ul>
2.8	Conflicts of interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As a general principle, members of any decision-making body should be independent in their decisions</li> <li>➤ No-one with a personal or business interest in the issue under discussion should be involved in the decision</li> <li>➤ Adequate procedures should be established in order to avoid any conflicts of interests</li> </ul>
2.9	Election or renewal of office-bearers on a regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The duration of the terms of office should be pre-determined in order to allow election / renewal of office-bearers on a regular basis (e.g. every four years)</li> <li>➤ Access for new candidates should be encouraged</li> </ul>
2.10	Decisions and appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Any member affected by a decision of a disciplinary nature taken by any sports organisation should be offered the possibility to submit an appeal to an independent body within the sport's jurisdictions</li> <li>➤ When decisions are taken against a member, special attention should be paid to the appropriate balance between transparency and protection of privacy</li> </ul>

### 3. HIGHEST LEVEL OF COMPETENCE, INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

Theme		Elements to be considered
3.1	Competence of the members of the executive body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Members of the executive body should be chosen on the basis of their ability, competence, quality, leadership capacity, integrity and experience</li> <li>➤ The use of outside experts in specific fields should be considered when necessary</li> </ul>
3.2	Power of signature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good governance implies proper financial monitoring</li> <li>➤ In order to avoid any abuse of powers of representation (in particular signing), adequate rules should be set up, approved and monitored at the highest level</li> <li>➤ Precise, clear and transparent regulations should be established and applied, and effective controlling systems and checks and balances should be put in place</li> <li>➤ As a general rule, individual signature should be avoided for binding obligations of an organization</li> </ul>
3.3	Internal management, communication and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good internal communication reinforces the efficiency of sporting organisations</li> <li>➤ Good information flow inside sporting organisations ensures good understanding by membership of activities undertaken and allows managers to make timely and informed decisions</li> <li>➤ Good working conditions and atmosphere as well as motivation and incentive policies are essential for the smooth functioning of the organisation</li> </ul>
3.4	Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A clear and adequate risk-management process should be put in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identification of potential risks for the sports organisations</li> <li>○ Evaluation of risks</li> <li>○ Control of risks</li> <li>○ Monitoring of risks</li> <li>○ Disclosure/transparency</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3.5	Appointment of the members of the management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Leadership is above management</li> <li>➤ The majority of the members of management should be professional</li> <li>➤ Candidates should have professional competency and an impeccable professional history</li> <li>➤ The selection process should be based on objective criteria and should be set out clearly</li> </ul>

3.6	Code of Ethics and ethical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Develop, adapt and implement ethical principles and rules</li><li>➤ Ethical rules should refer to and be inspired by the IOC Code of Ethics</li><li>➤ Monitor the implementation of ethical principles and rules</li></ul>
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#### 4. ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND CONTROL

Theme		Elements to be considered
4.1	Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All bodies, whether elected or appointed, shall be accountable to the members of the organisation and, in certain cases, to their stakeholders</li> <li>➤ In particular, the executive body shall be accountable to the General Assembly of the organisation</li> <li>➤ Management shall be accountable to the executive body</li> <li>➤ All employees shall be accountable to management</li> </ul>
4.2	Processes and mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Adequate standards and processes for accountability should be in place and available to all organisations, and consistently applied and monitored</li> <li>➤ Clear and measurable objectives and targets must be set for the organisation, its boards, management and staff, including also appropriate tools for assessment</li> </ul>
4.3	Transparency and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Financial information should be disclosed gradually and in appropriate form to members, stakeholders and the public</li> <li>➤ Disclosure of financial information should be done on an annual basis</li> <li>➤ The financial statements of sports organisations should be presented in a consistent way in order to be easily understood</li> </ul>
4.4	Financial matters – applicable laws, rules, procedures and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Accounts should be established in accordance with the applicable laws and “True and fair view” principle</li> <li>➤ The application of internationally recognised standards should be strongly encouraged in all sports organisations, where possible, and required for an international body</li> <li>➤ For all organisations, annual financial statements are to be audited by independent and qualified auditors</li> <li>➤ Accountability and financial reports should be produced on a regular basis</li> <li>➤ Information about remuneration and financial arrangements of the governing bodies’ members should be part of the annual accounts</li> <li>➤ Clear rules regarding remuneration of the members of governing bodies and managers should be enforced</li> <li>➤ Remuneration procedures should be transparent and predictable</li> </ul>



4.5	Internal Control system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Internal control of the financial processes and operations should be established within the sports organisations</li> <li>➤ The adoption of a compliance system, document retention system and information security system should be encouraged</li> <li>➤ The structure of the internal control system should depend on the size and importance of the organisation</li> <li>➤ Audit committees should be appointed for large sports organisations</li> </ul>
4.6	Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There should be an induction programme for all new members of staff, volunteer officers and all board members</li> <li>➤ Ongoing education and training of executives, volunteers and employees should be integral to operations</li> <li>➤ The promotion of self-education and regular training within the sport organisations should be encouraged</li> </ul>

## 5. SOLIDARITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Theme		Elements to be considered
5.1	Distribution of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ As a principle, financial resources which are proceeds of sport should be allocated to sport and in particular to its development after covering all necessary sports-related costs</li><li>➤ Financial revenues should be distributed in a fair and efficient manner</li><li>➤ A fair distribution of the financial revenues contributes to having balanced and attractive competitions</li><li>➤ A clear and transparent policy for the allocation of the financial revenues is essential</li></ul>
5.2	Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Resources should be distributed equitably</li><li>➤ The equity in sport should be reinforced</li><li>➤ The right to participate in competitions should be encouraged and secured for those at an appropriate level for the athletes concerned</li><li>➤ The opportunity to organise large sports events should be open</li><li>➤ The criteria for choosing venues for events should be fair and transparent</li></ul>
5.3	Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The development of partnership relations between different sports organisations in developing countries should be encouraged</li><li>➤ The expansion of sports facilities in developing countries should be promoted</li></ul>

## **6. ATHLETES' INVOLVEMENT, PARTICIPATION AND CARE**

<b>Theme</b>		<b>Elements to be considered</b>
6.1	Right to participate and involvement of the athletes in the Olympic and Sports Movement and governing bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The right of athletes to participate in sports competitions at an appropriate level should be protected</li> <li>➤ Sports organisations must refrain from any discrimination</li> <li>➤ The voice of the athletes should be heard in sporting organisations</li> </ul>
6.2	Protection of athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Measures should be taken to prohibit exploitation of young athletes</li> <li>➤ Athletes should be protected from unscrupulous recruiters and agents</li> <li>➤ Cooperation with the government of the countries concerned should be developed</li> <li>➤ Codes of conduct should be signed by all sport organisations</li> </ul>
6.3	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sports organisation shall adopt rules for the protection of the athletes' health and to limit the risk of endangering the athletes' health (medical supervision, number of days of competition, pollution, etc.)</li> </ul>
6.4	Fight against doping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sports organisations shall fight against doping and uphold anti-doping policy</li> <li>➤ Zero tolerance in the fight against doping should be encouraged in all sports organizations at all levels</li> <li>➤ Sports organisations shall protect the athletes from doping in particular through prevention and education</li> </ul>
6.5	Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Insurance in case of death or serious injury is to be recommended for all athletes and should be mandatory for young / junior athletes</li> <li>➤ Whenever and wherever possible, athletes should be provided with social security coverage</li> <li>➤ Special insurance policies should be available for professional athletes</li> <li>➤ The organisers of sports events should obtain adequate insurance coverage</li> </ul>
6.6	Fairness and Fair play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fairness and fair play are central elements of the competition</li> <li>➤ Fair play is the spirit of sport</li> <li>➤ The values of sport and friendship shall be promoted</li> <li>➤ The undue influence of betting shall be avoided</li> </ul>

6.7	Athletes' education and career management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Educational programmes, developing in particular "Sport and Studies" programmes, should be encouraged</li><li>➤ Career management programmes should be promoted</li><li>➤ Training professional athletes for new professional opportunities after their sports careers should be encouraged</li></ul>
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## 7. HARMONIOUS RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS WHILE PRESERVING AUTONOMY

Theme		Elements to be considered
7.1	Cooperation, coordination and consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Sporting organisations should coordinate their actions with governments</li><li>➤ Cooperation with governments is an essential element in the framework of sporting activities</li><li>➤ Cooperation, coordination and consultation are the best way for sporting organisations to preserve their autonomy</li></ul>
7.2	Complementary missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Governments, constituents of the Olympic Movement, other sports organisations and stakeholders have a complementary mission and should work together towards the same goals</li></ul>
7.3	Maintain and preserve the autonomy of sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The right balance between governments, the Olympic Movement and sporting organisations should be ensured</li></ul>