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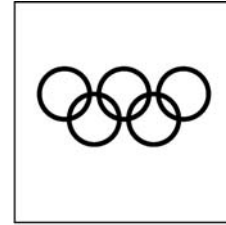
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# Women, Leadership and the Olympic Movement

## Final Report

Research Undertaken by the Institute of Sport & Leisure Policy  
for the International Olympic Committee

January 2004

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In addition we wish to acknowledge the major contribution of Katia Mascagni, not only in co-directing the project, but also in assisting with the conducting of interviews, and of Clarissa Brack for managing the major task of distributing questionnaires and sending reminders to non-respondents in a highly efficient manner.

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## List of Acronyms

ANOC	Association of National Olympic Committees
IF	International (Sporting) Federation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NF	National (Sporting) Federation
NOC	National Olympic Committee
OS	Olympic Solidarity

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

This document is an Executive Summary of the findings of a joint project undertaken by the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy at Loughborough University and the International Olympic Committee, directed by Dr. Anita White, Visiting Professor at Loughborough University and Katia Mascagni, Project Manager, Department of International Co-operation and Development at the IOC. The work was conducted by a team of researchers, directed by Professor Ian Henry, from the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy, evaluating the impact of IOC policy in respect of the roles, which women play on the Executive Committees of National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in each of the five continental Olympic Associations.

### 1. Context and Purpose of the Project

In 1997, as part of its Women and Sport policy, the IOC established targets for women's membership of NOC Executive Committees. These were for women to hold at least 10% of executive decision-making positions in NOCs by Dec 2001 rising to at least 20% by Dec 2005. The IOC has regularly collected statistics on the numbers of women on NOC Executive Committees and measured progress towards the achievement of the targets. The purpose of the research project was to provide information and evaluate progress on the implementation of the IOC policy in relation to women's leadership in the Olympic Movement. The research project thus evaluates the processes of recruitment of women to decision-making structures, their career paths into Olympic leadership, their impact on the activities of the organizations themselves, and the nature of training and support required by both the women members and the sports organizations to ensure that the benefits of wider involvement in decision-making by women are realised. In so doing the project has explored the views of both women Executive Committee members and NOC Secretary Generals on the implementation and impact of the policy.

### 2. Methods

The research, undertaken between January 2002 and December 2003, consisted of four elements:

#### 2.1: Questionnaire survey of all women members of NOC Executive Committees

There were 146 usable responses, estimated as a 57.5% response rate<sup>1</sup> of all female members representing 46% of countries. The geographical distribution was as follows:

Africa	37 from 27 different countries (responses from 51% of countries)
Americas	26 from 17 different countries (responses from 42% of countries)
Asia	19 from 12 different countries (responses from 29% of countries)
Europe	57 from 27 different countries (responses from 56% of countries)
Oceania	7 from 7 different countries (responses from 50% of countries)

#### 2.2: Questionnaire survey of Secretary-Generals of all NOCs

There were 89 usable responses representing a 48.2% response rate<sup>1</sup> of all Secretary Generals. The geographical distribution was as follows:

Africa	25 countries (47% response rate)
Americas	17 countries (42% response rate)
Asia	10 countries (24% response rate)
Europe	34 countries (71% response rate)
Oceania	3 countries (21% response rate)

<sup>1</sup> The response rates of 57.5% and 48.2% provide very respectable return rates, and are well above industry norms (Market Research Society - <http://www.mrs.org.uk/>).

**2.3: Detailed interviews with women members of NOC Executive Committees**

Thirty interviews were conducted with Women executive members ; 4 from Africa, 8 from the Americas, 8 from Asia, 8 from Europe and 2 from Oceania.

**2.4: Detailed interviews with Secretary Generals**

Twenty five interviews were conducted with Secretary Generals; 8 from Africa, 4 from the Americas, 7 from Asia, 5 from Europe, and one from Oceania.

**3. Main Findings from Questionnaire Survey of All Women Members of NOC Executive Committees**

- 3.1 The women recruited to the NOC Executive Committees were very well educated (78% of those responding had degrees and / or teaching qualifications; 29.5% had postgraduate degrees, and 8% PhDs) a significant proportion had experience as elite athletes (46% had been international athletes, and 20% had been Olympians) 61% were in employment and 70% were married / cohabiting, most of whom had children.
- 3.2 Recruitment of women to NOCs was very recent reflecting response to the establishment of targets; 71% had been appointed since 1996 when the targets were announced.
- 3.3 Two thirds of the group reported that they had been elected to the Executive Committee, with the remainder co-opted. In several cases election had followed after a period of co-option.
- 3.4 59.4% of women reported that their NOCs had established a Women's Committee though in many instances they were relatively recently established.
- 3.5 64% of women perceived their work as being primarily or solely concerned with general matters rather than primarily with women and sport, although 49% served on Women's Committees.
- 3.6 More than half of the respondents (52%) reported having received training since joining the NOC, which is notable given the voluntary nature of the work. IOC regional seminars had been well received. The sample expressed interest in a range of potential training activities, including generic issues such as sports administration and management, language proficiency, skills in dealing with the media, as well as aspects relating to women and sport specifically.
- 3.7 Most female respondents argued that significant benefits were associated with the introduction of women to Executive Committees (though a minority reported no positive impact). The benefits cited include the promotion of women's influence in the NOC; stimulation of specialist provision for women; having more women on sports leadership training courses; more female candidates appointed to other committees for sports and administrative functions; as well as a generally increased profile for women in sport.

**4. Main findings from Questionnaire survey of Secretary Generals of all NOCs**

- 4.1 The Secretary Generals also reported that women's membership of Executive Committees had grown since the announcement of the targets in 1996 and that they came disproportionately from elite athlete backgrounds.
- 4.2 64% of respondents indicated their NOC had taken special measures to recruit women to their Executive Committees following the introduction of the targets. These measures included reserving places specifically for women, revising their statutes, encouraging NFs to nominate women candidates, setting up a taskforce to nominate suitable women candidates, inviting potential women candidates to attend special functions, and directly approaching suitably qualified women.

- 4.3 The most regularly cited difficulty experienced in attracting women to work on the Executive Committees of the NOCs was the “structural” issue of getting women nominated and elected from a constituency of National Federations whose representatives were predominantly and traditionally male. Secretary Generals tended to suggest that difficulties were the product of ‘problems’ with women (lack of availability of qualified women, reluctance because of family commitments etc) rather than as a result of ‘problems’ with the strategy adopted by the NOC to recruit women (e.g. lack of flexibility in working or recruitment patterns etc.).
- 4.4 The Secretary Generals described those women who were members of the Executive Boards as being among the most active members of the Executive (51.4% in the most active quartile and 78.2% in the upper 50%)
- 4.5 As with the responses from the women’s questionnaire, Secretary Generals indicated that the work of a majority of women Executive Committee members (71%) was largely or solely concerned with general rather than women’s issues. Like the women respondents, the Secretary Generals suggested that women’s committees had as yet had little impact. The mean proportion of women as chairs of NOC commissions was low at 21.3%.
- 4.6 There was a strong association between those countries which had adopted policies on women and sport and those in which programmes to promote women and sport were run.

## **5. Main Findings from detailed interviews with a sample of women members of NOC Executive Committees**

- 5.1 The interviewees nearly all regarded the IOC targets as a positive force for change and did not see themselves as “tokens”. However targets on their own may well not be enough to reduce inequalities as although they may deal with the effects of inequity by opening access to leadership positions, they do not directly address the circumstances or attitudes which cause such an imbalance in the first place.
- 5.2 Given the high levels of qualification and competence of many of the women interviewees, considerable frustration was expressed about apparently less well qualified male members of Executive Committees being given preference for posts of responsibility.
- 5.3 Some women in full time employment, with family responsibilities found themselves in very pressured situations particularly where traditional gender roles and patterns of domestic labour were maintained in the home. They relied heavily on support from families and partners and there was some evidence of personal sacrifices being made in terms of personal relationships.
- 5.4 In the vast majority of cases, recruitment to NOC Executive Committees, and subsequent effectiveness was fostered by the support and encouragement of senior NOC members, both male and female.
- 5.5 The solution of dealing with NOC targets by co-opting women or encouraging individuals to stand for election, means that the structure of National Federations may remain relatively untouched by such changes and thus the NF delegates to the NOC Assembly are likely to continue to be predominantly male.
- 5.6 Interviewees suggested that their impact / effectiveness on Executive Committees increased disproportionately where there was more than one female member and therefore more than one female voice on the Executive Committee.
- 5.7 The value of the IOC Women in Sport seminars and other international links for many respondents was very clear. Not only did such events provide a source of new ideas in policy terms, they also provided support networks for women who might otherwise be isolated if they were among a small minority on the NOC Executive.
- 5.8 Training needs reported were very similar to those specified in the questionnaire responses. However it is important also to acknowledge that forms of support other than training (e.g. mentoring, networking and internet resources) may be required if women are to be successfully recruited and retained.



- 5.9 Women are not a homogenous group and the data from the interviews suggest that differences across socio-economic, ethnic, religious and geographical boundaries imply the need for very different approaches in different cultural contexts.

## 6. Main findings from detailed interviews with a sample of NOC Secretary Generals

- 6.1 Although the establishment of the minimum targets had served to raise consciousness of the issue of women's involvement in Executive Committees, the minimum target had not been met by all of the interviewees' NOCs. Even where it had, 10% had been regarded as the maximum or norm rather than a minimum level to be achieved. One NOC president indicated that he felt that unless sanctions were incorporated in the system that NOCs would continue to treat the matter less seriously.
- 6.2 Several Secretary Generals highlighted the structural problem of the make up of NOCs in that the majority of the membership is made up of delegates from National Federations who are largely male. This leaves relatively few women who are delegates to the NOC Assemblies to stand for membership of the executive.
- 6.3 Expectations placed on women recruited as role models often implied high standards as elite performers, and / or high levels of academic qualifications which were not necessarily applicable to male candidates.
- 6.4 The competences sought in respect of women (as opposed to qualifications and sporting experience) were not clearly articulated and hence the training needs of new women members were difficult to establish.
- 6.5 Although the great majority of respondents recognised traditional gender roles as barriers to female participation in the work of the Executive, few looked for flexible policies through which to respond to these barriers.
- 6.6 There are dangers in treating 'women' as a homogenous group since differences among women may reflect significant sources of disadvantage (e.g. urban-rural, regional differences).
- 6.7 The respondents were positive about the decentralisation of Olympic Solidarity Funding and about the potential of Solidarity Funds to be used effectively to support women's development. However there was evidence that in practice this had been happening in only limited ways.

## 7. Conclusions

### 7.1 The Success of the Targets

Perhaps the most obvious point to make is that the introduction of minimum targets has had a clear and positive impact on the proportion of women in NOC Executive Committees. The rapid growth of the numbers of women in such positions, from a very low base, immediately following the announcement of the minimum targets is clear both in numeric terms from the questionnaire data, and also from the observations made by women and the Secretary Generals during the interviews. Thus the target approach can be said to have had success in raising awareness of gender inequalities, in bringing talented women in to the Olympic family, and of improving Olympic governance by setting an example and providing moral leadership to the world of sport in terms of equity in representation.

The data collected provide a clear indication of the quality of the cohort of women recruited. They were very well educated as a group, many brought valuable transferable skills from their professional work and many were former elite athletes. They were also very active and hard working as evidenced by the fact that Secretary Generals indicated that 51% of the women on their Executive Committees were in the top quartile in terms of the most active members, with 78% in the top half. Thus the introduction of the targets policy has helped to unlock the source of a skilled, educated, and committed workforce which has considerable potential to grow.

The use of targets of at least 10% and 20% has the merit of providing a simple, understandable, measurable and transparent policy goal. Perhaps the only area of confusion in relation to the goal was that relating to the difference between quotas and targets, and respondents almost universally used these terms interchangeably. Notwithstanding this fact, and the implication that quotas are compulsory there was little sympathy generally for the imposition of penalties for failing to achieve "quota" or target numbers.

The importance of the leadership of the IOC in respect of addressing the issue of inequitable representation on decision making bodies should not be underestimated. Some respondents felt empowered in making demands on other sporting organisations not covered by the IOC policy simply by virtue of the IOC's position on this matter. Thus the notion of targets as a reasonable expectation in the sporting world was legitimated to some degree by the fact that the Olympic Movement had adopted such an approach.

## **7.2 The Limitations of Targets**

There are perhaps three principal limitations of the target policy evident from the data. The first is that they affect only part of the system of Olympic and sports administration. As one respondent put it, there is a hierarchy from clubs at the base to regional, national and international federations, and to NOCs, Continental Olympic Associations and the IOC. One interviewee pointed out that the NOCs are failing to recommend women for consideration as potential candidates and thus the IOC itself has restricted room for manoeuvre in terms of appointing more female members. By focusing solely on NOCs and IFs (the latter not investigated in the current project) important elements of the system are ignored. Co-opting or even electing one or more women onto the NOC Executive is unlikely to have a lasting effect if the predominantly male electorate for the Executive (in the form of the NF nominees to the NOC Assemblies) is left unchanged. Thus the policy only addresses certain points in the pyramid with the result that it may not foster organic growth of the number of women in decision making positions. A long term sustainable solution to the involvement of women in executive decision making is thus likely to require work at the level of clubs and regional / national federations in addition to the NOCs and IFs per se.

The second limitation of the minimum targets approach is that even where the minimum targets themselves are achieved this has not necessarily led to the adoption of policy initiatives that foster women's participation in sport or in executive decision making. There is a danger that some NOCs see the achievement of targets as an end in itself rather than a means towards a more effective Executive Committee. Many NOCs have set up Women's Committees but few respondents reported much impact as yet. Guidance and advice on ways of ensuring the effectiveness of Women's Committees could be useful both to NOCs and the committees themselves.

The third limitation of the targets is that the universal percentages do not take account of the social and cultural conditions in different countries. In some countries women's equality is well accepted and advanced in all aspects of life, in others women still face significant inequalities. NOCs operate both in the context of the values of the Olympic Movement and also within the cultural conditions that exist in their own country. The targets were set to represent the minima rather than maxima, but several NOCs appeared to regard them as a ceiling to be attained rather than a base from which to build. Others were justly proud that they had exceeded the targets by a considerable amount. There is scope for further emphasis of the desirability for NOCs to strive to achieve higher levels of equality in their governance structures from whatever base they start.

## **7.3 The Recruitment Process**

The interviews with women in particular highlighted the importance of both encouragement / sponsorship of candidates by senior figures within the NOC who showed belief in their ability

to do the job, and also the importance of female role models. Secretary Generals were largely unaware of the critical importance of encouragement by experienced NOC members. It is ironic that given the very well qualified nature of the female members that they should be less confident than some of their male counterparts, but being the first, or among the first women to submit to election from a predominantly male electorate can be daunting. Acknowledging the difference that such encouragement has made may be helpful in promoting the active sponsorship of candidates by experienced members of the NOCs.

Two thirds of NOCs reported taking special measures to recruit women and one third reported not having attempted any measures. One indicated a backlash when attempts to vote through measures had been rejected by the NOC. There is no doubt that special measures have been effective for those NOCs that have adopted them. NOCs that have not yet met the 10% minimum target could learn from the experiences of NOCs that have taken special measures, both formal and informal, to successfully recruit women Executive Committee members.

#### **7.4 Training, support and networking**

Major sources of policy ideas on the development of women and sport were seen to grow directly out of the IOC organised regional seminars and other international forums on Women and Sport. These meetings provided two critical ingredients for the development of policy – a source of policy ideas, which may be adapted and reshaped for local application elsewhere, but also as a source for promoting confidence and creating networks among women who may often be working alone or in small numbers on the Executive Committees. The importance of providing moral support for women seeking to make a contribution as a minority in the context of their own organisation should not be taken lightly. Time and again the women interviewed referred to the importance of confidence in relation to their willingness to submit themselves for election, and in relation to their willingness to speak out in promoting policies for women and for the general population. It was equally clear from the feedback of Secretary Generals that while they understood the significance of the Women in Sport conferences and seminars for promoting policy ideas, the issues of confidence building, and networking were not always fully appreciated.

The nature of the training needs cited by women was not unexpected. Management, sports administration, technical skills (sports law, sports medicine, coaching) were mentioned together with the need to learn about successful initiatives elsewhere. However a key element of the training and support requested was the exchange of ideas in seminars and workshops etc (rather than the passive receipt of ideas) such that networks might be established and maintained. Internet communication could be built into these initiatives to allow networking and mutual support groups to flourish outside the context of face-to-face meetings. Such networks might require some (light touch) management but would have the potential to capitalise on the investment made in training

While the IOC Women and Sport seminars have been a very important means of support in facilitating confidence building, networking among women and in providing project management tools, it may be appropriate to consider organising seminars that include more men in the future. Several respondents pointed out that if gender issues are to become mainstream concerns and real progress made, men and women must work together to take responsibility for promoting gender equality in sport. So far women's awareness and understanding of gender issues has been raised through training but there has been limited engagement of men.

#### **7.5. Next Steps**

The research has provided evidence of the way in which the policy targets have been successful, and sought the views of those most involved in its implementation – women Executive Committee members and NOC Secretary Generals. Many examples of good practice have been identified. Dissemination of the findings of the research should assist the

Olympic Movement in the continued implementation and development of the policy. The areas in which further work would seem appropriate include work with Continental Olympic Associations of NOCs, Women's Committees of NOCs, and other members of the Olympic family, in particular International and National Federations. It is hoped the experiences of those who have contributed to the research as respondents will assist in taking forward this work and be used to help NOCs achieve and exceed the 20% target in the months leading up to December 2005.

Anita White / Ian Henry  
Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy  
January 2004

## Section 1

# Project Overview

### Introduction

This document reports the findings of a joint project undertaken by the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy (ISLP) at Loughborough University and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), directed by Dr. Anita White, Visiting Professor at Loughborough University and Katia Mascagni, Project Manager, Department of International Co-operation and Development at the IOC. The work was conducted by a team of researchers, directed by Professor Ian Henry, from the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy, evaluating the impact of IOC policy in respect of the roles which women play on the Executive Committees of National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in each of the five continental Olympic.

The joint project investigating Women's Leadership in the Olympic Movement was initiated in January 2002 and involved a two year programme of work. This final report outlines the findings of the study designed on the basis of the original proposal submitted to the IOC by the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy in November 2001.

### 1.1 Context and Purpose of the Research

In 1997, as part of its Women and Sport policy, the IOC established targets for women's membership of NOC Executive Committees. These were for women to hold at least 10% of executive decision-making positions in NOCs by December 2001 rising to at least 20% by December 2005. The IOC has regularly collected statistics on the numbers of women on NOC Executive Committees and measured progress towards the achievement of the targets. The purpose of the research project was to provide information and evaluate progress on the implementation of the IOC policy in relation to women's leadership in the Olympic Movement. The research project thus evaluates the processes of recruitment of women to decision-making structures, their career paths into Olympic leadership, their impact on the activities of the organizations themselves, and the nature of training and support required by both the women members and the sports organizations to ensure that the benefits of wider involvement in decision-making by women are realised. In so doing the project has explored the views of both women Executive Committee members and NOC Secretary Generals on the implementation and impact of the policy.

### 1.2 The Research Questions

Following a meeting in January 2002 with Katia Mascagni and the Research team at Loughborough University, the key questions as outlined in the initial project proposal were refined. These are listed below, and give an indication of the types of issues that were developed in the project.

#### For Women Members of NOC Executive Committees

- What are their career histories and what paths have their career development taken? What are their backgrounds in sport (particularly in National Sports Federations / Governing Bodies) and in management?
- What qualifications, skills and competencies do they have? How have they managed to combine voluntary work in sport with other aspects of their lives?
- How were they recruited to the NOC? What was their personal motivation for becoming involved?

- What roles do they fulfil within the NOC? What committees are they on? Have they been involved with Women's Committees/ Commissions and how effective did they think they were? How successful have they been in influencing decision making, and why? How were they experiencing their role? What issues or difficulties do/ did they face? What coping/ influencing strategies do they use?
- What do they think of the way their NOC operates? What changes would they like to see? What training or support have they had so far (including that funded by Olympic Solidarity) and what training and support do they need in the future? Do they think the IOC targets have been helpful?
- What are their future aspirations and personal goals?
- What is the overall status of women / women and sport in their country? Is there a national gender equity policy or a sports policy on gender equity? Has their country adopted the Brighton Declaration and does that make any difference? Is there legislation on gender equality? What formal or informal support networks do they have?

### **For Secretary Generals of NOCs**

- How many women are on the NOC, when were they recruited and what roles do they fulfil? What special knowledge, skills and competencies do they bring to the organisation?
- What is the overall status of women / women and sport in their country? Is there a national gender equity policy or a sports policy on gender equity? Has their country adopted the Brighton Declaration and does that make any difference? Is there legislation on gender equality?
- What mechanisms have they used to recruit women to the NOC? Have they had difficulty recruiting women and if so why do they think that was? Do they think the IOC targets have been helpful?
- What influence do the women have on decision making, and what contribution do they make to the overall work of the NOC?
- In what ways has the NOC tried to support the women in their positions/roles? Does the NOC have a Women's Commission/ Committee? If so, how successful has it been? If not, why have they decided not to have one?
- What help or assistance would they like from the IOC in working towards gender equality in sport?

## **1.3 The Research Methods**

The project set out to undertake two questionnaire surveys and two sets of in-depth interviews, together with secondary analysis of existing sources as follows:

#### Questionnaire Surveys

- i. of all women on NOCs Executive Committees
- ii. of Secretary Generals of all NOCs

#### In-depth interviews with a sample of

- i 25 - 30 women from different countries and cultural backgrounds and with different range of experience of NOC work.
- ii 25 – 30 NOC Secretary Generals, ideally from the same countries as the women interviewees.

Secondary analysis focused on existing literature and reports, such as country reports to the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG), UN reports on the status of women, and information held by the IOC.

## 1.4 The Research Team

Given the diversity of backgrounds and cultural orientations of the NOCs and interviewees involved in this research, a multi-skilled and multi-cultural research team was developed, providing a range of knowledge and skills, which were both culturally and contextually specific and policy relevant. The team thus consisted of the following:

- Dr Anita White (Co-Director of the Project Working Group, Visiting Professor at Loughborough University, ISLP)
- Ms Katia Mascagni (Co-Director of the Project, Project Manager, Department of International Cooperation and Development, IOC, French, Spanish, Italian speaker)
- Professor Ian Henry (Director of ISLP, research in policy analysis, Olympic governance; French speaker)
- Dr. Mansour Al-Tauqi (Lecturer at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman seconded to ISLP, research in Olympic governance ;Arabic speaker)
- Ms. Dawn Aquilina (postgraduate RA ISLP, research interest in women in Olympism; Maltese speaker)
- Mr. Davies Banda (postgraduate RA ISLP, background as fieldworker in sports development and HIV in Southern Africa)
- Mr. Alasdair Henry (postgraduate RA ISLP, research interest in discourse and media analysis)
- Ms. Irene Kim (seconded from Kyrgyzstan NOC to ISLP, research interest in women in Olympism; Russian speaker)
- Ms Wirdati Radzi (University of Malaya, seconded to ISLP: research interest in women , sport and Islam, and Sharia law; Malay speaker)
- Dr. Emma Rich (Lecturer in School of Exercise and Sports Science, Loughborough, ,research background in women and Olympism, qualitative methodology)
- Dr Christine Shelton (Smith College, Massachusetts, USA; research interest in women in leadership; Spanish speaker)
- Dr. Eleni Theodoraki (research background in Olympic management, Greek speaker)

## 1.5 The Work Programme February 2002-March 2004 2003

Table 1.1 below presents the programme of work undertaken in the 22 months of field work for the project.

**Table 1.1: Outline Work Programme February 2002 – March 2004**

February 2002	Criteria agreed for construction of a list of women to be interviewed based on continental regions, cultural and religious diversity, length of experience. Questionnaires developed for both women's and Secretary Generals surveys
March 2002	Selection of NOCs and women to be used for questionnaire pilots. Pilot questionnaires distributed
April 2002	Questionnaires revised following return of piloted copies. Distribution of questionnaires to all women members of NOC executive committees and to all NOC Secretary Generals . Development of interview schedule for women's and Secretary Generals' interviews
May 2002	Women's interviews conducted at PASO Seminar / IWG Conference in Montreal, Canada (8 interviews completed; interviewers AW, ER, CS) Secretary Generals Interviews at ANOC meeting Kuala Lumpur Malaysia (25 completed, interviewers IH, MA)
June 2002	Further women's interviews completed, one in Europe and four in Asia at the IOC Seminar in Doha, Qatar (interviewer AW). Reminders sent to non-respondents for questionnaires. Transcription of tapes of interviews
July 2002	Second reminders sent to non-respondents for questionnaires. Transcription of tapes of interviews
August / September 2002	Third reminders sent to non-respondents for questionnaires. Transcription of tapes of interviews Analysis of Secretary Generals' interviews using NUD*IST software. Interview with one African woman member of an NOC Executive (ET interviewer)
October 2002	Transcription of tapes of interviews Analysis of Secretary Generals interviews using NUD*IST software.
November 2002	Preparation of interim report Conducting of interviews at the IOC supported women's leadership seminar in Rome (3 interviews conducted, ET interviewer) Interview with one woman member of European NOC Executive (AW interviewer)
February 2003	Review meeting of project Team and Katia Mascagni in Loughborough
End February 2003	Final reminders sent to return questionnaires by end March
April/ May 2003	Final Questionnaire analysis
June 2003	Interviews with French speaking African respondents ( 2 interviews conducted by KM)
July- October 2003	Transcription and analysis of interview data
August 2003	Meeting of Loughborough project team
September 2003	Interview with African French speaking respondent in Lausanne (IH)
September 2003	Presentation by Professor Henry to meeting of IOC Expert Group in Lausanne
November 2003	Preparation of draft final report
Jan 2004	Meeting of core project team with Thomas Sithole, Katia Mascagni and Clarissa Brack in Lausanne to discuss draft Final report
End of January 2003	Delivery of final report to IOC
March 2004	Presentation to IOC Women and Sport conference



## 1.6 Notes on Work Programme

### (a) Questionnaires

All questionnaires were distributed via the IOC office and returned via that office to Loughborough for analysis.

There was a series of sets of reminders sent to non respondents (two sets for NOC Secretary Generals and four for Women members of NOC Executive Committees) from the offices of the IOC to ensure that returns were maximised. Usable returns were as follows:

Questionnaire for women members of NOC Executives Committees 143 returns  
(estimated as 57.5% response rate of all female members representing  
46% of countries)

Questionnaire for NOC Secretary Generals 89 returns (48.2% response rate)

Completed questionnaires and status reports were forwarded to Loughborough from the IOC office in Lausanne. Those returned were coded and subjected to analysis employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

### (b) Interviews

At the start of the project a list of women to be interviewed was drawn up in consultation with Ms. Mascagni based on criteria including continental region, cultural and religious diversity, and length of experience. Whilst this helped to direct the data collection, the list was modified according to the availability of interviewees at regional seminars and conferences. In some cases, it was difficult to find suitable times during which women were available for interview given their commitments at seminars and conferences. However, this also enabled the team to take advantage of interviewing additional women, across a diverse range of cultural backgrounds and 30 women's interviews in total were conducted.

The Project team took advantage of the following meetings to hold groups of interviews with women members of NOCs:

'Women In Sport' World Conference, Montreal, May 2002;

Asian Women in Sport Seminar in Doha in June 2002;

European NOCs Seminar on Women in Sport, Rome November 2002

African Women's Seminar (Francophone) in Senegal May 2003 (two interviews conducted by Katia Mascagni).

In addition interviews were held in a variety of other contexts in all five continents. Arrangements were made to conduct two further interviews by telephone when face to face interviews proved impossible, but intercontinental connections to mobile phones proved unsatisfactory. All interviews were conducted face to face, taped and transcribed. They were conducted in English, Spanish and French with three interviews in respectively Farsi, Japanese and Albanian (all three with translation). The distribution of the female interviewees was as follows: Africa 4; Americas 8; Asia 8; Europe 8; Oceania 2.

Interviews with Secretary Generals of NOCs with one exception took place in the context of the meeting of the Association of National Olympic Committees in Kuala Lumpur in May 2002. 25 interviews were conducted with Secretary Generals from Africa 7; Asia 7; Americas 4; Europe 6; Oceania 1. Interviews were conducted in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, (and one in Romanian, with translation). They were taped, translated, where necessary, and transcribed. In three cases when Secretary Generals were not available NOC Presidents were interviewed, and in one case a Secretary General and President were interviewed together.

### **(c) Programme Meetings / Communication**

The Project Team members based at Loughborough met regularly and used a secure intranet resource from the Loughborough University web site as a means of communication and record sharing with the two members of the project team (Anita White and Chris Shelton) who were not based on campus, and for sharing records with the IOC staff involved. In addition, as indicated in the work programme above, periodic meetings were held with the larger project team (incorporating the non-Loughborough based team members) and four meetings were held with Katia Mascagni (and IOC staff) to review progress at key stages.

A consequence of the way in which the team has developed materials used as a background to the study has been the development of web-based resources which may be useful to women working in NOCs and to others interested in research in these areas. It is intended therefore at the end of the project to make these resources (typically articles, reports, data, and web links) available on an internet location.

## **1.7 The Structure of the Report**

The structure of the remainder of this report is as follows. Sections two and three review the findings of the questionnaire surveys of women members of NOC Executive Committees and Secretary Generals respectively. Detailed analysis of the data from the interviews with Secretary Generals and with women members of NOC Executive Committees is reported in sections four and five respectively while the final section of the report summarises findings and considers implications for policy.

## Section 2

# Analysis of Responses to the Questionnaire to Women Members of NOC Executive Committees

## 2.1 Introduction

Of the estimated 251 women NOC executive committee members, 143 completed the questionnaires sent to them as part of this study. This 57% response rate is very respectable for postal questionnaires but was achieved only after several reminders were sent across the period. Given a 'dedicated' population of the type being surveyed one might have achieved even better results, however there do appear to have been problems in contacting the women executive committee members through their NOC offices, since it seems that at least some members did not receive the material delivered in this way. Notwithstanding this difficulty, the 143 responses received provide valuable insights into who the women are who have been recruited to NOC executive committees, and into the roles which they play within them.

A small number of responses were also received from women who were not members of executive committees but who were members of the NOC General Assembly and / or closely involved in the work of the NOC in their country. These data have not been included in the reporting of the responses here (since this is a survey of members of executive committees, rather than of female members of NOCs) but the additional responses did often provide useful additional background information which informed our thinking.

The report of findings from questionnaire analysis in this chapter takes the following structure:

- National and Continental Affiliations of Respondents
- Demographic and Personal Data
- History of Involvement with the NOC
- The Role and Functioning of the Women's Committees
- Women's Experience of Work on the Executives of the NOCs

## 2.2 National and Continental Affiliations of Respondents

The NOCs of respondents who provided usable returns are listed below in table 2.1 with their continental affiliations cited in table 2.2. It should be noted that Asia and Oceania are underrepresented in the sample and that Europe is by contrast over-represented.

**Table 2.1: NOCs of Respondents**

Albania x3	Equatorial Guinea	Japan x2	Sao Tome x2
Armenia	Estonia	Kenya x3	Senegal x2
Aruba	Ethiopia	Lesotho x2	Seychelles x2
Australia	Fiji	Liberia	Singapore
Barbados	Finland x4	Libya	Slovakia
Belarus x3	France x2	Luxembourg x2	Slovenia
Bermuda	Gambia x2	Malawi	South Africa x2
Brazil	Georgia x2	Malaysia	St Lucia
Burkina Fasso	Germany x2	Mali	Sweden x3
Burundi x2	Ghana	Mauritius	Switzerland x2
Cameroon	Great Britain x3	Mexico	Syria
Canada x3	Grenada	Micronesia	Tanzania

Chile	Guinea Bissau	Morocco	Thailand
China	Guyana x2	Namibia	Togo
Colombia	Honduras	Nauru	Trinidad
Congo	Hong Kong	Nepal	Turkey
Cook Islands	Hungary	New Zealand	U.S
Croatia x4	Iceland x4	Norway x2	Uganda
Cuba	Iran x3	Pakistan x4	US Virgin Islands
Czech	Ireland x2	Palau	Yemen
Denmark	Israel x3	Philippines	Yugoslavia x3
Dominica	Italy	Puerto Rico	Zambia x2
Ecuador x2	Jamaica x2	Romania x3	Zimbabwe

**Table 2.2: Continental Affiliation of Respondents**

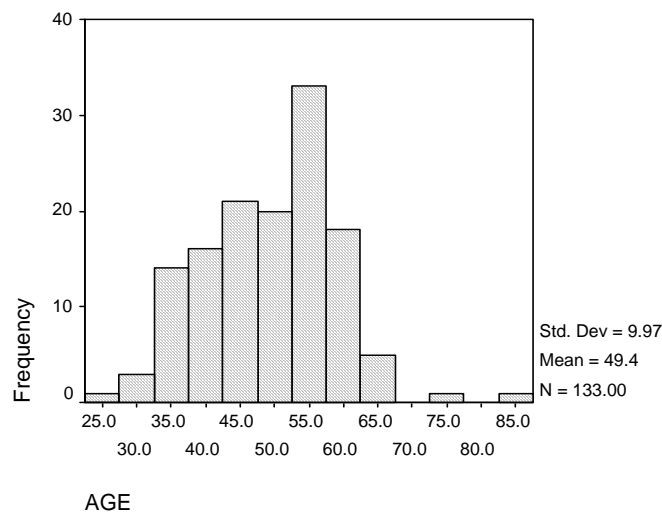
	Frequency	Percent of sample	Total number of NOCs in each Continental Association	Per cent of total number of NOCs in the Continental Associations
Africa	37	25.9	53	26.9
Americas	25	17.5	41	20.8
Asia	18	12.6	41	20.8
Europe	56	39.2	48	24.4
Oceania	7	4.9	14	7.1
Total	143	100.0	197	100

## 2.3 Demographic and Personal data

### (a) Age, Employment Status, Educational Qualifications and Background in Sports Participation and Leadership

The age of respondents ranged from 25 to 85, with a mean of 49.4, with only 12 respondents aged 35 and under (see figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Age of Women members of Executive Boards of NOCs



90 women (63%) indicated that they were in employment, of whom 69 (48%) were in full time posts and 21 (15%) part time. Table 2.3 indicates qualifications held. 94 (66%) of the

respondents had at least a first degree or teaching qualification, indicating a relatively well educated cohort of women working on NOC Executives.

**Table 2.3: Qualifications Held by Women Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of returns excluding non responses
<i>Non response</i>	23	16.1	
1st Degree	42	29.4	35.0
Postgraduate Degree	26	18.2	21.7
PhD	10	7.0	8.3
Professional Qualifications	18	12.6	15.0
School only	3	2.1	2.5
School and professional qualifications	5	3.5	4.2
Degree and professional	10	7.0	8.3
Teaching qualification	6	4.2	5.0
Total	143	100.0	100.0

Respondents were also asked to indicate what experience they had had of leadership roles in sport, specifically, in teaching, coaching, officiating, or administration in national or international federations. As table 2.4 indicates the most significant form of leadership experience of the women recruited to NOC Executive committees is work with national federations, which is to be expected, given the recruitment of members of NOCs from national federations.

**Table 2.4: Sports Leadership Backgrounds of Respondents**

Leadership Background	Officiating	Coaching	Sports Administration / International Federation	Sports Administration / national Federation	Teaching
<i>Non-response</i>	18	18	23	12	17
Yes	28	31	21	118	34
No	97	94	99	13	92
Total	143	143	143	143	143

In addition to their experience of sports leadership roles, the great majority of respondents (81.8%) had been competitive sportswomen and 65 had participated at international level (see table 2.5). These included 29 Olympians, a further 8 who had participated in world championships and a further 16 who had taken part in Continental Games.

**Table 2.5: Competitive Level of Participation by Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Regional	13	9.1
National	37	25.9
International	65	45.5
<i>Non-response or none of the above</i>	28	19.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

The sports with which respondents had principally been associated were varied and included some non-Olympic sports such as netball and chess (see table 2.6).

**Table 2.6: Sports with which Respondents have Been Principally Associated**

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
<i>Non-response</i>	29	20.3	Shooting	5	3.5
Netball	7	4.9	Sailing	1	0.7
Archery	1	0.7	Handball	7	4.9
Curling	2	1.4	Cross country running	1	0.7
Gymnastics	8	5.6	Fencing	5	3.5
Figure skating	3	2.1	Orienteering	1	0.7
Skiing	4	2.8	Naginata	1	0.7
Table tennis	5	3.5	Canoeing	1	0.7
Badminton	6	4.2	Athletics	13	9.1
Hockey	6	4.2	Squash	1	0.7
Basketball	9	6.3	Tennis	4	2.8
Chess	4	2.8	Softball	2	1.4
Rowing	4	2.8	Swimming	4	2.8
Volleyball	7	4.9	Synchronised swimming	2	1.4
			<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

More than 70% of the sample was married or cohabiting, (table 2.7) and a similarly high proportion had one or more children (table 2.8).

**Table 2.7: Marital Status of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
<i>Non-response</i>	7	4.9
Married	101	70.6
Widow	7	4.9
Single	16	11.2
Co-habiting	6	4.2
Divorced	6	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2.8: Number of Children of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
<i>Non-response</i>	7	4.9
None	20	14.0
One child	34	23.8
Two children	44	30.8
Three children	28	19.6
Four children	7	4.9
Five Children	2	1.4
Six children	1	0.7
Total	143	100

### (c) Religion of Respondents (Self Descriptors)

Respondents were asked to indicate in their own terms to which religion if any they were affiliated. While 44 respondents (30.8%) gave a nil response to this question, various denominations of Christianity formed the majority of responses (51.7%) with Muslim women forming 12% of the total. The lack of variety of non-Christian religions may in part be a reflection of the currently low levels of respondents from Asia.

**Table 2.9: Religious Affiliation of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
<i>Non-response</i>	44	30.8
Christianity	19	13.3
Methodism	1	0.7
Animism	2	1.4
Christian Orthodox	5	3.5
Judaism	3	2.1
Islam	17	11.9
Buddhism	2	1.4
Church of England	4	2.8
Roman Catholic	33	23.1
Metaphysical Truth	1	0.7
Protestant	11	7.7
Evangelism	1	0.7
Total	143	100

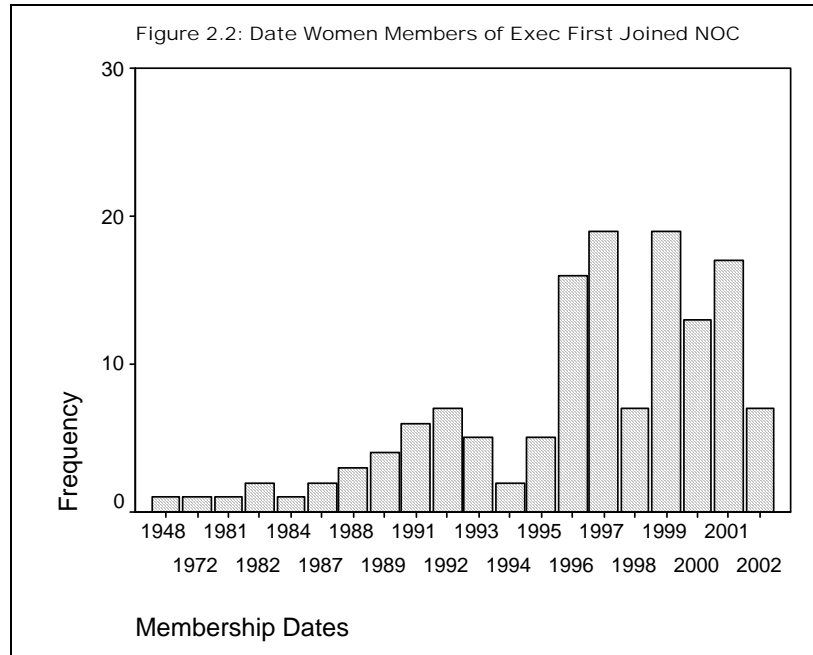
## 2.3 History of Involvement with the NOC

In terms of the methods of joining the NOC, two thirds of respondents were elected (a number after having been initially co-opted) with thus almost one third of respondents non-elected. The need for co-option may reflect the difficulty of ensuring that the electoral constituency (which for NOCs tends to be dominated by national federations) is prepared to promote women as candidates for election. Once co-opted however subsequent election is more likely as candidates have 'demonstrated' their worth, or at least raised their profile with the electorate.

**Table 2.10: Method of Joining NOC Executive**

	Frequency	Percent
Non-response	3	2.1
Election	89	62.2
Invitation / nomination	51	35.7
Total	143	100.0

Figure 2.2 illustrates the relatively recent recruitment of many women members. The pattern of recruitment suggests that this is, in large part, a response to the IOC establishing of targets, and thus it seems likely that without such targets recruitment would be slight.



## 2.4 The Role and Functioning of Women’s Commissions / Committees

As one might expect, the work of Women’s Commissions was a significant feature of many respondents’ work on NOCs. Although only 85 (59.4%) of the 143 respondents reported that their NOC had a Women’s Commission, 70 respondents (49%) served on the Women’s Commission / Committee of their NOC.

**Table 2.11: Respondents whose NOCs had Women’s Commissions / Committees**

	Frequency	Percent
Non-response	12	8.4
With Women’s Commission / Committee.	85	59.4
Without Women’s Commission / Committee	46	32.2
Total	143	100.0

This raises the question of whether women serving on NOCs are dealing solely or predominantly with issues related to women and sport or whether they play a more general



role in the work of the Executive. 35 respondents (24.5%) indicated that their work on the Executive related solely or primarily to issues of women’s sport, with a further 84 respondents (54.7%) indicating that their work related primarily to general issues but also to women’s sport. Clearly there is a tension here between women having a voice in relation to women’s sport and the need to avoid ‘marginalizing’ women’s involvement by restricting it largely, or even solely, to this domain.

**Table 2.12: Respondents’ Perception of the Nature of their Work on the NOC**

	Frequency	Percent	Percent excluding non-response
<i>Non-response</i>	16	11.2	
Solely involved with issues relating to women's sport	4	2.8	3.1
Primarily women but also general	31	21.7	24.4
Primarily general but also women's sport	84	58.7	66.1
Solely general no women's issues	8	5.6	6.3
Total	143	100	100.0

Of the 38 NOCs which reported operating without a specific Commission or Committee charged with dealing with women’s sport, in nine cases the establishment of such a commission had never been actively considered while in 17 cases responses indicated that the issues relating to women’s involvement were dealt with elsewhere. Of those providing ‘other reasons’ the most common comment was that the establishing of such a Commission was imminent.

**Table 2.13: Reasons Given for Why No Women's Commission or Committee Exists in the Respondent's NOC**

	Frequency	Percent	Per cent excluding no or non- response
<i>Non- response</i>	105	73.4	
issues dealt with elsewhere	15	10.5	39.5
proposal never considered	11	7.7	28.9
other reasons	12	8.4	31.6
Total	143	100	100.0

Membership of the Women’s Commissions was, as one might expect, dominantly female, on average 80% of members of such commissions were women (see table 2.14).

**Table 2.14: Women Membership as Proportion of Total Membership of Women's Commissions**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Females as Percentage of Women's Committee Membership	60	14.29	100.00	80.94	20.31

The average length of time for which Women's Commissions had been in operation was just over four years (with a range from one to sixteen, see table 2.15), with 10 NOCs having established such Commissions within the last year.

**Table 2.15: Number of Years Women's Commission has Been in Existence (for NOCs with a Commission only)**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Existence women's committee years	72	0.1	16	4.33	3.18

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt that the presence of women on the NOC Executive had had any impact on the policies pursued. Table 2.16 summarises some of the responses. Despite some concerns the clear majority of responses reported positive outcomes.

Below are a selection of sample respondents. These, and other similar 'example boxes' that appear throughout the report, are illustrative quotes. They are not numerically representative and therefore do not include all responses that were given under particular categories. The quotes are attributed only by questionnaire number and continent of origin in order to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

**Table 2.16: Examples of Responses to the Question 'What has been the impact of the Women's Committee on the activities of the NOC in terms of activities promoted / policies pursued?'**

*Positive image / influence*

- "I think that a committee has a chance to give my NOC a new positive image with the society." (Americas, 4)
- "a lot of women have understood [the importance of sporting activity]. One should create a network." (Africa, 20)

*Specialist provision for women*

- "the IOC, and the NOC constructed in the first week of the year 2000 a sporting centre for women where sporting practice is fostered (aerobics, basketball, football, tennis, volleyball, particularly by women and children)." (Americas, 12)

*More women on sports leadership courses*

- "more women are being nominated for sports leadership courses within and outside the country." (Asia, 8)

*More women nominated for awards*

- "more women are nominated for sports awards as well as been given awards based on their sports activities." (Asia, 8)

*More women appointed to committees on sports*

- “more women are appointed to committees on sports” (Asia, 8)
- “improvement in the NOC composition.” (Europe, 56)
- “the most significant has been the number of women involved in the NOC Club and the National Level. An area very few women have ventured before.” (Oceania, 2)
- “women are beginning to enter in to federations and the NOC as managers. The NOC reserves a budget for women’s sporting activities each year.” (Africa, 2)

*Increased profile women in sport*

- “strong support by our NOC for the IWG Congress in Montreal, May 2002. Stronger linkage with PASO and its ‘women in sport committee. Use of women’s committee in support or international strategies.” (Americas, 6)
- “there has been considerably influence in policy in general. The committee has promoted female participation.” (Americas, 9)
- “adoption of Brighton Declaration and Windhoek call for action.” (Europe, 12)
- “has supported the NOC’s in all its events using their slot to promote awareness to women and sport.” (Africa, 15)
- “raised the profile of women in sport issues.” (Europe, 33)
- “activities by the committee receiving IOS support and other sources remain major activities of the NOC. These activities target NF’s and have impact on policies, specifically on establishment on women’s committees, percentage of leadership positions and promotion of women sports in general.” (Africa, 34)

*Achieve IOC minimum target %*

- “pushed NOC to align itself with the IOC resolution of a certain percentage representation of women in the NOC.” (Africa, 15)

*more women involved in voluntary and administrative level*

- “through the women’s committee the NOC has more activities for the development of sport. There are more women involved in voluntary and administrative level.” (Europe, 53)
- “it has put forward a ..... woman [from my country] who received the trophy for women and sport from the IOC.” (Americas, 10)

*Goals not yet achieved*

- “still to be achieved” (Americas, 2)
- “there has been no impact but it has provided the opportunity to convince people of the meaning of participation in sport by women and of the performances they can attain.” (Asia, 16)
- “the impact of the women’s committee will be felt after the adoption of which resources will be mobilised for the follow-up activities to the workshops.” (Africa, 9)
- “we have yet to meet as a committee.” (Americas, 24)

## 2.6 Women’s Experience of Work on the Executives of the NOCs

### 2.6.1 Roles Fulfilled

In qualitative responses respondents indicated that they played significant roles in the NOC in addition to simply being a member of the Executive Committee. Such roles included the following: President, Vice President, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, Treasurer, Secretary of National Academy, Member of Administration Council, Representative of Women, Sports Coordinator, Chair of Women’s Commission, Olympic Programmes’ Manager. Since most appointments of women to NOC Executives had taken place relatively recently it is perhaps unsurprising that women are particularly underrepresented in senior positions in the NOCs. However as many women suggested in expressing their aspirations

for the future (see section 2.6.6) they would be seeking senior positions in the future within the NOC Executive.

## 2.6.2 The Qualities Sought in Members of NOC Executives

The range of attributes sought in the prospective members of NOC Executives as perceived by the female respondents was wide and varied and may be described as falling under the headings of personal qualities, skills, experience, and knowledge. Whilst this was one of the most important areas in relation to moving into Olympic Leadership it was also one of the least definitive. It was evident that a clear person specification was not shared, as different emphases were given by respondents even from the same NOC. As one respondent expressed it:

“It differs. Often they only look for a person and did not mention which qualification they look for.” (Europe 13)

### *(a) Personal Qualities*

The personal qualities mentioned by respondents included moral qualities and personality traits as well as personal status. Thus in terms of moral qualities “honesty” (Africa 14, 19) “integrity and selflessness” (Asia, 12), “high ethical awareness” (Europe, 47) and being of “unprejudiced and morally sound character” (Africa, 37) were items cited. In relation to personality traits and personal status “passion vision and creativity” (Asia, 6), “energy” (Africa, 21), “intelligence, character, charisma and professionalism” (Europe, 44), “creativity” (Europe, 51) were stressed.

### *(b) Skills and Experience*

There was a clear emphasis given to two elements, managerial skills and experience on the one hand and administrative or sports administration skills or experience on the other, by a wide range of respondents. In relation to the former, “business acumen” (Oceania, 1), “organisational skills and management capacities” (Europe, 22), “leadership, organisational ... human relations skills” (Americas, 22), “communication skills” (Europe, 9) were among those cited. In terms of the latter comments such as “We need people that have experience or have knowledge of sport administration, sport officials, sport public relations and technology.” (Oceania, 4) was typical of observations made. A smaller number of respondents made reference to specialist skills such as sports medicine which prospective members might bring to the NOC executive.

A smaller number of respondents referred to the importance of high level sporting experience, even though the women members of the NOC Executives as a whole incorporated a high proportion of former elite athletes.

## 2.6.3 Female Respondents’ Motivations for Joining the NOC Executive

The motivations for undertaking the work of a NOC Executive member varied from the wish to promote sport in general (or sport in their country in particular), to the intrinsic enjoyment of working in sport, the wish to promote women’s participation and involvement (both in sport and in decision making), and the wish to serve other groups (in particular the young). These motives are reflected in the responses summarised in table 2.17.

It is notable that only one respondent referred to the wish to develop her career in sports administration. This issue of aspiring to develop to higher levels of Sports or Olympic Leadership is a significant point which is further detailed in section 4 of the report from the findings of the interviews with women.

**Table 2.17: Motives for women becoming members of NOC Executive Committees**

*Promotion of Sport*

- "I know sports as athlete, I have higher special education and I want to contribute to further development of sports in [my country] by my personal knowledge and experience." (Europe, 4)
- "I would like to bring my modest contribution to the development and the promotion of sport in general and hand ball in particular." (Africa, 1)
- "I would like to contribute to the development of [my own sport] and sport in general." (Europe,8)
- "The key words are: passion, vocation, interest for promoting sports glory, love for sport." (Europe, 43)

*Intrinsic Enjoyment of Working in Sport*

- "Just love sports and voluntary work." (Africa, 38)
- "I love sports and hope to do some good." (Europe, 30)
- "I like my job, as a reason. Internal motivation." (Asia, 5)
- "Passion for sport and sports world in general." (Europe,38)
- "love of sport, along with the impact that sport, particularly team sport has had on my own personal development is one of the main reasons for my involvement in sport. In addition the value of sport to the nation's development in terms of the shaping of skills/attitudes, which cannot be taught in any other arena, has contributed to my own commitment to sport." (Americas, 18)
- "Passion for sport - the challenge to make a difference, work and meet with people who have common interest and motivation." (Oceania, 6)

*Assistance to Women*

- "As former top-level athlete and acting coach I know internal problems of sport. Hope my experience and activity can help to overcome the problems and to add new vision to the problems of women sport." (Europe, 7)
- "My biggest motivation is doing things for women of the third world such as [my country] assuring mental and physical health, and assuring great competition at regional, national and international level." (Africa, 11)
- "There is the desire to fight for ensuring that women are involved in sports at all levels, break the barrier of male domination in sports administration and help to ensure girls are given same opportunities as their male counterparts in sports activities." (Americas, 15)
- "To give an example for women who may have reservations in their ability to work along with the male figures because of the likely hurdles they face in their quest for ensuring balance as it relates to the involvement of women and girls in sports at all levels." Americas, 16)
- "Developed sports women. Women and girls health and happiness. Developed Girls Fitness and leisure time." (Asia, 4)
- "Opportunity to conduct the national sport in [my country]. Promotion of the women's status in the sport [of my country]." (Europe, 35)
- "Promoting a sport to a reasonable level. To be involved with young to lead them. To encourage other ladies to volunteer in sport. To make things happen." (Africa, 12)
- "Reluctance of men to give women change to be in leadership. To me it is challenge and inspiration." (Africa, 15)

*Assistance to Other Groups*

- “ Love sport. Think it is of value. All children should have the opportunity to enjoy sport and follow their dreams.” (Americas, 6)
- “ My motivation is simple and natural; I have loved sport since my childhood. I am one of the first women to have been trained in the physical education at the University of [...]. I am one of the first and therefore a model in terms of the practice of sport in [my country]. I have always dreamed of the blossoming and development of [country name] sport and women, knowing very well the evolution of women's sport in [my country]. I am very happy with the progress made so far, small though it may be today.” (Africa, 2)
- “ [My country] is a small ... state with lots of naturally talented sports men and women. I wish to lend my energies and administrative skills to the development of our athletes and to provide them with an alternative to a delinquent lifestyle.” (Americas, 14)
- “ I was motivated by my own enjoyment of sport promoted my well being and discipline. I believed its only fair to our children, if I share what sporting skills I have, and the best result was their involvement. (Oceania, 5)
- “ Sport transform lives. The satisfaction of seeing and being a part of persons realising their potential.” (Americas, 22)
- “ Giving back to sport what it gave me as an athlete. An interest in sport, of the structure and organisation of sport. To try and reach the head of the profession.” (Europe, 51)
- “ I enjoy the fitness aspect of sport. I am interested in interaction and the breakdown of unjust barriers in the world through sport. The development aspect of human nature and character building.” (Africa, 36)

## 2.6.4 The Impact of Women Executive members on Policies and Processes of NOCs

The question of whether women's presence had an impact on the policies pursued by the NOC Executives (and if so what kinds of policies), and an impact on the way the Executive went about its tasks, the processes in which it was involved, are of key interest to the study. Conclusions drawn by respondents on this matter were, as one might expect, mixed. Some women were clear that women's presence could make a difference, not just to what was discussed, but to how it was discussed, as the following comments illustrate.

“better decision making – broader perspectives to debates, better policy development. Men often begin issue analysis with a ‘numbers’ perspective – cost based / cost effectiveness etc. Women often begin issue analysis by examining the key values and principles underpinning decisions”  
(Americas, 5)

Some women were also clear that they acted not only for themselves but as models for others to follow.

“First and foremost it has provided role models who can act as a catalyst not only for equity between sports, but providing a balance of elements to the Committee and the sporting world at large” (Europe, 25)

However, some respondents reported finding life difficult on the Committee, with little impact

"not a great deal. There are two women in our executive Board, but I would not say that we have been able to influence policy matters, in favour of women. We sometimes have to struggle to face criticism and to keep the organisation going" (Americas, 1)

Where members of any group form isolated members of an Executive their confidence and willingness to promote their views is likely to be lessened.

"Because women do not form an integral part of the NOC there is no significant impact on policies considered and adopted by the NOC."  
(Americas, 16)

Nevertheless, although numbers of women on the committee did not guarantee that voices would be heard it is clear from a number of responses that having more than one or two women encouraged female participants to express themselves.

"actually, the [NOC] is a gender-sensitive, organisation and with more women present in the committee, it has helped in creating awareness on the difference between women's concerns and women's issues, in considering certain policy measures regarding training opportunities and in organising activities.. .... One of the 3 female members is the vice president, who takes care in the absence of the President. This is gradually changing the mindset of [our countrymen] that women can also be very effective managers in sports. At most meetings women's voices are heard the most, because they are the most vocal." (Africa, 8)

The importance for some NOCs of having former elite athletes as women on the Executive is evident for example in the following remark that "The presence and opinions of the feminine leaders are respected as they are recognised [sporting] personalities." (Europe, 43), though such remarks tended to be more prevalent in former communist countries with strong traditions of Olympic success.

**Table 2.18: Comments on the Impact of Women on Policies and Processes of the NOC Executives**

<p><i>Positive comments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It helps to solve the problem of women in sport as well as to solve other problems." (Europe, 4)</li> <li>• "[Our country] has a very strong representation of female athletes and supports women in sport. Policies including ethics and harassment have recently been upgraded." (Oceania, 1)</li> <li>• "Actively work on promotion of women's sport, initiate discussions on questions of anti-doping measures." (Europe,7)</li> <li>• "The presence of women in the NOC means that partner federations can not ignore women. Olympic Solidarity aid benefits female and male athletes." (Africa, 2)</li> <li>• "I would not be on the executive if it was not for women in sport and our NOC policy." (Americas, 5)</li> <li>• "better decision making - broader perspectives to debates, better policy development. Men often begin issue analysis with a 'numbers' perspective - cost based/coast effectiveness etc. Women often begin issue analysis by examining the key values and principles underpinning decisions" (Americas, 3)</li> <li>• "Even though I believe that women's issues is everybody's concern , the presence of women will make it be considered under all circumstances. As I am an only woman in my NOC I have seen consciousness of issues (women) and with the increase of members it will make it even more so." (Africa, 7)</li> <li>• "actually, the [NOC} is a gender- sensitive, organisation and with more women present in the committee, it has helped in creating awareness on the difference between women's concerns and women's issues, in considering certain policy measures regarding training opportunities and in organising activities." (Africa, 8)</li> <li>• "Our opinions and proposals are always considered with much attention. Thanks to our effort the interests of women in sport is protected and respected." (Europe, 21)</li> </ul>
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- “First and foremost it has provided role models who can act as a catalyst not only for equity between sports, but providing a balance of elements to the Committee and the sporting world at large.” (Europe, 25)
- “We have a strong personality as our General Secretary she has been very instrumental in ensuring that fair practice prevails for both male and female athletes.” (Americas, 14)
- “The women’s presence in NOC has a great role specially in women’s progress and improvement in management, coaching and refereeing fields.” (Asia, 5)
- “We have brought another perspective to the decision-making process.” (Americas, 18)
- “Women still need to be decision makers. However, it should be paid attention that great ideas from women at committees especially at artistic sports, work well and lead [the NOC’s] national plan.” (Asia, 7)
- “Women even though few have encouraged gender equity at all levels especially when it comes to decision-making we feel left out. Policies laid down affect women and we are trying to change this idea.” (Africa, 17)
- “The presence of women is positive, and makes it among other things possible for women to compete and train with equal conditions as men.” (Europe, 42)
- “Since there are 50% women on the Board and also 50 % women as managers I think they have great impact.” (Europe 41)
- “With women's presence in sport women have come to the forefront. Their presence hinders men from side-lining women’s participation at regional and international level.” (Asia, 11)
- “A good one. The presence and opinions of the feminine leaders are respected as they are recognised personalities.” (Europe 45)
- “Very positive. There is a concerted effort made to embrace women at all levels in the operations of the NOC. Contribution of great ideas. The work of women is respected. Important tasks are being delegated to women with skills.” (Americas, 22)
- “The issue and problems concerning women and sport can be addressed. Proposing the project 'preventing sexual abuse in sport.’ (Europe 52)

#### *Negative Comments*

- “not a great deal. There are two women in our executive Board, but I would not say that we have been able to influence policy matters, in favour of women. We sometimes have to struggle to face criticism and to keep the organisation going.” (Americas, 1)
- Not much. “ (Europe, 8)
- “Because women do not form an integral part of the NOC there is no significant impact on policies considered and adopted by the NOC.” (Americas, 15)
- “Minimal if any. “ (Europe, 35)
- “The impact of the presence of women in the heart of our NOC is still weak.” (Africa, 24)
- “something has been achieved but not much. Policies considered by NOC on representation of women are being implemented and consolidated by NF’s. The government has provided for a clause on women participation in sports in the draft National sports policy. Some of these are on papers. There is still a lot required in terms of women representation and participation in the NOC. On the executive board of 11 members there is only 1 woman! Not even compliant to 2000 % target.” (Africa, 34)
- N/A to me at present however I observe no impact to date. The board has 3 women in total beating the 20 % requirement by 2002.” (Africa, 36)

#### *Neutral / Ambivalent Comments*

- “this is still a new area for [my NOC].” (Americas, 3)
- “This being the first time for a woman to be on the Executive Board, progress has been slow but the Board has been co-operative and willing to accommodate women’s programmes.” (Africa, 19)
- “We already had women in Leadership positions when the IOC request came. Women are regarded as part and parcel of the whole in my country. Women in the NOC is as normal as anything else.” (Africa, 23)



- “though I am the only member, they all encourage women to come into sports leadership. But because of the still conservative attitude social factors after getting married very few women continue getting involved in sports.” (Asia, 9)

## 2.6.5 Training Required and Received

While 74 respondents (52%) reported having received training, a further 53 (37%) had not (with 11% no response rate). The form which such training had taken varied from one NOC to another but a number of respondents reported attendance at seminars, workshops and conferences on woman and leadership in sport, and attending courses in sports administration. Whilst these events were often those supported by Olympic Solidarity, the above findings suggest that there are a number of further training needs which might be supported through a cohesive development programme.

When asked in an open ended format to name additional forms of training which they would regard as helpful, examples of items cited are listed in table 2.19.

**Table 2.19: Examples of responses to the question ‘What training and support if any do you feel you need in future for your role in your NOC?’**

<p><i>Training related to women in sport issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “access to timely, topical information [on women and sport] on a continuing basis.” (Americas, 6)</li> <li>• “information about international women’s projects and equality programmes.” (Europe, 12)</li> <li>• “to continue to attend these types of events [women and sport conference] and to maintain contact with people of a better understanding and greater experience.” (Americas, 12)</li> <li>• “more involvement in women and sport at the Olympic Level and with the Olympic Movement in general.” (Americas, 19)</li> <li>• “access to more info on how sport is developed in other countries. Info on sport for all and women and sport activities research.” (Africa, 21)</li> <li>• “support to attend women and sport world conferences.” (Asia, 15)</li> </ul> <p><i>Administration and management at a Senior level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “personal development, effective meetings all kinds of management training courses.” (Americas,1)</li> <li>• “specialist courses in specific areas of management.” (Americas, 9)</li> <li>• “training on management of sports, and orientation on the Olympic Movement.” (Africa, 9)</li> <li>• “further exposure to administrative systems and advocacy for women.” (Americas, 14)</li> <li>• “sport management and marketing.” (Africa, 16)</li> <li>• “I prefer to take some sports management course.” (Asia, 9)</li> <li>• “a course in organisation and admin and advanced courses which are local.” (Asia, 16)</li> </ul> <p><i>Confidence building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Facing the media and camera with confidence.” (Europe, 27)</li> </ul> <p><i>Workshops &amp; conferences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “continued attendance in future conferences and workshops.” (Americas, 2)</li> <li>• “attend forums etc.” (Americas,3)</li> <li>• “seminars for the exchange of ideas and financial management.” (Africa, 20)</li> <li>• “seminars and conferences in my respective programme areas.” (Oceania, 6)</li> </ul>
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- “permanent attendance of various and round tables on actual sport matters.” (Europe, 55)
- Feedback / assistance / mentoring*
- “having a mentor is also helpful.” (Americas, 1)
  - “to exchange experiences with other colleagues within other NOC.” (Europe, 17)
  - “information flow and regular feedback.” (Europe, 28)
  - “mentorship from previous members especially women would be helpful.” Americas, 24)
- Internet access/ technological*
- “I would like to visit other NOC which have more experience in this area and to benefit from more detailed information.” (Africa, 2)
  - “training in new technologies.” (Europe, 57)
- Language training*
- “communication skills.” (Americas, 27)
  - “an extensive course in English, providing that I speak French.” (Africa, 18)
  - “information direct from the IOC in relation to things which would benefit my work with the women’s commission.” (Americas, 26)

Given that information flow and maintaining of contacts with other women working in the Olympic movement are viewed as important it is encouraging to note that 120 of the 143 respondents reported having access to, and making use of, the internet. The internet may well provide a useful medium through which to develop key support networks and materials for women sports leaders.

***Table 2.20: Respondents Use of Internet***

	Frequency	Percent
<i>Non-response</i>	17	11.9
yes	120	83.9
no	6	4.2
Total	143	100.0

### **2.6.6 Future Roles or Activities to which Women Aspire**

Table 2.21 summarises some of the responses to the question “How would you like to see your role develop in the future?” Respondents tended to stress positive factors or the need for positive action – including personal advancement in the organisation – suggesting that it was difficult to make a difference in the organisation unless more women were to become involved, in more senior positions within the Executive. Simply being a member of the Executive did not necessarily provide sufficient opportunity to influence policy.

A number of respondents emphasised the need for women to be present not simply on the NOC but also on National Federation (NF) Executives. The need for organic change in the culture of the organisation throughout the NOC/NF was emphasised. Simply addressing the NOC’s Executive make up was seen as insufficient if the make up of NFs remained unchanged.

Two isolated comments are incorporated here because they reflect the difficulties and frustration felt by some women on executives which is articulated in some of the interview data. One respondent indicated that she was likely to resign (going back to work with her NF)

because she felt that she was unable to make a difference to the work of the NOC Executive, though this was one of the NOCs with the highest proportion of female members in executive positions. The second remark relates to the need to make more positive the culture / ambience / process of the organisation and its meetings which would allow more positive interaction between its members.

**Table 2.21 How would you like to see your role in your NOC develop in future?**

<p><i>More involvement in decision –making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Women should be included to the NOC or NOC Executive Board not only because of the necessity to obey the ratio recommended by the IOC. They should be nominated to decision-making positions.” (Europe, 6)</li> <li>• “I would like to have more influence, but a necessary knowledge of the files is obligatory and I am busy for my federation.” (Europe, 20)</li> <li>• “To be more involved in the taking of decisions.” (Africa, 4)</li> </ul> <p><i>Fostering More Women’s Participation at Board level in the NOC and NFs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I would like women to be more in the forefront and have confidence in their ability to lead - in this male dominated society.” (Americas, 3)</li> <li>• “As well as being members of the Executive Committee, I would like to see an increased sensitising of women who practice sport, and each Federation should have a female member.” (Africa, 3)</li> <li>• “The entry of women into the heart of the Executive Board of the NOC (19 members, 3 women).” (Africa, 5)</li> <li>• “A resource person capable responding to needs of the [NOC]. A pioneer for the promotion of women in all aspects of sports.” (Americas, 22)</li> <li>• “Leading women towards full time involvement within every federation.” (Oceania, 5)</li> <li>• “Mentor/encourage/support other women to become interested in putting themselves forward for [the N. O.C.] Board..” (Oceania, 6)</li> </ul> <p><i>Attaining Formal Positions of Responsibility associated with the NOC.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Fulfil the role of Assistant Chef de Mission for Athens 2004 successfully and be elected for a further term 2005-2008.” (Oceania, 1)</li> <li>• “I would like to see my role develop into higher management, with executive authority, in the future I hope that I will be able to contribute professionally to the ideas of the NOC” (Africa, 9)</li> <li>• “My role as 2nd Vice President should that of President so as to facilitate more women’s participation in sports. Being one among five men is still stiff.” (Africa, 10)</li> <li>• “To get a higher position, one that will enable me to reflect my experience and to make changes.” (Europe, 35)</li> <li>• “Moving into an executive position with more active involvement in planning and the strategic development of [the NOC] at the level of policy and elsewhere.” (Asia, 7)</li> </ul> <p><i>Requiring / Generation of Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Women in sport to have a budget so we can implement our gender equity policy.” (Americas, 6)</li> <li>• “I would like to see myself as Vice-President given a chance to study abroad and improve my administrative skills in sport. My country is under-developed, therefore needs qualified women to uplift sports, more women need to attend seminars.” (Africa, 17)</li> <li>• “Must be allowed to attend more courses and seminars, thus gain more knowledge and experience.” (Asia, 13)</li> </ul> <p><i>Improving the culture of the organisation and the way it operates</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “a lot more professionalism. More co-operation. More recognition for job well-done. Less personal attacks. Less focus on details and really stick there and use as reason to criticise” (Americas, 1)</li> </ul>
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**Resigning**

- “I am quitting NOC because I feel that my involvement doesn't make any difference. I would rather like to work closer and more directly with [my] sport.” (Europe, 41)

## 2.7 Themes Emerging from the Women's Questionnaire Responses

Some clear themes emerge from the data reviewed in this section. These can be summarised as follows:

1. The women recruited to the NOC Executive Committees were very well educated (78% of those responding had degrees and / or teaching qualifications; 29.5% had postgraduate degrees, and 8% PhDs) a significant proportion had experience as elite athletes (46% had been international athletes, and 20% had been Olympians) 61% were in employment and 70% were married / cohabiting, most of whom had children. It is not possible to demonstrate whether these women are better qualified or incorporate more elite performers than their male counterparts, though some interview respondents (men and women) made such observations.
2. Recruitment of women to NOCs was very recent reflecting response to the establishment of targets; 71% had been appointed since 1996 when the targets were announced. Targets have clearly had a very positive effect on recruitment.
3. Two thirds of the group reported that they had been elected to the Executive Committee, with the remainder co-opted. In several cases election had followed after a period of co-option.
4. 64% of respondents perceived their work as being predominantly concerned with general matters and only partially concerned with specific matters relating women and sport although 49% served on Women's Committees.
5. 59.4% of respondents reported their NOCs had established a Women's Commission (though in many instances they were relatively recently established). In many cases, the role of these commissions was not always clear to those involved, and to be more effective, more assistance, resources and guidance is needed.
6. More than half of the respondents (52%) reported having received training since joining the NOC, which is notable given the voluntary nature of the work.
7. The respondents expressed interest in a range of potential training activities, including generic issues such as sports administration and management, language proficiency, skills in dealing with the media, as well as aspects relating to women and sport specifically.
8. Most female respondents argued that significant benefits were associated with the introduction of women to Executive Committees (though a minority reported no positive impact). The benefits cited include the promotion of women's influence in the NOC; stimulation of specialist provision for women; having more women on sports leadership training courses, more female candidates appointed to other committees on sports and administrative functions as well as a generally increased profile for women in sport.
9. Where there was more than one woman on the NOC their impact was greater. This is important in terms of representation and development, but also in ensuring that those women who are members of NOC executives do not become a 'sole' voice and have mutual support.

## Section 3

# Analysis of Responses to the Questionnaire to Secretary Generals of NOCs

### 3.1 Introduction

Of the 197 NOC Secretary Generals to whom questionnaires were sent, 89 usable responses were received, a response rate of 48.2%. It is likely that the respondents will tend to include the more active of the NOCs in respect of women and sport, and this should be borne in mind in reviewing responses. Nevertheless the response rate is healthy in comparison with generic postal survey return rates where a return rate of 33% is considered acceptable.

The structure of the reporting of findings for this element of the research is as follows:

- Membership of the NOC and the recruitment of women;
- Level and type of activities of women on the NOC Executives and their impact;
- The situation in relation to legislation, sports policy, and gender in each country.

Table 3.1 indicates the source of responses.

***Table 3.1: Respondents to Secretary Generals Questionnaire***

Albania	Cyprus	Jamaica	Portugal
Algeria	Czech Republic	Japan	Qatar
Argentina	Denmark	Kyrgyzstan	Romania
Armenia	Ecuador	Laos	Russia
Aruba	Egypt	Latvia	San Marino
Australia	El Salvador	Lesotho	Singapore
Austria	Equatorial Guinea	Libya	Slovakia
Azerbaijan	Estonia	Liechtenstein	Slovenia
Barbados	Ethiopia	Lithuania	Somalia
Belarus	Finland	Luxembourg	South Africa
Belgium	Gambia	Mali	St Vincent & Grenadines
Britain	Germany	Mexico	Sudan
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Moldova	Swaziland
Burundi	Greece	Morocco	Switzerland
Cambodia	Guinea-Bissau	Namibia	Thailand
Cameroon	Guyana	Netherlands	Togo
Canada	Haiti	New Zealand	Tunisia
Chile	Honduras	Nigeria	Uganda
China	Hungary	Norway	United States
Colombia	Iceland	NSF	Vietnam
Croatia	Iran	Papua New Guinea	Virgin Islands
Cuba	Italy	Poland	Zambia
			Zimbabwe

**Table 3.2: NOC Respondents by Continental Affiliation**

	Frequency	Percent	Total no of NOCs in each Continental Association	Response rate
Africa	26	29.2	53	49.1
America	17	19.1	41	41.5
Asia	9	10.1	41	22.0
Europe	34	38.2	48	70.8
Oceania	3	3.4	14	21.4
Total	89	100.0	197	45.2

As with the women's survey, Europe is over represented in the sample and Asia and Oceania under represented, which will mean that the perspectives of Secretary Generals from those regions, and from particular cultural / religious / ethnic backgrounds are underreported.

### 3.2 Membership of the NOC and the Recruitment of Women

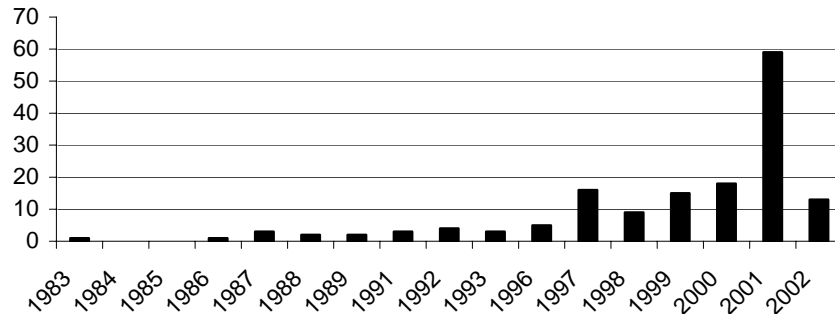
Respondents reported that on average women represented 12.6% of the membership of the NOC / General Assembly and 15.4% of the Executive Boards of NOCs. The fact that there is a higher proportion of women on Executives than in the NOC General Assemblies reflects the fact that women represent a small part of the electorate for Executive Committee positions, and that special efforts have been made following the declaration of the IOC of minimum targets to recruit, elect, or co-opt women to the Executives. Without a healthy proportion of women in the NOCs themselves this effort to recruit / elect to the Executive committees may prove very difficult to sustain.

**Table 3.3: Proportion of NOC Executive Committee who are Women**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Total number on NOC Executive Committee	85	3	80	16.7	14.94
Number of women on NOC Executive Committee	83	0	20	2.33	2.47
Proportion of Executive Committee who are Women.	81	.00	.43	0.15	0.10

As figure 3.1 highlights recruitment of women serving on NOC Executive Committees has been relatively recent, reflecting efforts to conform to IOC target levels. It also illustrates that the level of female membership of the executive in the five years immediately prior to the establishing of targets was much lower than that subsequent to the target adoption.

**Figure 3.1: Dates of First Membership of NOC Executive Board of Current Female Members on Executive**



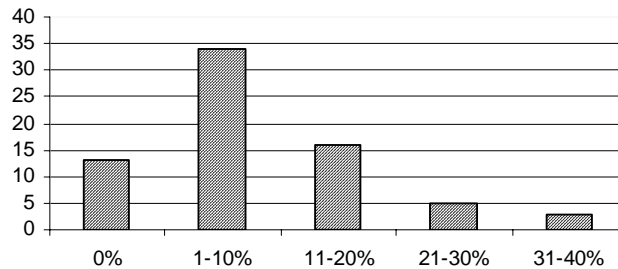
The sporting background of the women recruited is provided in table 3.5 and clearly indicates the importance of a background as an elite performer for women. It is suggested in the material provided by both male and female respondents that there is more onus placed on having a background as an elite performer in the case of women than of men. This may in part be because women have been recruited through the channel of athlete representation which is a recent and more gender balance area of recruitment. However it may also be because women may feel more secure in their role on Executive Committees if their position is 'legitimated' by reference to their experience of elite performance<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 3.4: Sporting Background of Women Members of NOC Executives**

	No of women with elite sporting background (members of national team)	No of women with coaching / sports admin background	No of women with background in physical education
Yes	110	92	52
No	36	46	67
Total	146	138	119

<sup>2</sup> It would have been interesting to compare male and female memberships of NOC Executive Committees in terms of factors such as athletic record and education, since it is clear that the women in our sample were very well qualified in educational terms and incorporated a disproportionate number of (former) elite athletes. However, such comparison would have required similar data for male members of NOC Executives.

**Figure 3.2: Proportion of Executive Board Female  
Executive Board Members 1992-6**



57 NOC Secretary Generals (64% of the sample) indicated that they had taken special measures to recruit women following the introduction of the targets. Table 3.5 provides examples of the types of special measure cited by respondents, and these vary from the more passive, simply seeking to make contact with women's groups, through active encouragement, to identifying of particular qualified individuals and cooption onto the executive.

**Table 3.5: Special Measures Adopted by NOCs to Recruit Female Members to the NOC Executive**

- "The national federations were allocated additional places for increasing the number of women in the name list of NOC." (Europe, 2)
- "In December 1994, a Taskforce was established to identify ways of encouraging and improving the representation of women in key [NOC] and Olympic Team positions and within member national federations." (Oceania, 1)
- "National federations are encouraged to elect women to their executives as well as to promote the active participation of women in sports as athletes and as technical officials. The IOC mandate has been highlighted in our newsletter and at various seminars and conferences." (Americas, 3)
- "The [NOC Board] have encouraged the sports federations to offer female candidates to the Administration Boards elections." (Europe, 6)
- "creation of posts of secretaries for the promotion of women's sport and other posts. Making contact with women." (Africa, 2)
- "In April 2000 during the elections a women was co-opted to work in the Bureau of the NOC, and another two representatives of female sport." (Africa, 3)
- "The [NOC] adopted a gender equity policy in 1995." (Americas, 4)
- "A process of the invitation of women to take part In the NOC as potential members and to present their candidature to the assembly." (Americas 6)
- "to establish contacts with women who are potentially qualified and to invite and incorporate them. To advertise that female candidates would be welcome. To conduct an analysis of women with a sporting ability and to approach them." (Americas, 7)
- "A provision has been made in our revised statute for a women to be appointed to the executive Board and within the next couple of months the appointment will be put into effect." (Europe, 9)
- "There are no special measures in this regard." (Africa, 5)
- "Seminars and workshops were held to increase women's awareness of sports. As a result a steering committee was founded with branches in the regions of the country." (Africa, 6)



- “Women were invited to attend special functions organised by the NOC. Women were also selected to serve as members of sub committees, to attend courses and to act as Resource Persons in courses and seminars organised by the NOC. We even on two occasions select women to represent the NOC at overseas seminars. The Constitution was amended to include a certain percentage of Women in the Executive Bureau.” (Africa, 7)
- “Reserving places for women.” (Africa, 10)
- “made contact repeatedly with female potential members. Repeated encouragement to participate in courses or seminars in sports administration. Encouraged the federations to put forward women for the post of member of the exec committee of the NOC.” (Americas, 11)
- “ Personal efforts and statutory responsibilities.” (Europe, 22)
- “To promote the participation in the executive committee and in the executive boards of the National federations.” (Americas, 14)
- “In order to make available more seats for women ion the NOC General Assembly, the NOC Statutes were amended by the year 2000 increasing the number of women administrators representing women sport sections in the school and University sports and in women sport administration.” (Asia, 3)
- “Gave special interviews, composition of a list of women in national top sports administration and a list of former women champions who would be willing and able to participate actively in the work of the NOC, Founding of the Commission for Women in Sport, participation in International Women and Sport Conferences.” (Europe, 33)
- “The IOC policy and directive has been acknowledged in the legislative decree of 23 July 1999 ..... which has to bring about the reform of [the NOC] and subsequently in [NOC] Statutes.” (Europe, 18)
- “Since 1995, the president of the .... NOC has demanded the election of two females within each Executive body for every federation.” (Africa, 21)

Respondents were also asked to identify any difficulties experienced in recruiting women. Table 3.6 below illustrates some of the responses received. A recurrent theme is the difficulty of electing women to the Executive when the electorate is made up in large part of the national federations which are themselves dominated by male membership.

**Table 3.6: Illustrative responses to the question ‘What difficulties have you experienced in seeking to recruit women as members of the Executive?’**

- Problems of Obtaining Candidates from Federations*
- “The constitutional structure of members being elected through sport requires action at the grassroots level of administration.” (Oceania, 1)
  - “the difficulty of not having women representing the national sports federations who are in charge of decisions.” (Americas, 6)
  - “We do not have women who are representative of the national sporting federations in charge of this decision.” (Americas, 6)
  - “An insignificant number of women in the sports federations.” (Africa, 9)
  - “Has little participation of women in the management of the [national] sport in federations who are the source of recruitment.” (Americas, 8)
  - “Less women in the national sport federations in decision making positions...familiar reasons.” (Europe, 14)
  - “no major difficulties except for a certain reluctance on their part to put themselves forward as candidates for election.” (Americas, 11)
  - “NOC members are president s of different national federations. To date almost all presidents of sports federations are men, there are no female members. However there are seven Secretary Generals who are females on their respective federations. Two females are presidents of national federations.” (Asia, 5)

- “there is a limited pool of women occupying senior posts in the management of the federations.” (Europe, 22)
- “Since the NOC EB should be composed by 50 % of representatives of the NF, its formation depends in many ways on the number of women -leaders of NFs.” (Europe, 30)

*Lack of Candidates / Willingness on the Part of Women*

- “Too small number of women who are active and interested in sports political matters.” (Europe, 12)
- “Very few Women were willing to serve when asked. “ (Africa, 7)

*Women’s Other Roles Impinge on Availability*

- “Social and Cultural factors. Qualified women exist in our community, but often do not volunteer to take up a position in sports.” (Americas, 1)
- “Problems of availability and family preoccupations. Women are practically never elected.” (Africa, 22)
- “After finishing sports careers all the energy of women athletes is devoted to studies and/or professional career and family. Very few former women athletes are eager to participate further in sports activities.” (Europe, 33)
- “Women have difficulty attending meeting due to the lack of transport infrastructure at night. Their partners don’t like their women participating.” (Africa, 20)

*Board / NOC Unwilling to take Special Measures*

- “Rejection of proposals/changes of Status as regards the rule about at least two women members of Executive Board.” (Europe, 32)
- “The attitudes of both, women and men seems an obstacle.” (Africa, 6)

There are effectively three types of difficulty one might refer to in explaining the problems of recruiting women to the Executives. These are problems ‘associated with the women themselves’ (e.g. a lack of suitable women candidates, the lack of interest of women in this work, or their reluctance to put themselves forward); problems associated with the structural context of NOC Executives (e.g. their electoral constituency, the National Federations, being dominated by men and male interests); and problems associated with the NOC itself (e.g. lack of policies or willingness to accommodate particular needs of some women such as say child care). It is noticeable that Secretary Generals responses have tended to focus on the first and the second to a greater degree, but not to have focused on any problems emanating from the nature and activities of the NOC or the Executive.

### 3.3 Level and Type of Activities of Women on the NOC Executive and their Impact

Secretary Generals were asked to indicate whether women working on the Executive undertook work which was solely, primarily, or partly related to women and sport, or totally unrelated to such issues (see table 3.7). The Secretary Generals’ perception for all the women in their Executives that 29% were largely or solely involved with women’s sport, is fairly close to that for the women’s sample (see table 2.12) in respect of their own individual roles.

**Table 3.7: The Focus of Women's Activity when Working on NOC Executives.**

	Frequency	Percent
Solely involved with issues relating to women and sport	1	0.6
Largely involved related to women's sports issues and some general sporting issues	46	28.4
Largely involved in general sporting issues and some women's sport issues	97	59.9
No involvement with women's issues	18	11.1
Total	162	100

Respondents were also asked to indicate how active the female members of the NOC Executive were in relation to their fellow members. Table 3.8 indicates that the women appointed were perceived to be significantly more active than their male counterparts, with 78% rated in the top 50% of most active members.

**Table 3.8: The Perceived level of activity of Women on the NOC Executive Committee Compared to that of the Membership of the Executive as a whole**

	Frequency	Percent
Most active 25% of the NOC	73	51.4
Second most active 25%	38	26.8
Third most active 25%	25	17.6
Least active 25%	6	4.2
Total	142	100

However while the perceived level of activity of female members was high, the impact of the Women's Commissions was not always considered to have been marked. Many of the Commissions were still relatively recently formed and hence there had been little time to develop policies. Nevertheless some Secretary Generals were positive about the contribution made, but few Secretary Generals appear to have indicated concrete achievements.

**Table 3.9: Illustrative Responses to the Question 'What has been the impact of the Women's Commission on the Activities of the NOC in Terms of Activities Promoted or Policies Pursued?'**

- "Creation and reinvigoration of female clubs in different federations." (Africa, 3)
- "Greater awareness of women's role/participation/ contribution." (Americas, 4)
- " They have influenced positively all aspects of the work of the Olympic Committee and in sport in general. In [my country] there has been a struggle for 4 decades for the equality of women in all activities and sport is no exception." (Americas, 7)
- "There has been some impact but *not* as expected." (Europe,9 )
- "More articles from/ about women and women's sports in official publications. More female speakers at events/meetings. Change of statute." (Europe, 14)
- "Days of reflection on the role of women and sport. A day of reflection concerning the Brighton Declaration and a course for female managers next August." (Americas, 11)
- "little, although the period of integration has been running for less than a year." (Americas, 14)
- "Participation of Leaders of NOC on the activities of women in Sport Commission." (Europe,27 )

- “The sport for all Committee of the NOC started with the actions for increasing the number of women participating in the Olympic Day Runs. A club of former women-Olympians was founded.” (Europe, 33)
- “This is a new committee, activities and policies are TBD [to be determined].” (Americas, 16)
- “To organise courses for women, encourage them to attend technical, administration course; send women to attend, to participate in International competition, seminar, meeting...” (Asia, 10)

### 3.4 The Situation in Relation to Legislation, Sports Policy and Gender in Each Country and Continental Association

In order to consider the context of decision-making in respect of gender equity in sport, respondents were asked to indicate whether their states had equal opportunities legislation. 70 respondents (78.7%) indicated that their state had adopted legislation in relation to gender equality (see table 3.10).

**Table 3.10: Existence of legislation on gender equality (by Continental Association).**

Continental Association	Is there legislation on gender equality		Total
	yes	no	
Africa	19	4	23
America	12	4	16
Asia	7	1	8
Europe	29	4	33
Oceania	3		3
	70	13	83

For almost half (49.3%) of those reporting having a formal policy statement in relation to sport, those policy statements made no reference to a policy on women’s sport (see table 3.11).

**Table 3.11: Indication of whether national sports policy incorporate policies specifically for women (by Continental Association)**

Continental Association	Does this sports policy incorporate policies specifically for women		Total
	yes	no	
Africa	12	7	19
America	6	9	15
Asia	4	2	6
Europe	11	17	28
Oceania	3		3
Total	36	35	71

Similarly, in relation to the question of whether special programmes for women's sport were provided for within national sports programmes 39 respondents (43.8%) indicated that they did not have such programmes (figure 3.12) while just over half of those responding indicated that their country had signed up to an international declaration (such as the Brighton Declaration) on women and sport (see table 3.13).

**Table 3.12: Indication of whether a special programme relating to women and sport exists (by Continental Association)**

Continental Association	Special programme relating to women and sport		Total
	yes	no	
Africa	8	13	21
America	6	7	13
Asia	4	3	7
Europe	10	16	26
Oceania	3		3
Total	31	39	70

**Table 3.13: Crosstabulation of 'existence of national sports policy incorporating policies specifically for women' and 'the existence of special programmes relating to woman and sport'**

		Do any special programme relating to women and sport exist in your country?		Total
		yes	no	
Does this sports policy incorporate policies specifically for women	yes	27	7	34
	no	2	25	27
Total		29	32	61

**Table 3.14: Crosstabulation of countries which have adopted an international document / declaration on women and sport (such as the Brighton Declaration) by Continental Association**

Continental Association	Adopted an international document on women and sport			Total
	yes	no	unknown	
Africa	10	10		20
America	9	6		15
Asia	3	4		7
Europe	14	14	1	29
Oceania	1	1	1	3
Total	37	35	2	74

In each of the above cases differences between NOCs for different Continental Associations are not significant.

### **3.5 Main findings from Questionnaire survey of Secretary Generals of all NOCs**

1. As was the case for the women Executive Committee respondents, the Secretary Generals reported that women's membership of Executive Committees had grown since the announcement of the targets in 1996 and that they came disproportionately from elite athlete backgrounds .
2. 64% of respondents indicated their NOC had taken special measures to recruit women to their Executive Committees following the introduction of the targets. These measures included reserving places specifically for women, revising their statutes, encouraging NFs to nominate women candidates, setting up a taskforce to nominate suitable women candidates, inviting potential women candidates to attend special functions, and directly approaching suitably qualified women.
3. The most regularly cited difficulty experienced in attracting women to work on the Executive Committees of the NOCs was the "structural" issue of getting women nominated and elected from a constituency of National Federations whose representatives were predominantly and traditionally male. Secretary Generals tended to suggest that difficulties were the product of 'problems' with women (lack of availability of qualified women, reluctance because of family commitments etc) rather than as a result of 'problems' with the strategy adopted by the NOC to recruit women (e.g. lack of flexibility in working or recruitment patterns etc.).
4. The Secretary Generals described those women who were members of the Executive Boards as being among the most active members of the Executive (51.4% in the most active quartile and 78.2% in the upper 50%)
5. As with the responses from the women's questionnaire, Secretary Generals indicated that the work of a majority of women Executive Committee members (71%) was largely or solely concerned with general rather than women's issues. Like the women respondents, the Secretary Generals suggested that women's committees had as yet had little impact. The mean proportion of women as chairs of NOC commissions was low at 21.3%.
6. There was a strong association between those countries which had adopted policies on women and sport and those in which programmes to promote women and sport were run.

## Section 4

### Analysis of Interviews with Women Members of the NOC Executives

#### 4.1. Introduction

During the research project 29 women were interviewed who were members of NOC Executive Committees and one who was a leading members of an NOC with no female members on its Executive Committee. Interviews were spread across the two year period of the research project, some were undertaken in the margins of international or national meetings. Other interviews were conducted at various venues across all five continents during the research period. The distribution of the female interviewees was as follows: Africa 4; Americas 8; Asia 8; Europe 8; Oceania 2.

**Table 4.1 – Data on the samples of NOCs Executives from which Female Interviewees were drawn:**

	Total Members of Executive (as of 2001)	Female Members of Executive (as of 2001)	Female Members as % of NOC Executive
1. Europe, 1	11	2	18%
2. Africa, 1	9	1	11%
3. Americas, 1	9	2	22%
4. Oceania, 1	15	3	20%
5. Americas,2	13	1	8%
6. Americas,3	7	1	14%
7. Americas,4	7	0	0%
8. Africa, 2	20	4	20%
9. Asia, 1	20	2	10%
10. Americas,5	13	3	23%
11. Europe, 2	14	3	21%
12. Africa, 3	9	1	11%
13. Oceania	10	3	30%
14. Americas,6	6	2	33%
15. Asia, 2	11	3	27%
16. Europe, 3	15	4	27%
17. Asia, 3	19	1	5%
18. Asia, 4	N/A	N/A	N/A
19. Europe, 4	13	2	15%
20. Europe, 5	13	2	15%
21. Asia, 5	18	3	17%
22. Africa, 4	9	1	11%
23. Asia, 6	34	4	12%
24. Americas, 7	6	1	17%
25. Asia, 7	7	1	14%
26. Europe, 6	23	1	4%
27. Europe, 7	11	3	27%
28. Asia, 8	11	1	9%

29. Americas, 8	13	2	15%
30. Europe, 8	14	1	7%

The matching of interviewees in the female and male samples (such that they would come from the same NOC) so that data could be gathered from a female and a male perspective on the same context, was not always possible. A number of female and male interviewees were drawn from the same NOCs (14 in total) but, particularly with interviews held at seminars, unpredictable attendance and commitments of prospective interviewees meant that some 'substituting' of individuals within the initial sample was inevitable. These 'substitute' interviews did not invalidate the findings or research process, rather they quite often enriched the diversity of participants in the study. Interviews were conducted in English (22), French (3), Spanish (3), and (with interpreters) in Farsi, Albanian and Japanese. Interviews were translated and subsequently coded and subjected to computer-based analysis employing *NUD\*IST* qualitative data analysis software. The interviewing team for this aspect of the work primarily involved Anita White, Emma Rich, Chris Shelton and Eleni Theodoraki with some supplementary interviewing conducted by Dawn Aquilina, Ian Henry, Wirdati Radzi and Katia Mascagni.

The interviews were designed to complement the data from the questionnaire returns of female members of NOC Executive Committees. More specifically the aims of the interviews were to identify;

- The sports administration career paths which interviewees had followed, and the skills and competencies they perceived themselves as having;
- The process of their recruitment to the NOC Executives;
- Their perception of how the NOC Executive Committee works and their explanation of their role within it;
- Their perspective on IOC targets in respect of gender;
- Needs in terms of training and other sources of support;
- Their future aspirations and personal goals.

The structure adopted here for the reporting of findings in this section is as follows:

- The nature of respondents' sports administration careers;
- Recruitment to the NOC and to the Executive Committee;
- The nature of their work within the Executive Committee and the NOC, and their impact on the NOC's policies and processes;
- Views on the IOC's targets for women's representation on decision making bodies;
- Comments on sources of inequality;
- Significant differences between women in the sample e.g. religious world views;
- Training Needs;
- Future aspirations.

## 4.2. The Nature of Sports Administration Careers of Female Members of the NOC Executives

The early socialisation into sports participation and induction into sports leadership and administration are clearly significant issues in the successful integration of women into the Olympic Movement. This section considers respondents' accounts of these processes.

### 4.2.1 Formative Years

Most of the women interviewed had considerable experience in sport, often, though not exclusively as elite performers. It is hardly surprising therefore that the level of commitment to



sports administration is outstanding. One respondent, for example, looked forward to retiring in order to dedicate her time and efforts to other areas of sports leadership:

The biggest problem is needing more time to devote to these things - networking. In two years time I will retire from my paid work and I should be able to do this on a voluntary and full-time basis. (Interview 2, Americas)

The importance of support from parents as socialising agents into sport at an early stage in life was emphasised by many respondents. Such influences are important in the sports careers particularly of these women from social and cultural contexts where women's participation in sport was still subject to significant cultural barriers:

my father ... when I was young he was always talking to me so I learn a lot from him as a teacher and also to be the leader. (Interview 28, Asia)

Another interviewee reported that she was raised by "her father and he instilled in her these values to see that she could do things and put herself forward with confidence" (Translator, Interview 6, Americas).

The gendered nature of domestic roles meant that women made regular reference to the need for support from their partners or families.

when I leave home five or six times a year – [my husband] has to take responsibility for his children... He is a sportsman and this is why I have had a tremendous support. He is the eternal competitor and this has been a shared understanding. We could not have been together otherwise. (Interview 7, Americas)

But I had to have a supportive family. , ....that is very important because I came from a family background which was very open minded, my father did judo and my mother volleyball both in high school. ... They were very, very open minded and it is very, very important for the young athletes. So when I finished my athletic career I met my husband who is even more open minded than my parents. And for me to be married with someone like that was a condition for staying in sport. (Interview 22, Africa)

Another respondent from Asia reported that her husband "did not support her and he did not stop her" and that they had 'independent minds to do something' (Interview 15, Asia). Moreover, having a partner to assist with domestic duties enabled interviewees to commit more fully to leadership position as in the above case where the husband "supports the children and takes care of the home when in she is Congress" (Interpreter, Interview 15, Asia).

Even with such support, the path through sports participation into leadership and administration is not always easy. Even for the elite performer problems of acceptance by older male members of the administration could be problematic.

I was young, I am a woman and I was an athlete. And when you are an athlete your elders see in you always the 'little athlete' because you go through various categories, cadets, minimes, juniors etc. but in the

minds of certain people you are always still a cadet. They say "I coached her, I knew her when she was very young. She cannot come here [into a decision making role] straight away." (Interview 22, Africa)

#### 4.2.2 'Balancing Commitments'

The life stories of the women on the NOC executives reiterated the challenges facing women when establishing a career in sports leadership. All the interviewees made reference to having to balance not only a challenging career but the other cultural expectations of them to carry out particular roles as 'women':

[my husband] was very happy for me to go off to [sports event] and go to meetings, or umpire at the weekends. I just kept going on as it fitted in with family life. Later on, it was a case of balancing employment as well. (Interview 11, Europe)

The dedication and commitment of these women to their careers is reflected by the fact that for many of the women, this meant making some personal sacrifices in terms of relationships:

When we met [her partner] in 1984, I said I really did not have time to be his girlfriend because I was involved with training for the Olympics. We stayed together for 16 years. He was always very supportive but the things that I did and the things that he did were not the same. I was getting more and more involved with the sports activity and less involved with him. We came to a point where he admitted he could not take it anymore and I said I had always been involved in sports. He knew me like this but I had not realised how bad it was. I told him right from the beginning do not ever make me choose between you and sports because you are going to lose. This is who I am - you cannot ask me to change the person that I am. I can dedicate a little less time to sports but do not ask me to give it up because I never will. In 1998 we decided to separate and we are working on the final aspect of the divorce. (Interview 3, Americas)

The balancing of work commitments, the demands of sports administration, family, and personal relationships simply proved impossible for some:

It has never been easy and I have to leave the office and go for meetings straight after work which sometimes finished about 8 to 9 o'clock and I'd come home and if I had some work to do, for the next day, I'd work late into the night on those documents. ...I think at some stage my daughter will probably tell you may be she found that in my earlier years I was quite busy and my husband probably spent more time with her, but when I could, I did.... I got divorced a few years ago and I really can't say, that this was the sole cause ... that I was so busy, I don't really think that was entirely the reason you know, but well I suppose whenever women are successful and you have your career to juggle with other things, something gives up, I mean, by the same token there are other women who have done administration and still been able to keep their marriages going. (Interview 25, Asia)

These experiences highlight the increasing need to reflect on the wider support required if women are to be recruited and maintained in leadership roles in the Olympic Movement. For some women, adapting to a culture in which the timing and volume of work required, provides

little flexibility in terms of allowing for family or personal commitments, in addition perhaps to paid employment, will mean that they are simply excluded from involvement in the organisation of national or international sport. Flexibility in the nature and timing of demands placed on these women will be required if they are not to be left with the dilemma of choosing between a work career, a sports administration career, and family/domestic life.

#### **4.2.3 Developing a Career in Sports Leadership**

##### **(a) Sports Leadership Networks, Role Models and Mentors**

All of the respondents pointed towards the importance of being part of a sports network, of being socialised into it and learning from it, and of gaining support or having advice from other members of that network, or of contributing to the confidence of other members in the network.

It is back to this confidence. At the moment, we are an officer short and I was interviewing someone in sport yesterday. She has a very good [university] degree, an international gold medal, she is a partner on a company and she understands Boards. When it came to crunch time, her response was, "I am not sure that I am capable or suitable to do this job." I said "you are 70 per cent more suitable than I ... You have been on our board, you are young, and the right person to carrying on the work, bringing the athletes through, you understand the athlete, the international and the domestic side of the sport". The importance of bringing women through at a high level to help everything else that is happening as well. You see that this is an in-built attitude with women. (Interview 11, Europe)

Respondents indicated that many of those who were seen as mentors, had been particularly influential, providing what might be termed 'informal training' or 'socialisation' into sports leadership:

The President has also been a mentor. I have been very closely involved with him professionally for 20 years, ever since I was a little girl. When he came back and entered politics we have been working together a political supporter and then working professionally for him - it has been impressive. I have been very close to certain people in positions, which I can learn from and I call them my mentors. (Interview 3, Americas)

It was not simply mentoring however which aided and sustained respondents but also collegiality and mutual support.

Yeah, quite a few people, I have you know,.. people who I had meetings, committees with, quite supportive, and I think this is why, I've had a good, feel like just keep on having, keeping on these committees because the support that I get from my committee, and other people .... I, I'm just involved in so many things, and the support is always there (Interview 13, Oceania)

The value of mentoring and support should not be underestimated, and where individuals already in the Olympic Movement encourage women into leadership positions, their efforts to

do so should be recognised as key. A 'natural' corollary of this may be that others follow suit and engage in similar practices. However, a more formal 'mentoring' programme and structure may be necessary to increase the numbers of established members in these organisations actively encouraging women into leadership roles.

The importance of female role models for young women was highlighted by respondents, a number of whom made reference to individuals who had guided them through their sports careers in the formative years, and socialised or inducted them into sports leadership networks. This underlines the importance of the visibility of women in leadership positions for those who have aspirations to develop sports leadership careers. In countries or social contexts where gender stereotyping and segregation was prevalent, the mere visibility of individual female coaches or leaders made possible, for some, the idea that leadership positions were indeed plausible.

I was coaching boys and girls but mostly girls. There were not many women coaches in [my country] then but my coach was a female coach - when I was an athlete my coach was a woman. When I go back now, I am thinking that I must have been influenced by her. That coaching as a woman is not a problem. It was just a normal thing so I didn't think about it as women and men - I just thought that ok I could become a coach in athletics. (Interview 30, Europe)

The importance of such support was considerable when respondents were experiencing inequality, or experiencing difficulties with sports organisations or individuals.

I have to say that I did experience a great deal of frustration because I felt that it was so difficult for me to get into things that I really felt I could do because there was a lot of manipulation and manoeuvring and of course it is really controlled very much by the male members and how they did it. I was really thinking of just giving up and I just happened to bump into her [current president of IF] in one of those tournaments when she was already, I think on the [IF] Council and immediately, you know, she kind of took me under her wing and said 'Don't worry, we'll give you support' and she brought me into the international arena in terms of technical officiating and when I came on the [IF] and she has always been very supportive and helpful to me. I think, being able to learn from somebody like her was a tremendous thing .... So I think I was very fortunate in that respect to have had [her] mentoring and guiding me, and that's really helpful. It strikes me coming into the [IF] that there is quite a strong women's network to support and encourage women. (Interview 25, Asia)

My [Secretary General] ... was very instrumental in encouraging me to lend my efforts to the NOC. She is now an executive member of the [continental organisation], and she has done very well herself as a woman, I really admired and applaud her, and she continues to do quite a lot, she is also the permanent secretary in our Ministry of Sport, so she is a government official as well [...] There have been other women who have helped along the way, particularly in the netball arena. Some very strong women who, when things began to look very dismal and you want to get off this, you know, they keep you in, keep you going (laughs) (Interview 14, Americas)

Despite having these role models, and having described themselves as being passionate about sports, none of the women interviewed stated that they actively sought high profile leadership positions. This is highly significant, and indicated that sports leadership positions

seemed to 'unfold' as they moved through their sports careers, rather than something that they had strong aspirations to achieve.

you know [I had] no great ambitions, I just follow through. My ambitions came later. (Interview 29, Americas)

## **(b) The International 'Women and Sport' Movement**

For a number of respondents it was very important to have a point of reference outside of their own country. Many talked enthusiastically and positively about the importance of the women's sports movement as an integral part of their support when things were not going well at home. For many international conferences and seminars provided a key context within which they had learnt about good practice in promoting women's sport and women's involvement in sports leadership, and interviewees made regular reference to this.

I've also said in the questionnaire that, you know by attending these meetings, the conferences or whatever they are, it would just give a bit more feel of how to go about setting up these things, cause I have something planned, looking at a women's sports day on the international day of women in March, and that is something that I've found, that I've picked up from one of those conferences, sports for women only, as I've said, going to these meetings...you pick up things, it puts it into your head and I say "I'll go back and try this at home" ... (Interview 13, Oceania)

Significantly, for some of the women, the IOC regional seminars and International women and sport conferences were the only context in which they could meet other women in similar positions and discuss their problems and share ideas. The value of these contexts was central to these women's pursuits in advancing their own careers, and indeed the wider goal of developing opportunities for other women in sport. Reference was made, for example to the importance and enduring influence of the Brighton Declaration by a number of respondents.

Human capital is thus being developed through the seminars and international (global and regional) conferences. When women have shared experiences and had an opportunity to network at these conferences and seminars it has provided the inspiration and confidence to be active and begin structuring how they work in their NOC and in sport in their country. Whilst many training and support needs are being met through the Women and Sport movement there are additional requirements that may be addressed through, for example, the Olympic Solidarity Programmes.

## **(c) Recruitment Processes:**

The interviewees' routes onto the NOC Executive Committee fell roughly into five categories.

1. Some put themselves forward for election (from their national federation);
2. Some were co-opted or 'invited to stand for election' usually by the President or senior figure(s) in the NOC Executive;
3. Some became members by virtue of the introduction of athlete's representatives on the NOC;
4. Some individuals adopted a mixture of these routes, being for example initially nominated and then subsequently elected;
5. Two women became members of their NOC by virtue of first becoming a member of the IOC.

In addition, one had worked for the NOC before being invited to stand and then putting herself forward for election.

Election sometimes occurred when an NOC was looking to enhance the proportion of women in its Executive, and sometimes simply because a talented individual had been spotted.

It just happened. I was the second Secretary General and I got a chance in November of 1997. You have the Vice President and Second Vice President and then the Vice Secretary General. I went to the [continental] Sports Organisation Congress in 1997. I was the only woman, relatively young compared to the others, and I speak English and Spanish, I think I am sociable. I started talking and at the next meeting they said do you want to be on the legal committee. I was very surprised. There was an NOC meeting in May of 1998 and [name] invited me into his office, he said he did not know where to place me - in the Executive Committee in [the continental sports organisation], or in the Women in Sports (which was going to be started). I did not ask for this and whatever he thought was fine by me. They placed me in both - I was elected into Executive Committee and appointed as the President of the Women in Sport Committee. It is not something that I asked for - it is not in my character to do so. It just happens. I like to work, I like doing sport very much and you just roll into it. (Interview 30, Europe)

One respondent referred to the process of cooption as a former elite athlete first onto the Athlete's Commission and the IOC and then onto the NOC Executive. Despite being invited onto these bodies she still experienced a reticence to accept her as a young women, no matter how accomplished, on the part of male members who had been in authority positions (coaches, managers) in relation to athletes.

For my administrative career I was often co-opted. I was co-opted onto the [international committee] I was co-opted first onto an Athletes Commission of the [international sports federation] federation, by [the president], who had thought about the establishment of an Athletes' Commission, which was made of nominees of the President. We were about 15 to 20 athletes who had stopped but who could give something back to [the sport]. And I really liked the work because I stayed close to the athletes, close to the managers, close to the coaches and even though I had finished my career I had the impression of still being able to contribute to sport. But as soon as I had finished my career as an athlete and I entered into the field of administration I felt a reticence of the administrators who had previously advised me and trained me when I sat down beside them at meetings and so on. But I accepted this because I had accepted the differences before and I said to myself "That is another battle for another time." It was necessary to accept the differences, the little games, the whole thing and it was not easy ... and it still is not easy. (Interview, 22, Africa)

The vast majority of women were encouraged in some way to enter the NOC by someone in a senior position. Personal contacts (i.e. father, husband or close friend route) were often important in the identifying of appropriate female candidates.

there were elections for the [NOC]. I received a visit from the President of the [sport] Federation and at the same time I was co-opted [because they needed legal advice] ..... At first one is invited. As I was saying I

was asked by the President to represent him in the General Assembly (of the NOC). then I was elected (Interview 2, Africa)

The encouragement from those individuals already in the NOCs is a significant factor, as is their subsequent support. In the following extract, one respondent reports how a lack of such support prevented her from putting herself forward as a candidate for her Olympic Committee:

As the president of the [national sport] federation, I had been in contact with the OC when I would attend the committee meetings as a representative of my federation. When elections were scheduled I had the intention then of leaving the federation to leave room for someone else to contribute .... So that could be an option for me, to leave when elections [to the OC] were announced. I considered presenting my candidacy, but I doubted, I didn't feel I had enough support from the leaders and there were many people interested in the position – many people presented candidacies. (Interview 24, Americas)

In the above case, the respondent further reports that there were no women on the NOC to offer support:

20 people were running for 5 positions and they were all old-timers, there was nobody new, and I was new, I was a woman. And when I talked to leaders nobody really supported me. So I sent my papers on the last day at the last possible minute, and they arrived one minute late, and because they had to be received by a notary public, they were not accepted. Then I thought it was my fault because I had doubts until the last minute. I didn't let it bother me and I continued in the federation... (Interview 24, Americas)

These cases further highlight the need for the fostering of a woman's candidature. The instilling of confidence is critical to the decision to stand for election and once again reinforces the need for a more formal structure for mentoring and support to encourage more women into sports leadership:

What I would say , it was [name]. He wouldn't say so but quite obviously, yeah, I am sure, because again, I mean, I probably would not have stood for the position, I don't think I would have even thought of putting myself up for that position, if they hadn't invited me in the first place. ... That's right, you know, I've said to people, I think that's the problem with women in leadership roles – lack of confidence, so I am saying, yes, we can do it...(Interview 4, Oceania)

The interviewees' experiences of recruitment were not, of course universally difficult or negative. For some the experience had been fulfilling, particularly where conflict was minimal:

I really enjoyed the committee ...and I am enjoying it, I suppose I felt as part ... serving the associations, there was very much less conflict, there was almost no conflict, there was more respect and dignity, so I said to myself "no, I'll stay with my club and I'll stay with the Olympic Committee, and I'll give-up [work on my own sports national federation]". (Interview 29, Americas)

The histories of recruitment into the NOCs underline the importance of the encouragement of senior figures and women being asked, nominated, appointed and encouraged by a senior figure to become involved. This may be particularly important in contexts where women are

unlikely to put themselves forward. Thus active fostering of candidatures is crucial particularly where talented individuals may lack knowledge, confidence or the robustness to stand in a minority on the Executive Committee. Of course such electoral patterns may limit the kinds of women who are to be nominated to those 'acceptable' to the senior figures in the NOC but this limitation is presumably better than the alternative of limited numbers of female candidates.

### 4.3 Leadership Qualities of Female NOC Executives

The women in these NOC executive positions reported and demonstrated a wide range of skills, experience and competences that they brought to their posts. As sports leaders, the clear majority of the women were well educated and 'high achievers', gaining educational qualifications up to doctoral level, and having backgrounds in a whole range of contexts including:

- Museology
- Nuclear physics
- Attorney / Law
- Banking
- University teaching
- Journalism
- International law
- Physical education teaching
- Business management
- Positions in Parliament
- Political science
- Business administration
- Sports coaching
- Tourism and law,
- Professional coaching
- International Marketing
- Teacher Training

A number of participants interviewed had a strong background associated with education and sports development/youth development.

This is my life's ambition to train physical education teachers. By extension I got into sport and sport management and that is how I spent the period since 1974 as a member of [my national federation]. (Interview 5, Americas)

The following extract is illustrative of the way in which the value systems associated with this physical education/sports experience are so deeply embedded for some of these women that it feeds into other areas of their life:

I just work by myself and do my thing and even though I do not have any position I feel it is my responsibility because I am a physical education teacher and because of my personality to be the leader. I try to do everything and I work with the kids. ...Even though I did not have a position in the NOC and also I try to encourage the girls and the females and especially my students, to sit down and talk with them about taking care of themselves and encourage them to understand their roles in terms of the "woman". Whenever you go back home you try to encourage your mother and your sister to exercise and fitness. Also in my university, I try to have some kind of research to pick up the



information about the roles of the female, and people in the rural area and how they can take care of themselves in terms of healthcare. I do that for ten years without a position. (Interview 28, Asia)

Others were selected for their very area of professional expertise.

After getting my degree (licence) I was working in the Youth Section and the Minister asked for a legal opinion and the person in the sports section was not there..... and it was through this that I got involved. It was quite recent. There was a dispute between a club and a federation. The club had accused the federation of [illegal activity]. So I had to give my interpretation of what the law said and whether the federation had acted legally. So I gave my opinion and the Minister said but yes you understand sport! Because the discipline of sport is not a branch of law .... From then on I continued for another year [as legal adviser]. The legal adviser is the third category after the Minister, and the National Director. So I went along. There were elections and I spent time working in collaboration with the Scrutiny Commission and after there were elections for the [NOC]. ... (Interview 2, Africa)

In terms of personal qualities or competences, many of the respondents adopted the position that as 'women' they had something very different to offer in terms of abilities, management styles and skills. Communication and diplomacy for example, was seen to be an attribute that women in particular could bring to the position:

One of the most important things is communication. Having a good relationship with all the responsible people in the world - the leaders in organisations for example. Recognition for their organisation promotes communication. (Interview 15, Asia)

a lot of people describe me as 'you are very diplomatic' but I try to put my points across in a way that perhaps it is not combative and not so brash. (Interview 25, Asia)

The notion that the contribution of women was different to that of men was underlined by some respondents (though this is perhaps a dangerous line to argue since it can be used in a negative sense).

You have to keep reminding them, whenever they look at issues, sometimes, they forget, they just talk about it in a man's way and they forget that there are women and we listened to that but by and large I think it is getting better. I try to bring a more down to earth approach, a more hands-on approach, and I think that the athletes have appreciated it and the other members are now more aware that you have to adopt that kind of thing and, that is where I think that, I feel I have had quite a bit of influence in the way of thinking. Some say it's a woman's approach, caring, nurturing. I don't know, may be it's my sports background, but it is a combination of all that and I hope that will change the way things are done in the future. (Interview 25, Asia)

Sometimes you meet men who will not put aside issues and deal with situations - we waste time in this area a great deal. A woman would have dealt with these issues and moved on, solving the problem quickly. (Interview 5, Americas)

They [women] are working, they are nice to work with and they bring different perspectives (Interview 30, Europe)

One of the problems with this line of argument is that 'women' are portrayed as a homogenous group. Whilst the promotion of the skills of various women may have a number of wider benefits, there is always the risk that this is done at the cost of failure to understand the various cultural and social differences that women from different social and geographical locations bring to Olympic leadership posts. Furthermore, it is quite possible that those not wishing to support the development of women's involvement in sports leadership would draw on very similar arguments to suggest that there are inherent male and female characteristics which render women less effective in certain leadership roles, and therefore less appropriate for certain types of post. These kinds of negative constructions of women's abilities have been observed in other contexts such as Physical Education.

#### 4.4 Respondents' Descriptions of Experiencing Gender Inequity in NOCs and their Responses

Whilst most respondents described a number of situations and experiences that relate to gender inequality, interestingly, not all the women were able to identify incidents as examples of gender inequality, rather such incidents were seen as just good or bad aspects of being in sport leadership (and hence viewed as 'gender neutral').

Some of the women alluded to being well qualified academically, and indeed better qualified than their male colleagues (for example having appropriate professional experience, or being generally educated to a higher level than male counterparts) but who had had to struggle against being assigned non-senior roles, or tasks.

it still is the guys first who are given them [the better positions within the organisation] without thinking, ...they do acknowledge that I was a successful lawyer, but when it comes to say a rules committee, I was never considered for that committee, whereas someone who wasn't [a successful lawyer], but has been a politician is still put on there. (Interview 25, Asia)

Others alluded to working harder than male peers in these contexts yet not having the same privileges or acknowledgement:

[a fellow female NOC member] organises all the travel for the delegations, all the technical commissions - all the really hard work. She also goes with the delegation going unpaid but having completed all the hard work including the organisation. When they get to these things the men go out in the evening and dance and have a good time - women can not do that - they are taking care of the money and other things! (Interview 6, Americas)

Once there is work to be done the men are quite happy to leave it to the women to do. The decision making process is always the point at which they wish to have a bigger say! That is the way it is. They will praise you but they do want to maintain the top position and the decision making - unless you are a particularly strong woman (which I am!). My biggest asset is my determination and dedication to what I am going to do. (Interview 5, Americas)

Women were also subjected to the implicit criticism that they may be in their posts because of tokenism rather than because of their talents.

Every time a male asks me –“you are the first woman Vice-President?” - I say “whenever a man is Vice-President, you never ask ‘you are a man and a Vice-President?’” So every time they ask - is it different because I am a woman and a Vice-President? (Interview 16, Europe)

Another respondent suggested that she had been put in the position of Chairman (sic) of her NF because she was seen by male colleagues as controllable.

I have been told that I was invited to be Chairman of the [NF] board because they felt they could manoeuvre me. The person who told me this was an officer who was appointed just after me. His comment was "My God, didn't they get it wrong!" So I think it is sometimes that the men can be political enough to appoint women because they believe that in fact they (women) can be manoeuvred. (Interview 11, Europe)

Reference was also made to the pervasiveness of ‘old boys networks’ and the more subtle level of exclusion experienced within NOCs and wider sports organisations:

I suppose its frustrating in a sense that sometimes I still feel I would like to do things differently and it is still the old boys, they still keep doing things their way. ....I mean, they just assumed after the election, the same guy would be chair of all the committees, instead of sitting down and talking and trying to see who would be the best. So it is still, sort of the old system of doing things, and that frustrates me because I feel that I am still not being given by some people the credit of being able to take on more responsibility. And like I still find that when it comes to appointments or nominations, for say, the NOC or the [regional] Games, that would still be a couple of senior guys who take what I call the key committees ... (Interview 25, Asia)

Another respondent pointed towards assumptions made by others that particular leadership positions, would inevitably be occupied by men. She reported that although she was appointed Chef de Mission for her team at a major games in 1995, when she attended this event “they were sure that I was a man”. She goes on to say that they “put my room into the male section. I stayed there but that’s to tell you how convinced they were that I could not be female ...” (Interview 29, Americas):

In some cases then, even where women do occupy leadership positions the true worth of their participation and contribution still goes largely unrecognised and may often lead to feelings of isolation:

At this time we [women in our NOC] don't feel we have one person or one institution, rather we are trying to form a base ourselves from which to seek support, because we feel really isolated. (Interview 24, Americas).

Barriers to female progression, often referred to as the ‘glass ceiling’ reported by some women in NOCs are not, of course, specific to the Olympic context nor sports administration generally. Nevertheless the comments of the women interviewed indicate that in many instances they experienced frustration because they were not automatically accepted as appropriate candidates for management and executive posts, despite qualifications

Respondents identified a number of 'coping strategies' for dealing with the inequality experienced in these contexts. The most common response was that this was simply to be tolerated. Some women suggested that respect was something that had to be earned before male colleagues would listen to their opinions on certain issues:

So people knew who I was, and that helped I think and when you are supposed to have earned some kind of respect from them, then I think they [male colleagues] will listen to you. So as I said, I started off as a co-opted member, and as I said, initially the first two years were what I called the "running in" years. I needed to get to know a little more about how they function and I think they needed to size me up a bit more. ... So I think by the 3rd and 4th year, I was getting ready and I could sense that they [men] were treating me like an equal, they took in my views on things. (Interview 13, Oceania)

Others coped with their abilities being questioned by 'laughing this off' or 'joking' with those criticising them. For example, one respondent reported that when the media asked why she was given responsibility/position within her sports federation at a major sports events she 'jokingly said that maybe it is not so demanding' (Interview 25, Asia).

Respondents alluded to the need to act in an appropriately 'feminine' way, to not be too vociferous in voicing their concerns of inequalities towards women:

Yeah, they [the committee] tell me I am a domineering 'male-female'! Dictatorial female yeah. (Interview 29, Americas)

Yes, well I guess may be it is my style of doing things. I mean, I have legal training and may be, some people, a lot people describe me 'you are very diplomatic' but I try to put my points across in a way that perhaps it is not combative and not so brash. Where as on the other hand, this lady that I told you about, she is a very capable lady, she is a business woman, in fact she has done extremely well for netball, who've got their own premises which other associations would probably envy. She's done extremely well but at the same time, she is somebody who calls a spade a spade and she has no qualms about publicly using language which not many women want to use and criticising the men and perhaps describing some of them as brain dead and that kind of scenario to the extent that whenever she comes around you tend to see how they cringe and try to avoid her. I know from my own personal experience on these sports, when her name comes up as a possible candidate, that all the men will sort of speak up and find some reason for not wanting to have her and they go out of their way to look for somebody else. (Interview 25, Asia)

But I think we also have to be careful as women, in that when I say the wrong women, ...I think they carry the feminine flag too far, and that naturally this antagonises. Perhaps one of the greatest compliments I had was when I was with a group of men, and one of them said "do not worry about [name], she is one of us". Which was not meant as "I'm one of them" so much as I understand that, men have men's things that they want to talk about, the same as women might. To me it comes back to understanding your fellow man really. (Interview 14, Europe)

The position adopted by many of the respondents was perhaps most eloquently put by one of the African respondents:

They wanted to get into a domain which was dominated by men so they had to impose themselves. Sometimes they had difficulty, they were rejected but they are still there and they are fighting. And it is difficult. Me I am not a sexist, not a feminist. I say it is necessary to share with men. I cannot say I am a woman and set up in opposition to men, I want to work for synergy, in partnership hand in hand. If not women will be on one side and men on the other and there will be no dialogue. Communication is a therapy. Without it we will remain sick, men and women. (Interview 22, Africa)

The above extracts suggest that a number of the respondents are implicitly learning the gendered rules of the organisations and seeking to negotiate women's place within them.

## 4.5 The Effects of the IOC Policy on Gender Targets

There is good evidence to suggest that there have been very positive effects of the implementation of a policy on minimum targets. The issue of women's leadership in the Olympic Movement has been put on the agenda through targets, but meeting the minimum target may only go some way to meeting the policy objective. The policy objective is for women to be integrally involved in Olympic governance, and thus more than achievement of simple numerical targets will be required.

It is worth acknowledging at this juncture, that some of the women reported receiving very positive receptions on occasion, from male colleagues. Such accounts alluded to the benefit and difference that this made to the women's status within their organisation. This included being an accepted and respected member of the Committee whose views and opinions were acknowledged:

So I served on one and two committees like the .... Committee that we have for our athletes and was there to take on anything they felt and I have to say at that time, we had our previous Secretary General was a very nice man. He is somebody who actually was the [director of a leading national sports body] .... and he did encourage me more, and whenever there were any women and sport things that were coming up, in fact, he was the one who first called me and before I was on the [NOC] to ask me if I would go for the Conference in Lausanne, the first IOC Women and Sport Conference (1996) and that was my first exposure to the women and sport movement. And while he was there, I have to say he was also someone who was always willing to give that extra push and reminding people about the need to have women and putting forward my name to do various things. (Interview 13, Oceania)

Another respondent reported that there was a movement of men who had it as a 'priority to help women' (Interview 1, Europe). Others alluded to the integrated nature of their NOC, and that they felt part of a 'team' structure:

I do not know what you are looking for but we can help. But when I say we, I do not mean myself as a woman, but my NOC and the team. We think we are a team. We work together. When we have a problem everyone helps. I have to ask you if you need any kind of help or perspective. (Interview 7, Americas)

The introduction of minimum targets has however, been an undoubted stimulus to women's participation in decision making. One woman suggested that the implementation of a target policy had been 'the starting point' (Interview 16, Europe) for working towards women's involvement in the NOC.

Obviously in 1995, it was a time when everyone was very conscious of their percentages, and [female IOC member's name] was involved in a lot of the women's committees, and she was keen to increase the percentages. (Interview 11, Europe)

As you know, the Olympic Committee has many representatives inside the council. Until now they did not elect any women only starting this year. We started with the Olympic Committee to force the federation to have a woman in the Athletic Federation Executive board to be elected. We started from every club where they do not have any ladies as members (apart from the secretary). There is not a single club that has a team for girls - basketball or any other team. We were very surprised and impressed with how people had listened to our opinions. The issues did not make people angry. As a consequence, ladies are considered for election. ... [There has been a] strong effect in terms of encouraging change across a number of Olympic organisations. (Interview 18, Asia)

[I] have a feeling that it is necessary that the [NOC] invite more female board members. We have within the system, 25 board members who are nominated from each sport's national federations and one male becomes a member directly. In order for there to be a female member the [NOC] invites certain sport's federations in order to have at least one female. (Interview 17, Asia)

A positive effect? [in reference to the target policy] Yes because for myself, for my boss and my boss on the Olympic Committee ...they were talking about that [the policy] and next time they said they were going to have 20 per cent. We have 24 per cent ... (Interview 28, Asia)

When asked if the IOC target has helped to get women into the NOC another respondent replied "Definitely – in my country there had never been a woman on the Olympic Association." (Interview 17, Asia). Furthermore, she suggest that the NOC were unlikely to have made these changes without the development of such a policy, commenting:

I don't think it would have come that quickly because it has always been the 'old boys' network or we have people from the business sectors or the government too, would be brought into the NOC. I think the IOC helped me get my foot in the door, to give me the chance. (Interview 25, Asia)

#### **4.6 Women's Impact/Influence Within NOCs**

Those women who have reached the executive board of the NOCs do identify particular areas where they feel they are having an impact or influence on these organisations.

Yes they listen to me on women's issues in particular. I will quote an example. The IOC, with its terminology, cannot be gender specific anymore. There is a clause in the regulations for the Olympic Games that whenever there are mixed teams in any sport, it permits one more official in that area - it has not said that this has to be a woman. It has

deviated from that practice in the 2000 Olympics because this is an interpretation and I think they made an error in not giving a woman a specific role as a manager with a responsibility for women. They ran into problems and I stated that I thought they had seen the error of their ways and I would like one of the managers to be a female. This was agreed. They listen if it is something directly relating to women. I have been on the conference since 1982 with the exception of the President, all the others have come after me. I think the current composition of the board tends to be forward thinking and more open-minded than it was 10 years ago. (Interview 6, Americas)

Perhaps more than in meetings themselves, and the key has been attention to detail. I don't know whether it's a woman's perspective or a lawyer's perspective, and in the other cases I always try to remind them, not to forget women when they are looking at issues, even on the Sports Council .... So I keep reminding them although some times you get the odd sceptic, 'women and what is the problem with you women,' but I just keep at it anyway, you know. (Interview 25, Asia)

In some cases this was assisted by the wider cultural context in which women were accepted as contributing to the organisational development of the NOC as a whole:

I have set a standard where people trust my judgement - right across the community, not just within the immediate people of track and field, and the association. I have built a reputation based upon this. (Interview 5, Americas)

[My contribution is] possibly ensuring that we do follow certain procedures., not necessarily always at the meeting, because I do not believe that you should put people in those positions (in meetings). So I think it is probably my people relationships in picking up the phone to the Chairman and saying "look, I do not believe we have got this right, I do not believe the officer structure at the [NOC] is right and it should be looked at." ... Probably my strength, and what I enjoy and where I think I have an effect on joining an organisation, is looking at the organisation itself and seeing how we can move it forward for the best. (Interview 10, Europe)

Others made reference to their backgrounds in physical education and education more broadly, as having a bearing on the ways in which they were able to influence:

I've come from a strong education background as well. I'm good at training, I do some other [things], I always train trainers. So slipping into that part of it has not been very challenging. (Interview 30, Americas)

Whilst individual efforts may not radically change the nature of these organizations, such personal experiences point towards political influences within these contexts. Many of the women were active in promoting the target policy or wider involvement of women in sports leadership in general:

Since 1990 and 1991 - about that time there were not any women officials to be included on the [NOC's] headquarters' official membership. But I insisted that there needs to be some women included for the delegation. As a consequence I became the first

official to become a member for the [country's] headquarters.  
(Interview 17, Asia)

## 4.7 Perceptions of Target Policy: The Quota/Target debate

The respondents took a variety of positions in relation to their opinions of the value of targets for women's involvement in the NOC. Some women expressed reservations about the establishment of targets, however these reservations were less about desires to have women on the NOCs, and more about why they were chosen.

When we received the letter [on targets] we made many jokes about it. Unfortunately, we do not have any women on the board but you know that women here work a great deal and the group works well. Are we going to change because of one quota? (Interview 7, Americas)

The most common argument raised was the concern to be promoted on the basis of their *abilities* rather than their *gender*, or by virtue of the fact that they were the only women available to fulfil the target:

Whilst gender equality is increasingly being recognised as an aspect of contemporary democracy, the issue of gender quotas and targets has been subject to debate both in broader political and social contexts. A quota serves as an instrument to introduce formal selection criteria, or a minimum or maximum threshold for particular groups. Generally however, a target is seen as a number or level that an organisation aims to achieve, and a quota is a number or level that an organisation must achieve. Such criteria, whether formal or informal, introduce explicit recommendations with the purpose of modifying the previous rules or policies that would otherwise apply. Quotas in essence act as a possible remedy to the shortfalls of the ideal of equality and free selection which are underpinned by understandings of democratic electoral systems. Whilst the distinction between targets and quotas was reinforced by interviewees, just as with their male counterparts in the interviews with Secretary Generals many of the women were making sense of the policy as a 'quota' rather than a 'target'.

The limitations of the contribution that could be made by a target for only part of the system (the NOC) was explicitly acknowledged by some respondents.

My hope is to see the quota set up within the Ministry, within the federation and the NOC and within the clubs. But this is just happening in a haphazard way in certain federations. I want to see it in all the federations and going right down to club level. At the moment however it is not happening. We do not have women presidents of clubs or of regions or of federations. We have clubs, regional leagues, federations, the NOC and the Ministry ... it is like a pyramid. But I am here [at the NOC] without having been there [in the club]. We have got a rich resource of women athletes, of women with academic qualifications and of experience, and so we must transmit this to those at the grass roots level so that they can access this resource. And generally in situations, because we have talked about democracy or co-optation, I think cooptation breaks the system. Women cannot wait to go through the system from the bottom - they would have been dead for two generations before anything happened. So the system is a bit twisted, it sometimes works but it should not be maintained like this. The rule should be that things start from the base. If I am in the hierarchy it is because there is an absence of women there also. (Interview 22, Africa)



The 10% minimum target appeared to have been regarded as a norm or a maximum rather than a minimum level of recruitment. Thus although the introduction of the target had raised consciousness of the issues it has also been regarded as an end in itself. Moreover, many of the women remained optimistic about the 10% minimum target but expressed concern over the likelihood of achieving a level of at least 20%. Some women suggested that allocating certain places within committees was necessary:

I remember that in the [sports federation] after they had a woman executive, they thought we have 15 men and we will limit two places for women. They held an election for these two places for ladies. If they start with every federation having to limit one place quota or two places for women we will start to have women in every federation. (Interview 18, Asia).

Some respondents suggested that there was not a sufficient pool of women from which to select, a key problem being that selection was determined by national federations and although international federations and the NOCs themselves may well be committed to improving the gender balance, their constituent organisations may not be.

Some remained reticent about the value of stronger sanctions in relation to achieving set targets. In the following quote, an African respondent alludes to the wider cultural context and the need to implement changes to these structures incrementally in accordance with this:

In many ... countries ... there are no women at all. Sometimes not even women competitors. You will see them perhaps take women to the Olympic games but that is because they have a quota - they don't make the A standard or B standard to compete but they just take them anyway to carry the flag or they put in a very poor performance. This is OK but for women to be a member of the NOC or the Federation I am for the quota, although sometimes I am against it. But when you do not have any solution you have to accept a quota and I am having difficulty with the 10% quota which is now 20%.

I always say you cannot run before you can walk and you cannot sprint before you can walk. You see we proposed this in 1996, and there are many, many countries which have not met the quota and will never meet the quota, like [country], and they are telling us this is none of your business. Women do not even have the right to drive and you are asking us to take them to the games. It is nonsense so we need to give the time for things to change. But when you are putting pressure maybe you are breaking things.

... we are trying to find a title for our next conference because we are trying to bring men and women together because when you put too much pressure, specifically in certain countries where taboos and customs are very strong, you might even take away the men's team and I think you should try to work slowly but surely. ... So that is why I am telling you that other countries [from certain regions] tell you [that you] don't need to duplicate the occidental system, otherwise it will not work in our own system. ....You have to understand us. (Interview 22, Africa)

Nevertheless though sanctions may not work the moral and political force of IOC targets without sanctions is seen as important.

it is my belief that the IOC has more influence for women because they are very much pushing and I think that they should push more...the NOCs should push more ... I think that the national officials should push more with International Federations and then they push with the National Federations to get more women. It is not because they should get women who are not qualified - but there are qualified women - they don't come to your eyes - and once the women are in they realise that's very good. They are working, they are nice to work with and they bring different perspectives and before they do not realise unless you start working with them. Then they recognise your talents more - they accept you for the way you are. (Interview 30, Europe)

The fact that the target has the moral and political legitimacy of support from the IOC has meant that the women have felt able to actively promote the target within federations and clubs as well as within their NOC:

every time when they have a meeting and at every place around the country, I keep telling them, not just the NOC but for the sport's organisations, even at provincial level - every association should have 10 per cent by now. And I keep saying - volleyball and basketball - how many? I am glad for that and this is the Brighton influence. (Interview 28, Asia)

Significantly, these gender targets are being introduced in countries that have different histories of mobilisation and integration of women into political life. Elsewhere, other countries may have more well established backgrounds for introducing gender targets and quotas, such as the Nordic Countries. However the solution to be found in the context of a global organisation such as the IOC is one which will reflect cultural diversity while achieving gains across the board in these diverse contexts.

Finally, with respect to the minimum targets, one of the respondents was asked her views on the fact that the IOC has not achieved the 10% minimum target in respect of its own executive:

I have been sitting on the selection committee and I can tell you that sometimes we get zero candidates, female candidates. It is a disastrous situation. We need to insist on making NOCs better aware because they are the source, it is they who should give us the women, who should propose them. (Interview 22, Africa)

Thus the achievement of targets at the NOC Executive level is seen to be only partial in addressing the problem of recruitment of women. The difficulty of seeking to make change only at the level of the IFs and the NOC Executives is that other elements of the system, particularly the NFs remain relatively untouched and even NOCs are not proposing female members for the IOC itself. Since the system is a 'pyramid' to use the terminology of one respondent, intervening at selected levels within the pyramid is likely to produce limited success, which may not be sustainable.

## 4.8 Roles Allocated or Adopted by Women in the NOC Executives

Few of the women interviewees saw their role within the NOC as solely related to promoting women's involvement in sport. Many of them expressed a desire to improve the opportunities for women in sports leadership, or in sport generally, but also felt they had many other things to achieve through their position on the NOC. In particular, those women from a physical

education background promoted a philosophy of sports development in general rather than restricting themselves to women's issues. Indeed some women expressed resistance towards solely representing the interests of women, refusing to be pigeon-holed, and seeking to represent male as well as female sport.

I am also .... manager on the [regional] Games looking after five sports, which is quite interesting. The sports are .... [names some traditionally 'male' and 'female' sports] ... and my job is really to have meetings with team managers, just making sure that the teams are training, despite having their normal training, fitness and whatever, to build up to the games in July...(Interview 13, Oceania)

What I personally feel is that if I am [holding an executive position] , I should be [holding the position] for the whole federation, not just the women's federation. (Interview 23, Asia)

## 4.9 Women and Sport Commissions

The value of the women's sports commissions was very evident in the remarks of the interviewees. It was clear that many of the successes and opportunities that ensued with the development of women's commissions within NOCs were being communicated and shared within the wider women's sports community:

[I] said to people when I went to Paris in 2000,... you know they had a conference four years before that, where we had representation here from [my country] and I said to myself , what's happened to the last four years, we've lost out on giving this women in sport commission going, so as soon as I came back from Paris, I said well, you know ... I'm going to get it going ...and this is how it all started, and then, then I went to Norway, learning more, so as I mentioned earlier I'm interim president, we haven't actually set-up a committee but we have a group of about seven or eight of us women... but I feel this, I could do a lot more, ...I think attending more conferences or any of these meetings would really influence me and get the feel and know-how to really get this commission going ...(Interview 13, Oceania)

Women interviewed at Women in Sport international meetings tended to identify ideas for local consideration:

No we don't have a Women's Commission and just a few minutes ago, I asked the [Secretary General] we are here and we haven't a Committee and we have to do something. So I spoke with the French girl and she has help for the starting point. (Interview 16, Europe)

Another interviewee whose committee did not have a Women's Commission at the time of interview was asked if this had ever been discussed. She replied:

It will be discussed after reading this - I will raise this point. We have got to set up a Women's Committee. (Interview 18, Asia)

Such enthusiasm for international links of this nature, however, was not universal – though only one respondent was sceptical about their usefulness, suggesting that such seminars were simply 'talking shops'.

Frankly, my personal view on seminars is we have too many seminars, just like women in sports meetings ..... if you look at many of the things that have been said at these seminars or conferences, they are basically, the same thing, in the sense of lack of participation by the women themselves, lack of support for the women from the community, from family, lack of outreach programs, so it's practically all the same to me, so to me, um, I've always been a person to do first rather than just talking about it, to me it's always back to let's do it ourselves, let's do it on our own. (Interview 21, Asia).

Notwithstanding the last respondent cited, generally comments reiterate the importance of having a shared network and of passing on examples of good practice in the development of women's sport, and in particular the usefulness of the women's commissions. However, it was evident from the interviewees' responses that many of these women would welcome more formal guidance in terms of firstly establishing, and then developing the role, of these commissions. Whilst they were learning about the potential value of these commissions.

Other concerns included the ways in which women were seen as disproportionately involved in the work of Women's Commissions and as such this raised concerns about the nature of women's work and indeed the commissions themselves.

My desire on leaving was that we should not have Women's Commission; it should not be necessary .... I still had this deep feeling that we could serve women best by encouraging them into the mainstream and if I got linked ... with women, then you tend to lose your strength. The strength was in the fact that everybody saw me as looking at sport generally, and working for sport generally and working within the [NOC] but obviously, they would be foolish to assume that I would not use that to further the female side if it was necessary... absolutely right. We are still putting a lot of emphasis on women and I think we should be putting emphasis on administrators and leaders. Unless you have got women in the leading positions, you are not going to be able to influence the policies that the performance directors and chief coaches put forward. It is at that level, it is board level; I look at some governing bodies and I am sure that most of their boards are men. It is getting better. (Interview 11, Europe).

This raises an interesting question as to whether Women's Commissions marginalise women's contributions to Olympic leadership? In using the strengths and talents of the newly appointed female members it will be important to define their role beyond the work of Women's Commissions.

There were also a variety of opinions as to the potential role of men on these commissions.

To work on this Women and Sport programme. It is my opinion that only ladies can work on this programme because they are aware of what the programme means in the federation and in schools, universities and in clubs - only they understand its full relevance. (Interview 18, Asia)

Some respondents also pointed out that establishing a Women's Commission would of itself accomplish little without resources.

Also in the Women's Sport Commission, we are also realizing that in I think our biggest frustration was that, due to the lack of resources, we wouldn't be able to do anything. Each one of us came with the idea of supporting an area or a level of sport. But I think the main reason why the group started to fall apart was the lack of support. So the group turned into a consulting group of the executive committee which wasn't very active – its participation was sporadic. (Interview 24, Americas)

## 4.10 Future Aspirations

Whilst many of the women did not see their role as solely related to the development of women's issues in sport, many of their future aspirations in Olympic leadership centred around acting as role models for women, or indeed developing more opportunities for future generations of women. Great importance is given to 'passing on' the positive experiences of this system to other generations of girls and women. Whilst the precise nature of the values, knowledge and experiences that they want to pass on varied according to the particular value position of the respondent, the respondents shared an enthusiasm to develop women's leadership in general terms:

I would like to see the development of more women taking leadership responsibilities and in all other areas. Coaching is a particular area where we have so few women that coach to any high level in any sport in [my country]. It is only in netball that we are seeing some coaches. (Interview 5, Americas)

I want all of those women to realise their roles in terms of taking care of themselves first and then taking care of the others. At least in my university I tell all the female staff you have to exercise and join the games at least 20 minutes everyday. Also in terms of the future I want the females to take more roles and to be the leader - I am sure they can do that. But every time when I tell them they have to show the males first - you have to show them that you can do it. I try to encourage them, give them a chance, to join in with international activities so they can learn more about those people. (Interview 28, Asia)

Yes, I am taking it as a personal challenge, to sort of bring the women along with regard to several sports that women can be involved in [my country]. I find there's a distance between the NOC and the IFs. (Interview 14, Americas)

There were relatively few expressions of desires to be promoted into senior positions or move higher up the hierarchy in Olympic Governance.

I always said to myself, 'Ah maybe the ultimate is to be on the IOC and to do something there but then at the same time I also appreciate that it will take a toll on my time, and having had one divorce, and remarried I also try to keep a balance and I really want to make sure that I don't overstretch myself...Well, I don't know, it is really hard, I think I am already happy with what I achieved in our National Olympic Council. Clearly, I want to try to remain there and do more in terms of helping the women. At the same time also being respected for my own abilities, and contributions. I don't want to take on too much at one time. (Interview 25, Asia)

The prospect of moving into other more senior positions was seen as something that might 'just emerge', not a role that was actively sought, and almost all of the respondents did not talk about personal advancement or ambition in the interviews:

The only other position I have available would be to become the President. You know, and I have not thought of that consciously but that's one of the options... but truthfully wherever I am I can work. (Interview 29, Americas)

Those who had followed a 'physical education' route tended to emphasise the desire to continue to develop youth sport:

The fact that I can make a difference to helping young people, athletes, administrators to reach their potential. I like to share my knowledge and experience with people. (Interview 5, Americas)

I am a 'mover' I want to do something. I never liked my job as a Permanent Secretary of the government because it was too passive and I would just sit there and execute things. I want to make things and create things - be active. That is something that I can do both in the Women in Sport's Committee, as well as in the Executive Committee - they give me the space. I am very happy about that. (Interview 1, Americas)

A further emphasis in the comments of respondents was on providing role models for women generally and for marginalized groups in particular. As one former elite athlete expressed it:

They wanted to know more about who was that Muslim woman who came from Africa and tried to be in the Hollywood Arena with all these stars and media people and I said I am just a normal human being but now I would like to send a message to all Africans, to all women to all the rest of the world that we are just as equal as anybody else and we are just as capable as those Eastern block athletes or North American athletes. And I started talking about how I could do it and they started listening to me and I started sharing my experience. How I had begun, the family circle, my studies, work, and my household tasks at home and my role as a women in a quite conservative society and how I could come out and break these taboos. They had to be broken so that I could reach the highest level. And the people listened attentively and I received invitations for all corners of the world, in Oceania, in Africa, in Asia, in America, in Europe. I say it is like this that I could be the voice of all these women and of all these children in difficult, miserable conditions, marginalized, discriminated against. In conditions which are not the same as those for men in general. And it was in this way that I was integrated into a circuit of different groups of friends who had confidence in me and who were interested by my experience. And they said "if you want to you can do it". (Interview 22, Africa)

## 4.11 Differences and Inequities Between Groups of Women

The policy on targets of the IOC is clearly aimed at addressing inequities between men and women in sports leadership. Although a number of respondents spoke of women as a homogenous group, others were more aware of the existence of inequities between women.

These inequities between women of different classes, geographical locations (urban / rural) or different ethnic groups were evident within individual countries.

What we decided to do was to produce a draft and I presented this to the President. I felt this would work because [the country] is so big. I stated that I wanted to have 10 members from the board and one from the committee - myself. One to be an athlete, a judge, a doctor, a psychologist, a therapist, a businesswoman, a teacher, and someone from sociology. Everyone has different points of view and most of them came from different areas of [the country]. Since the north is completely different from the south, financially and otherwise it was good that we had such diversity. (Interview 7, Americas)

Similarly, another respondent pointed towards the need to remain cognizant to the various difficulties that women from different social locations experience in relation to participation in sport at all levels:

I want to also see how we deal not only with active, middle-class, well-to-do girls in the urban area but also, have it as a something that is verily the right of every women, even in the rural areas, so you don't just have to go out there and maybe [get to] school early and not be allowed to do anything else. (Interview 30, Americas)

As with the male interviews the cultural and religious affiliation was a significant point of differentiation amongst the women and their responses to women's leadership in sport, and more specifically the role of a target policy. One specific example would be how the Muslim respondents' view appropriate roles of women. These interviews underline the fact that it is unhelpful to generalise about their position on women in sport, since circumstances and interpretations may vary from one community to another.

The political context of the activities of the Muslim women varied and thus the resistance by the authorities also varied accordingly:

Before she went to parliament, the issues of sport had some substance and promoting it was not problematic. After she went to parliament everything was a political subject and some people tried to resist the promotion of sport. However, this did not affect her work. Before going to parliament she suggested to women through her promotion to use a bicycle for travelling and this was accepted. When she was a Member of Parliament the political opposition said that this was not correct for Islamic women to use a bicycle. (Translator, Interview 15, Asia)

A contrasting view is provided in this extended extract from another Asian respondent.

A lot of Non-Muslims also asked me ... and I think that, quite often the Muslim women themselves and even the Muslim men also do not understand the Shariah or the Islamic Law, ... ..So I said, this comes back to sport, as I said in netball, our girls wear short skirts because that is more convenient, but I did also ask, because I was a bit worried, whether what the girls are doing could be wrong for them in Islam, for them and for me, because I had been with them, I did ask some of the persons who are knowledgeable in Islam, [names Islamic scholar], before he became the religious advisor to the Prime Minister, he was a lecturer at [a local university] before, he said "the most important thing

is what is your intention, if your intention is to wear your brief costume so that you can play better and the idea is to win, so that Muslim women could win, then it is otherwise permissible, but, if you wear the short skirts and all that, and the idea is to show off your beautiful legs and all that then of course it is not permissible, it is *haram*. (Interview 21, Asia)

## 4.12 Further Training and Support Reported as Needed

The range of training needs identified in interviews was not substantially different from that identified in the responses to the women's questionnaire. They stressed management, sports administration, media training, and technical skills in relation to performance management. The interviews however did give respondents the opportunity to stress the role that international meetings and seminars had played, not only in enhancing their knowledge, but also building their confidence to proceed.

However support may take forms other than training and childcare for example which for single parent families or for those living in circumstances in which the traditional division of labour in the household is dominant, represents a major difficulty.

Sport is more professional - on how to help women. How do we help women with children to take on coaching and performance director's roles unless they can afford a nanny? and do they necessarily want to do that? if you have a commitment to have children - is your commitment not to them as against your own personal career? That is for me the worrying side - how we can get women into coaching and as performance directors. Money will not solve people being able to give up six or seven days a week. That is what it takes in high performance sport these days. (Interview 11, Europe)

## 4.13 Summary Points Relating to the Themes Emerging from the Interviews with Female NOC Executive Committee Members

The rich descriptions which are provided in the interview data from the women's interviews provides a number of important insights into women's experiences in recruitment for and serving on NOC Executives. These are summarised below.

1. The interviewees nearly all regarded the IOC targets as a positive force for change and did not see themselves as 'tokens'. However targets on their own may well not be enough to reduce inequalities as although they may deal with the effects of inequity by opening access to leadership positions, they do not directly address the circumstances or attitudes which cause such an imbalance in the first place.
2. Given the high levels of qualification and competence of many of the women interviewees, considerable frustration was expressed about apparently less well qualified male members of Executive Committees being given preference for posts of responsibility.
3. Some women in full time employment, with family responsibilities found themselves in very pressured situations particularly where traditional gender roles and patterns of domestic labour were maintained in the home. They relied heavily on support from



families and partners and there was some evidence of personal sacrifices being made in terms of personal relationships.

4. In the vast majority of cases, recruitment to NOC Executive Committees, and subsequent effectiveness was fostered by the support and encouragement of senior NOC members, both male and female.
5. The solution of dealing with NOC targets by co-opting women or encouraging individuals to stand for election, means that the structure of National Federations may remain relatively untouched by such changes and thus the NF delegates to the NOC Assembly are likely to continue to be predominantly male.
6. Interviewees suggested that their impact / effectiveness on Executive Committees increased disproportionately where there was more than one female member and therefore more than one female voice on the Executive Committee.
7. The value of the IOC Women in Sport seminars and other international links for many respondents was very clear. Not only did such events provide a source of new ideas in policy terms, they also provided support networks for women who might otherwise be isolated if they were among a small minority on the NOC Executive.
8. Training needs reported were very similar to those specified in the questionnaire responses. However it is important also to acknowledge that forms of support other than training (e.g. mentoring, networking and internet resources) may be required if women are to be successfully recruited and retained.
9. Women are not a homogenous group and the data from the interviews suggest that differences across socio-economic, ethnic, religious and geographical boundaries implies the need for very different approaches in different cultural contexts.
10. The women clearly value The Women's Commissions with the NOCs but they are quite often unclear of the role or various ways in which they might develop these. In other cases, they have clear ambitions but lack the financial or other resources to achieve their aims. As such, further support, training and financial aid may be necessary for these commissions to reach their full potential.

## Section 5

# Analysis of Interviews with Secretary Generals / Presidents of NOCs

### 5.1 Introduction

During the research project detailed interviews were held over an intensive period of one week in the margins of the Association of National Olympic Committees Assembly in Kuala Lumpur 20-25 May 2002 with Secretary Generals (22) and / or Presidents (4) of a sample of 25 NOCs. Interviews were conducted by two members of the Loughborough Institute (Ian Henry and Mansour Al-Tauqi) largely in English (18 interviews), but also in French (four interviews), Arabic (one interview), Romanian (one interview with translation provided by the Romanian NOC), and Spanish (one interview with translation provided by Ms. Katia Mascagni). The interviews were subsequently translated into English where necessary and subjected to computer-based analysis employing *NUD\*IST* qualitative data analysis software.

The interviews were designed to complement the data generated by the questionnaires sent to all Secretary Generals, by generating more detailed explanations of the response of NOCs to the establishing of targets and their experiences in attracting and retaining female members to the Executive. More specifically the aims of the interviews were as follows:

- To establish the nature of the response to the establishment of targets in terms of measures taken as a result of the targets, problems and opportunities encountered.
- To identify attitudes of the membership of the NOCs toward the establishment of targets and to identify where and how positive adoption of the targets and where evident, resistance to the adoption of targets took effect.
- To identify strategies employed and difficulties experienced in attracting women members to NOC Executives.
- To compare perceptions and explanations of the above provided by male members of the NOC Executives with those of women members of the Executives interviewed.

Our initial intention was to match interviews of Secretary Generals and female members of Executives by country. However, there were difficulties in relation to the exact matching of the NOCs in the sample of Secretary Generals' interviews with the NOCs from which the female interviewees were drawn since the female sample reflected attendance at regional seminars at which interviews were largely conducted.

**Table 5.1 The sample of NOCs involved in these interviews with male Secretary Generals**

NOC	No of Persons on the Executive	No of Women on the Executive	% Women Members of executive
Africa, 1	9	1	11%
Africa, 2	16	3	19%
Africa, 3	9	1	14%
Africa, 4	10	1	10%
Africa, 5	13	2	15%
Africa, 6	8	1	13%
Africa, 7	9	1	11%
Africa, 8	8	1	13%
Americas, 1	13	1	8%
Americas, 2	13	3	18%
Americas, 3	6	2	33%
Americas, 4	13	2	15%
Asia, 1	14	1	7%
Asia, 2	20	2	10%
Asia, 3	11	3	27%
Asia, 4	18	3	17%
Asia, 5	34	4	12%
Asia, 6	9	2	22%
Asia, 7	11	1	9%
Europe, 1	15	4	27%
Europe, 2	14	5	36%
Europe, 3	15	1	7%
Europe, 4	25	3	12%
Europe, 5	19	2	11%
Oceania, 1	10	3	30%

The figures quoted above are those which were cited in the IOC's own survey of NOCs of the position in terms of women membership of Executives rather than those cited by interviewees since the former are likely to be more accurate (at least in relation to the position for early 2002). In a few instances interviewees acknowledged when asked about figures that they were unsure of the precise data, and there were occasional anomalies between the figures cited in the interview (when interviewees could not consult documentation) and the returns to the IOC survey.

What follows in this report is then a review of findings. The comparison of the Secretary Generals' perceptions, and those of women members of the Executive is largely reserved for the findings discussed in section 6 of this report.

The structure adopted for the reporting of findings in this section is as follows:

- Response to the Establishment of Targets.
- Measures Taken in Respect of Addressing Women's Under-representation on NOC Executives.
- The Roles Allocated or Adopted by Women in NOC Executives and the Work of Women's Commissions.
- Leadership Qualities Sought in Female Candidates for NOC Executives.
- The Nature of Sports Administration Careers of Male and Female Members of NOC Executives.
- Sources and Effects of Perceived Gender Inequity.
- Differences within National Groups between Groups of Women in Terms of Access to Sport and to the NOC.

- The Perceived Role of Olympic Solidarity Funding in Addressing Gender Inequality in Sports Administration

## 5.2 NOCs' Responses to the Establishment of Targets

While all but four of the 25 NOCs had reached the minimum target of 10%, nevertheless a number of respondents expressed reservations about the establishment of targets, even though they also described ways in which they had sought to achieve the targets themselves. Only one respondent identified overt opposition to addressing the issue of women's under-representation on NOC Executives.

Where we come from ... there is not much importance given to women in sport. Very often we hear something to the effect of when will they start commissioning men in sport because they believe that this women in sport is treated as.... given too much attention or it's too; 'what all this hype about having women in sport' in my opinion, this is my view, it is not as important as it should be. (Interview 3, Americas)

The most common argument raised was the need to promote the most able to become members of the Executive regardless of gender.

even in the women...they don't like this kind of quota. They would like to be chosen by competence ... not by quota. (Interview 20, Europe)

[There is] Not an explicit opposition in the sense that people are against the fact that women should gain access to positions in the management of sport. There is no opposition to that. We only say that one should not have a quota just for the principle of having one. It should be valid candidates who emerge. The quota if it means taking people who are not validly qualified just because they are women, that is wrong. (Interview 5 Africa)

Although the interviewers reinforced the distinction between targets and quotas, respondents regularly fell back on the use of the term 'quota' and the distinction between the two being elided (with quota being a *required* level of action as opposed to target which represents a *desired* level of action). It is clear that for some what they saw as being 'desired' by the parent body (the IOC in setting its targets) was regarded as being 'required' of them as NOCs.

I am promoting this because in international level this is the way that you are going so I don't want to be far off the international order....so if you have this instruction to establish women commission you are looking for this .. but the lady that you appoint for this .. she had a lot of problems to organise. (Interview 1 Africa)

As one might expect the Secretary Generals from those countries which had traditionally promoted a strong policy line on equal opportunities (most notably socialist and former socialist states) were most comfortable with the adoption of targets. But even in such cases respondents described how reservations had been expressed about the appointment of 'under qualified' women.

you see when the IOC says it's a certain percentage or ratio ... I don't think this is the correct thing ... .. why 10 percent is correct then what about 9 percent then what about 8 percent...it's not something that can be measured simply by your figure...(Interview 4, Asia)

The point was made even more strongly by another General Secretary who, while arguing that “there is a national policy of favouring women at all levels in our country”, suggested that biological differences accounted for the different roles adopted by the sexes.

And in nature, men and women .. listen you have to take account of reality and of nature, perhaps genetically men and women have two eyes, one head , two hands have feet, but morphologically it is a fact that women cannot achieve what men can. Women cannot achieve the speeds that men can, we have never seen a world record for both sexes beaten by a woman. So there is in human nature a part which is different between men and women. And you shouldn't be a feminist who argues for 'women, women, women, yes I don't see any women'...(Interview 14, Africa)

One final point in relation to the response of NOCs was that in virtually every case except that of one country the achievement of the 10% minimum target appears to have been regarded implicitly as a norm or a maximum rather than a minimum level of recruitment. Thus although the introduction of the target had raised consciousness of the issues it had also been regarded as an end in itself.

### **5.3 Measures Taken in respect of Women's Under-representation on NOC Executives**

There were two types of problem associated with attracting women onto the Executive. First in many instances, it was argued, there were simply not enough women presenting themselves. Second there were problems associated with 'displacing' male members of the Executive who were perceived to have performed their tasks appropriately and adequately. The solution taken by some Executives to the first problem was simply to co-opt members onto their Executive (though others argued that this was beyond their powers). The solution to the second problem adopted by one NOC was to add places to the Executive so that existing members could continue without feeling 'threatened' by the competition from an increased list of candidates.

My personal view is that we should have a quota system and I always thought we could achieve equality through expansion not substitution. If we have five men then we should add five women and make it ten .... but if there five men then you dropped two then the two men who are dropped would be very very upset...especially if a women is not so active .. (Interview 13, Asia)

In relation to the first problem, not having a sufficient pool of women from which to select, a key problem faced by NOCs was the fact that membership of the NOC was largely determined by the National Federations, and although International Federations and the NOCs themselves may be committed to improving the gender balance their constituent bodies were not necessarily so.

since we had this instruction [about targets] we have begun to tackle the problem from the base. That's to say in the federations. Since it is the federations which elect the members of the NOC we are in process of asking women to present themselves at the federation level so that when it comes to elections to the NOC they will be there. (Interview 5, Africa)

Now most of our people are elected...so elections is through the club system .. through the associations, so most of the clubs are run by men...so they [women] will not be nominated at the elections for the top. So is not just the question of at the top...it maybe easy to get two or three times women from the top.... Just a problem at the bottom...so to really solve the problem...I think it should be at all levels .. (Interview 13, Asia)

Some NOCs argued that they made no special effort to attract or train women because this simply was not required.

Frankly we haven't done anything yet...I'm not against the fact that we can do it...there is more than 700,000 university graduates...more than 60 percent of our young...which gives a good base for leaders because you have so many that have actually education. .... In the countries where you have a lesser level of cultural and sports development, you need targets, figures to give the first start. (Interview 6, Americas)

One country had adopted a fundamental approach adopting quotas for the NOC and for all National Sports Federations such that the executives of all such organisations should have a minimum of 40% of women and of men. While this solution may or may not have been difficult to implement (the Interviewees for this NOC gave no indication and the system had been running for some seven years at the time of the interview) it was described as now being accepted as the "natural" way to operate and as having considerable advantages. This had had considerable success not only in changing the make up of the Executive but also in helping to foster increased Olympic success for female athletes, and in enhancing the social environment of the work of the Executive.

And it's one thing which I think is very important which it's hard to put into words but it's more pleasant to work with women if it's mixed .... It must be more than one woman it must be I would say 20 to 30 per cent at least. (Interview 18, Europe)

## **5.4 The Roles Allocated or Adopted by Women in NOC Executives and the Work of Women's Commissions**

Respondents reported that the roles which women were allocated on the NOC executives were dominantly those which related to women and the women's commissions, though there were a number of examples of individual women chairing other commissions e.g. an ex-athlete who was a doctor chairing a medical commission (Interview 11, Europe), a financial advisor chairing a marketing commission (Interview 5, Africa), a lawyer heading a law commission (Interview 1, Africa), an ex-athlete who was chair of an international relations commission (Interview 21 Europe), and a former athlete who was Minister of Sport and President of the National Olympic Academy (Interview 23, Europe). With these exceptions however, it would seem that women were not normally allocated roles associated with the 'business' end of the NOC's work (media, sponsorship, marketing commissions etc.).

there are not many areas where women are given the opportunity to progress from the point of view that it is the feeling that even in the commissions that we have within our NOC we have 10 commissions of which 7 are chaired by men and that 1 female chairs the other 3 (Interview 3, Americas)

In the above case, the respondent goes on to report that the woman was chair of some other commissions:

[She chairs] Women in sport, uniforms committee, and standards committee. Uniforms is we preparing our team for the various games and everything, and the other one could be standards, setting standards for to reach the various games to qualify for the various competitions, various international competitions we are attending, commonwealth, the Olympics things like that. (Interview 3, Americas)

Although the example referred to in the above quotation is unusual in that the sole female member chaired three commissions, this was in a very small executive and the commissions chaired were those associated with women's issues, with clothing, and with the clerical administration of standards, rather than being associated with the commissions involved in giving strategic direction to the work of the NOC.

It was simply expected in many instances that the new female members brought in as a response to establishing of the targets would see their role as largely related to promoting women's involvement in sport rather than sports development more generically.

They are coordinating the ladies movement when we organise the courses...she is particularly there...she keeps a record of how many people are qualified in each province .. in each organisation. So they [women] are taking lot of interest now ..they are in contact with us ..a numbers of meetings they come and attend ...and they contribute now. (Interview 19, Asia)

Even in the case of a former socialist state in which gender equality was reported as a major goal, the interviewee argued that little effective responsibility was given to women.

Responsibility? Not much, not much. For instance they are responsible for the newspaper, responsible for coaches, responsible for athletes and some departments, for instance accident relationship [insurance]. (Interview 24, Asia)

Some NOCs however reported a resistance to women Executive members simply representing the interests of women.

They all have other responsibilities in general and the fact that they represent women's percentage it is just in relation to the percentage of representation of the women but they have responsibilities on the line of the commissions which they work and represent. (Interview 21, Europe)

In the case of one country's NOC a women's commission had been established in 1995, but this was superseded by a women's project which ran through until the current quadrennial. This project represented a set of research projects and policy initiatives aimed at tackling gender inequalities. If this set of initiatives has been successful it is argued, there would be no further need for a specialist woman's commission because such issues will have been absorbed into the core programmes of work of the NOC and will therefore not require specialist representation.

## 5.5 Leadership Qualities Sought in Female Candidates for NOC Executives

In relation to the experience sought in a potential female member of the NOC Executive, a background in elite sports performance was suggested as important by a number of respondents. There was a strong emphasis placed on their function as role models to inspire other women to get involved in sport, rather than on their function as decision makers / opinion formers in their Executives.

We chose [the women co-opted] by virtue of their sporting history. For the most part they are former internationals whether this is handball, athletics or basketball .. and also women's football. It is on the basis of their sporting past that we chose them. (Interview 5, Africa)

Those women athletes that went to the Olympic games were not there because of the figures...but because they had...they deserved to be there because of their talent...two out of the three in the NOC executive board have been gold medallists in the Olympic games. (Interview 6, Americas)

There are two criteria. First she must be a sportswoman because she will be a reference point for the other women. If she is not a sportswoman and you invite her to join she will not attract others. She must be a model. A champion or a competitor of a high level and then people will regard her as a model but if she has not been involved in sports this will not happen. (Interview 12, Africa)

We are trying to attract in the administration some of our former women athletes that have the necessary studies, high level studies, or that have the wish to enter sports administration. (Interview 21, Europe)

Nevertheless an elite sporting career alone was not deemed sufficient background for an NOC Executive member:

We have made great efforts to make sportswomen take some responsibility, but to arrive at the level of the NOC which is the supreme sporting body in each country, it requires several stages - to gain experience, gain a proper knowledge of how the federations and the associations work, and we have stated by interesting women sports administrators in the associations and at the level of the federations. (Interview 16, Africa)

Ironically elite sporting histories were not for the most part evident in the histories of the Secretary Generals themselves, all of whom had a clear and abiding interest in sport but most of whom had not had a career in elite sport at the international or Olympic level.

In addition to those women who had a background from the sporting elite, were a significant number of women who were selected from the political and social elites of their countries. Members of the royal family and of the political elites of particular regimes were cited by respondents.

In terms of the other forms of experience or competences which were valued by respondents, educational skills and qualifications were highly regarded, and many of the women recruited were exceptionally well qualified.



...in the beginning my colleagues are opposed against the idea having a special women's commission...now since seven months...a very, very good women's commission.... followed by women...but we have a very strong leadership...is a professor doctor in the physical education faculty and I think that with the work that now... in the near future in the next election that things will change a bit...(Interview 20, Europe)

The road is open to any other person having the university qualification necessary and having the aptitude and capacity required for a respected position in the administration .... (female colleague interjects) yes I'm an example here, I had no performances in sports. I graduated in languages ..... I have specialised in marketing so I have only an administrative relation with sport and a volunteering relation first. And I have my colleague also director of international relations of the .... Olympic committee who has a degree in languages as well but also in management . (Interview 21, Europe)

The four candidates who are [working with] the Executive Board are highly educated...they are not just normal females who happen to be in the board....two of them they have PhDs...so their participation is really impacting on general discussion of the executive boards....their input is significant. (Interview 25, Asia)

One respondent took the line that women had inherent characteristics which made them more likely to be effective administrators, and argued that this to some degree obviated the need for further training.

(Translator) He believes that the majority of the qualities and talents to be a leader, you sort of have them inherently...much more than what you can learn through training and other studies. .... He believes that actually women often times are more thoughtful more mature to be actually .. they are better thinkers....(Interview 6, Americas)

Such a line of argument was also taken by some respondents to suggest exactly the opposite – that there are inherent male and female characteristics which render women less effective in the leadership role. The argument that men or women are better or worse in such roles by virtue of their sex, rather than by virtue of their skills and abilities is thus an argument which 'cuts both ways'.

## **5.6 The Nature of Sports Administration Careers of Male and Female Members of NOC Executives**

As indicated above, of the men interviewed, relatively few had been elite sportsmen / Olympians. In many instances the men who had become Secretary Generals described themselves as passionate about sport but having gone into sports administration as an alternative to performing at an elite level.

Well to be an administrator...you don't have to be a sportsman. Anyway at least you have to have an interest in sports either as a fan or as a participant. Me, I like to watch football I never miss any competition unless otherwise we are not around. When I was working in a new company, a public company. I used to have a sports club because I was General Manager of that company. (Interview 7, Africa)

One route into NOC sports administration for two of the Secretary Generals/ Presidents from French speaking African nations, and one other from the Americas, was that of a career in military sport. However, although there were some military sport structures for women in those countries, there were in these systems no opportunities for women to rise as high in the ranks as men.

*Interviewer:* Is this type of sporting career in the military open for women as well? Are there women who are fairly senior in the armed forces who manage aspects of female sport?

*NOC President:* No because the only women who rise to senior posts in the army are doctors. The others are in divisions like communication. .... And the doctors may be involved in some sport but they tend to be very busy. They participate to stay fit but to manage or whatever is very difficult for them. (Interview 16, Africa)

In addition to the sporting and administrative routes into NOC administration for women indicated in the previous sections, there was evidence also of women working in paid employment in a number of the NOC systems, who were well qualified academically but who remained assigned to non-senior roles. Indeed it was suggested by a senior IOC figure that African NOCs were largely run by women administrators although decision making Boards remained male dominated.

But in fact in the administrative sector of our NOC we have nine employees...six women with a very good background study...university studies...they work very well with us...but they are paid they are not members of the body. (Interview 20, Europe)

Also at the level of the NOC we have 3 or 4 women who are not elected and do not form part of the executive but who are salaried. These are women who work in the NOC who are paid. One who deals with International Relations - ..... When she graduated we employed her at the Olympic Committee, we sent her on this course and when she returned we gave her responsibility for International Relations. .... we have another girl, another graduate from the Sports School but she speaks three languages, French Spanish and Arabic and she helps us translate and prepare all the correspondence which comes from the IOC or from English speaking countries to respond. ... [However] .... with the NOC there is a problem of availability because not all of the women live in the capital close to the Olympic Committee, they are spread out around the country. They are also women who are married, have children or are engaged, and therefore have a lack of time to work in the NOC. (Interview 16, Africa)

Traditional gender roles as a barrier to female progression in management are of course not specific to sports administration generally nor the specifics of NOC administration.

## 5.7 Sources of, and Responses to, Perceived Gender Inequity

While a number of respondents underlined the fact that gender equity issues were a key feature of policy in their national systems, they were still able to point to ways in which gender equity in sport participation and administration had not been addressed. Other respondents reported a lack of political weight given to the issues, or even an ignoring of gender in policy.

Recently we have just had a sports policy, which for the first time in our history after some 35 years of independence. Our first national sports policy was debated in the houses of parliament about 2 weeks ago and it's still being studied at the moment, hence I'm not au fait with all the details because the time it was debated I was away. But I understand it doesn't address gender equality, it doesn't address the issues of women in sport and hence this a matter that needs to be taken up with ourselves, the national federations and the NOC with the respect of minister of sport and the national sports council who are directly responsible for the development of women in sport ... (Interview 3, Americas)

Respondents recognised the persistence of traditional gender roles and its relationship to inequity, and tended to describe this as, or to imply that it was, 'inevitable'.

We are looking for the balance which is good...however in the administration some time, some directors of chief avoid to elect a woman for this very reason....to have a maternity leave...because children are sick sometimes. Because women however are still those who are taking more care of people who are sick or children I tell you that there are some countries like Sweden where you have fathers paternity leave, this is not our case. Maybe one day. (Interview 6, Americas)

maybe it's different from the west... always the girl students are more disciplined than the male students....so the school master always likes very much the girls, they are very disciplined ...if you want to teach them how to do the sports...they always learn very quickly...they concentrate on the learning...but boys always have some other distractions....but when things develop in the later stages the choice is totally different...and women you see get married and then they will have a baby and a family and they are looking after husband or something...you know in Oriental philosophy always women thinks she should....it's her responsibility to look after the family...not like in the United States ...of course it takes a lot of energy and timing out...where as the men comparatively speaking more focusing on the job on the sports...on all sorts of the thing .... So maybe there are all sorts of reasons why you see when it comes to a higher level...the administrative level...women involvement is a little bit less than the men's male involvement. (Interview 4, Asia)

However in some instances, particularly where there was evidence of traditionally matriarchal systems, women played significant leading roles as well as maintaining domestic responsibilities (Interview 8, Oceania; interview 9, Americas). There was perhaps one outstanding example of addressing problems of traditional gender roles and their impact on sporting involvement. The following extended quotation gives some indication of the flexibility of action and thinking employed.

*Interviewer:* Are there special measures taken to facilitate the participation of women?

*President of NOC:* It's not allowed saying no

*Interviewer 2:* but what kind of measures?

*President of NOC:* But I have been asked to pay for women on the board; she asked us to pay her mother's ticket when she goes abroad to look after her children and I say 'no' we don't do that....I refused to do that...we actually can't afford it.

*Senior Female NOC Officer:* That was what the sub project in this women project that we call motherhood then we had money for doing

that and three of the medal winners in Sydney ... it was a race walker and there were two on the women's soccer team ...gold medals...and there were a handball player ..and they say that if it wasn't for that sub project they would never

*President of NOC:* But they brought the children with them

*Senior Female NOC Officer:* Yeah .. it wasn't during the games ..that was just two weeks that can be handled it was the everyday training how we helped them ... When we started this we thought it was a matter of money, but it wasn't actually it was a matter of time and they needed different kind of things in order to make this the total situation and it was things that they hadn't thought of for example the race walker she was only a mother and she hadn't been the last 6 months before the Olympics we said that 'no you don't rest enough ... you train and then you are with your daughter (she was 1 or 2 years) you have to put your daughter in the nursery garden' .. And it was not the money, she had the money, we didn't need to give her that...but we could see that the total situation was too hard and she said that 'go to hell ... like I don't have a conscience for that .. at home I can take care of my child' and only in the last 6 months she came back and said if you hadn't made me think that way I would never have won that medal. This is only an example that women sometimes need more to win the medal or maybe to be a board member or to be a professional (Interview 18, Europe)

However, although in the above case the solutions adopted did not necessarily involve finance, some respondents acknowledged the economic dimension as a significant factor.

Well the problems with these courses are economic. When we have these courses they are for say 20 people. We try to put in 25 or 30 but the additional 5 or ten are not counted in the finance from Solidarity. We try to get them to participate but economically, we say you come if you can .. but it is here that we have the difficulty. .... Yes it is effectively more difficult for women than for men when they are not in the quota of [Olympic] Solidarity. (Interview 5, Africa)

Despite acknowledgement that traditional gender roles persisted there was also a suggestion that such barriers may be diminishing even if only slowly, with education as a key factor in this process.

Yeah yeah a lot of women before we are having problems in the political realms, we started with sports and now we are getting into the historical data. ...education hitherto, say ten years 15 years ago it was a little bit difficult to even preach in some states that women should go to school...but gradually today a lot of them are going to school...and education eventually might change the whole perception of that aspect of the country ... (Interview 17, Africa)

No because I think that in the near future in [country] will be a very big change ... nowadays are more women in the university than men ... and more women doctors ... more women lawyers than men .... so things are changing ... and I think that women now are more independent because they) are not dependant economically...and I think that in the next ten years everything will change....but they are interested in other things than sport... yes ... travelling, culture, .. (Interview 20, Europe)

One of the factors which two respondents pointed to as having influenced decisions relating to the resourcing of women's elite sports policies was that it was perceived as easier to obtain medal successes in major championships in women's sport because there were fewer participants, and that the return on investment was therefore likely to be greater in this respect than for male sports.

And you know one thing women's medals are a lot easier .... Because if take out of five continents...Africa is strong in athletics...and a few other sports in women...not in sport...Asia they are not talent...South America...so really women sport if you target that in some way it's easier. Think of Spain who won a gold medal in grass hockey ...in 1992... they took 20 girls ...one and a half year in a team in a village they train and they won a gold medal.... (Interview 11, Europe)

While there was an acknowledgement by some respondents of the significance of religious world views on the perceived roles of women in sport, separate provision for women to participate in competitive sport on a nation-wide basis was only claimed by one country.

In other systems also there were indications of increasing political pressure to address issues of inequality in representation in sports administration.

Yes...we have ..We will try our best to do it because now...not only in (country) according to the idea of the leadership of the IOC we have now the SEA [South East Asian] Games Federation. Every country have to offer 3 people, ...I am one and there are 2 other people....and now in South East Asia we have regulation day by day we have follow every country can send three person but only 2 men. ... and of course in our government we have many compulsory things to do, for instance in my sports department, or education in sport, a department in finance, a department...if choose the leader in ... my capital, about 4 or 5 very important department is women leaders...directors....and other departments we try to find the vice directors woman responsible for woman works. (Interview 24, Asia)

Even in the Parliament they have a quota system. ....[and] They are pushing very hard in the Parliament to have equal prize money. (Interview 20, Europe)

## **5.8 Differences within National Groups between Groups of Women in Access to Sport and to the NOC**

While the policy on targets of the IOC has been aimed at addressing the inequalities between men and women in respect of the Olympic movement, a number of respondents were able to point to the existence of inequities among women and reinforced the argument that it was mistaken to treat 'women' as a homogenous category.

Urban-rural, and regional, differences were often significant:

No this is only the access of sport it depends of the region. In the village it is not only the ladies .. even the boys they could not access (Interview 1, Africa)

*Secretary General:* ...the situation in [our country] is that the sport in the north is different than the sport in the south but in the last ten years five years we improve and now the difference between the north and the south keep on diminishing. .... So in the last five years the number of women increase three percent and the number of men increase 0.7 percent and also the south and the islands improve more and more quickly than the north. So we have a situation not the same in the north and the south but less different than in the past. (Interview 11, Europe)

*Interviewer:* And is there any difference between urban and rural populations?

*Secretary General:* There is a huge difference. ... Big cities...which is close to the northern part of [the southern half of the country] ... they are the cities which are more developed in terms of sport....because the awareness of people is much higher

*Interviewer:* Are you having to make special efforts for the women from rural populations?

*Secretary General:* The primary goal is to get to all these groups but they are taking the project slowly according to the feasibility ...because the financial aspect is important .... and also the awareness of people is also important. It also takes time. (Interview 25, Africa)

The most significant of the differences to be cited however were religious-based views on the appropriate nature of participation for women in sport.

While various requirements of religious observance (e.g. not competing on Sundays) may be associated with different religious world views, the position taken by Muslim groups on women's sport was the most significant in issues discussed with interviewees. It is important therefore to underline the fact that there is a significant pluralism within positions adopted by Muslim groups in regard to women in sport. It is thus as unhelpful to generalise about an Islamic position on women and sport as it would be try to incorporate Christian viewpoints from the fundamentalist right to the liberationist left, into a single 'Christian' position in relation to sport and the presentation of the body.

## 5.9 The role of Olympic Solidarity Funding<sup>3</sup>

Olympic Solidarity's 21 programmes offered during the current quadrennial provide key resources on which NOCs can draw in respect of support for women's advancement in the NOCs. These programmes include specialist funding for 'Women in Sport' initiatives, and programmes in the NOC Management area, including for example the 'Sports Administrators Training Programme' and the 'High Level Education for Sports Administrators'. Olympic Solidarity specifically encourages the promotion by NOCs of women's access to these opportunities. However one of the difficulties faced in monitoring the access of women to such resources is the difficulty of retrieving attendance records from many NOCs.

The use of Olympic Solidarity funds to support women's involvement at a whole range of levels was reported in many of the interviews. Where women's involvement was viewed as a

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the interviews provide data relating to the interviewee's perception of how the NOC used OS funds in relation to women. It would be of value to clarify the extent to which funds are used across the 21 OS programmes in respect of men and women.

key concern, Olympic Solidarity funded projects were reported as supporting aspects of women's involvement across all four of the areas it seeks to serve, athletes, NOC managers, coaches and the various special fields.

Yes we have a good relationship with Olympic Solidarity. This year we spend 10 courses Olympic Solidarity. Three courses separate for women [these courses were for] management and coaching and doping control and medical courses. Medical for women. (Interview 10, Asia)

While some interviewees reported women only provision for other areas, generally speaking separate provision tended to be limited to 'Women in Sport' programme activity, such as the IOC seminars and attendance at the world conferences.

*Secretary General:* Since we began with Olympic Solidarity we have requested once a course for training of women footballers. This was agreed to and we put on the course. But when we have a course for Olympic Solidarity whatever the speciality it is both men and women who participate in the course. We had a course in administration and it was both men and women who participate.

*Interviewer::* Was it 50/50?

*Secretary General:* No we accept those who are in the federations leagues or clubs. We say you should sign up and those who do participate in the course. (Interview 5, Africa)

While widespread use of Olympic Solidarity funds to support measures directed at achieving greater involvement of women in administration was reported, support for such measures outside the programme was limited. This may be in some cases a matter of financial limitations, or it may demonstrate a lack of commitment of the NOC to develop its own programme of activities aimed at promoting women's involvement. Nevertheless it underlines the importance of Olympic Solidarity funding to the fostering of practical measures towards equity.

The availability of funding may in some cases be a necessary condition of provision, but it is by no means sufficient condition since some NOCs are still slow or reluctant to take up the funded possibilities.

*Interviewer::* Have you accessed any funding for women at all in the projects from Olympic Solidarity?

*Secretary General:* No, but we have a proposal I think this for a women in sport project ... either late this year or early next year .... The secretary is working on it. I am not quite sure how long it is gone ... but the Assistant Secretary she just attended that programme in Montreal ... I suppose she'll come back with some ideas of how to proceed. ... (Interview 9, Americas)

Ease of access to Olympic Solidarity funding was reported as a positive factor. Generally speaking decentralisation of funding decisions was appreciated by interviewees.

*President:* ... so we manage our own funds and it is totally flexible ... so the problems are more not just kicking the administrators in the

bum, basically of the different courses all they have to do is to send me an email and we send them money ... So for us it's really easy ... Because a lot of these people just don't use it.

*Secretary General:* As [the President] says ... Olympic Solidarity is now pushing ... is based on the Oceania format which he virtually runs ... and for us it's the best thing that ever happened. ...

*President:* The best thing for us now is that the money won't go back to the IOC ... so say the Cook islands needs money for women in sports programmes and Maui doesn't use it, it won't go back into the IOC account. (Interview 8 Oceania)

However for one interviewee at least who was a new Secretary General there was some uncertainty about how the system worked. He was unaware of the training made available but recognised the importance of developing knowledge in this area.

Yeah I think Olympic Solidarity should look at it from this angle and you can make this recommendation ... for new secretary generals when they are elected they need to have two week programmes for them ... they don't have to ask, it should be part of what Olympic Solidarity should offer and say when you are elected you have two weeks, for that individual to know what to do with regard to Olympic Solidarity funds, because it's a huge amount of money, even if you have the background [in business]. (Interview 17, Africa)

There is a fine line perhaps between acknowledging the importance of Olympic Solidarity funding to the promotion of gender equity and the development of 'grant dependency', with NOC administrators seeing themselves as unable to develop programmes beyond those for which funding is provided. One interviewee for example (Interview 5, Africa) pointed out that if payment to attend course was involved, women were disadvantaged (because competition for places with men would be greater) and that therefore the solution was for Olympic Solidarity to provide a greater level of funding.

## 5.10 Summary Points Relating to the Themes Emerging from the Secretary Generals Interview Data

There is a range of themes which have emerged from the analysis of the interviews with male presidents / Secretary Generals and these are summarised below.

1. Although the establishment of the targets had served to raise consciousness of the issue of women's involvement in Executive Committees, the target had not been met by all of the interviewees' NOCs. Even where it had, 10% had been regarded as the maximum or norm rather than a minimum level to be achieved. One NOC president indicated that he felt that unless sanctions were incorporated in the system that NOCs would continue to treat the matter less seriously.
2. Several Secretary Generals highlighted the structural problem of the make up of NOCs in that the majority of the membership is made up of delegates from National Federations who are largely male. This leaves relatively few women who are delegates to the NOC Assemblies to stand for membership of the executive.
3. Expectations placed on women recruited as role models often implied high standards as elite performers, and / or high levels of academic qualifications which were not necessarily applicable to male candidates.



4. The competences sought in respect of women (as opposed to qualifications and sporting experience) were not clearly articulated and hence the training needs of new women members were difficult to establish.
5. Although the great majority of respondents recognised traditional gender roles as barriers to female participation in the work of the Executive, few looked for flexible policies through which to respond to these barriers.
6. There are dangers in treating 'women' as a homogenous group since differences among women may reflect significant sources of disadvantage (e.g. urban-rural, regional differences).
7. The respondents were positive about the decentralisation of Olympic Solidarity Funding and about the potential of Solidarity Funds to be used effectively to support women's development. However there was evidence that in practice this had been happening in only limited ways.

## Section 6

### Overview of Findings, Policy Implications and Conclusions

This final section of the report overviews the findings, considers the successes and limitations of the target approach and draws conclusions from the research. It also highlights implications of the findings for the continued implementation of policy in this area.

#### 6.1 The Success of the Targets

Perhaps the most obvious point to make is that the introduction of targets has had a clear and positive impact on the proportion of women in NOC Executive Committees. The rapid growth of the numbers of women in such positions, from a very low base, immediately after the announcement of the targets is clear both in numeric terms from the questionnaire data, and also from the observations made by women and the Secretary Generals during the interviews. Thus the target approach can be said to have had success in raising awareness of gender inequalities, in bringing talented women in to the Olympic family, and of improving Olympic governance by setting an example and providing moral leadership to the world of sport in terms of equity in representation.

The use of targets of at least 10% and 20% has the merit of providing a simple, understandable, measurable and transparent policy goal. Perhaps the only area of confusion in relation to the goal was that relating to the difference between quotas and targets, and respondents almost universally used these terms interchangeably. Notwithstanding this fact, and the implication that quotas are compulsory there was little sympathy generally for the imposition of penalties for failing to achieve "quota" or target numbers.

The importance of the leadership of the IOC in respect of addressing the issue of inequitable representation on decision making bodies should not be underestimated. Some respondents felt empowered in making demands on other sporting organisations not covered by the IOC policy simply by virtue of the IOC's position on this matter. Thus the notion of targets as a reasonable expectation in the sporting world was legitimated to some degree by the fact that the Olympic Movement had adopted such an approach.

#### 6.2 The Limitations of Targets

There are perhaps three principal limitations of the target policy evident from the data. The first is that they affect only part of the system of Olympic and sports administration. As one respondent put it there is a hierarchy from clubs at the base to regional, national and international federations, and to NOCs, Continental Olympic Associations and the IOC. One interviewee who was an IOC member and party to the evaluation of potential new candidates for the IOC itself pointed out that the NOCs are failing to recommend women for consideration as potential candidates and thus the IOC itself has restricted room for manoeuvre in terms of appointing more female members. By focusing solely on NOCs and IFs (the latter not investigated in the current project) important elements of the system are ignored. Co-opting or even electing one or more women into the NOC Executive is unlikely to have a lasting effect if the predominantly male electorate for the Executive (in the form of the NF nominees to the NOC Assemblies) is left unchanged. Thus the policy only addresses certain points in the pyramid with the result that it may not foster organic growth of the number of women in decision making positions. A long term sustainable solution to the involvement of women in executive decision making is thus likely to require work at the level of clubs and regional / national federations in addition to the NOCs and IFs per se.

The second limitation of the targets approach is that even where the targets themselves are achieved this has not necessarily led to the adoption of policy initiatives that foster women's participation in sport or in executive decision making. There is a danger that some NOCs see the achievement of targets as an end in itself rather than a means towards a more effective Executive Committee. Many NOCs have set up Women's Committees but few respondents reported much impact as yet. Guidance and advice on ways of ensuring the effectiveness of Women's Committees could be useful both to NOCs and the committees themselves.

The third limitation of the targets is that the universal percentages do not take account of the social and cultural conditions in different countries. In some countries women's equality is well accepted and advanced in all aspects of life, in others women still face significant inequalities. NOCs operate both in the context of the values of the Olympic Movement and also within the cultural conditions that exist in their own country. The targets were set to represent the minima rather than maxima, but several NOCs appeared to regard them as a ceiling to be attained rather than a base from which to build. Others were justly proud that they had exceeded the targets by a considerable amount. There is scope for further emphasis of the desirability for NOCs to strive to achieve higher levels of equality in their governance structures from whatever base they start.

### 6.3 The Recruitment Process

The interviews with women in particular highlighted the importance of both encouragement / sponsorship of candidates by senior figures within the NOC who showed the belief in their ability to do the job, and also the importance of female role models. A number of women were co-opted before being subsequently elected but the male interviews suggest that the Secretary Generals were largely unaware of the critical importance of encouragement by experienced NOC members. It is ironic that given the very well qualified nature of the female members that they should be less confident than some of their male counterparts, but being the first, or among the first women to submit to election from a predominantly male electorate can be daunting. Knowing the difference that such encouragement or sponsorship has made to women who are successfully contributing to the work of their NOC Executives may be helpful in promoting the active sponsorship of candidates by experienced members of the NOCs.

Two thirds of NOCs reported taking special measures to recruit women and one third reported not having attempted any measures. Measures adopted by NOCs to recruit women included policies of reserving places for women, establishing quotas (Norway was particularly prominent in this respect having established required quotas of 40% for all NFs as well as the NOC Executive), diktat from the NOC President, as well as holding seminars and workshops with prospective female candidates, and targeting and persuading potential candidates. Clearly these latter measures, from what has already been indicated, though informal, provide important stimuli for women to come forward for election / co-option. A minority of NOCs reported not having attempted any measures and one indicated a backlash when attempts to vote through special measures had been rejected by the NOC.

The Secretary Generals suggested three principal reasons for failure to recruit. The first was that the NFs supplied no female candidates. The second was that women had other preoccupations or obligations and were therefore unwilling to submit themselves, The third was that their Boards were unwilling to take special measures. Clearly the use of informal methods of identifying candidates, showing confidence in their potential as candidates and talking through how NOC Executive members dovetail NOC and other responsibilities may help, to some degree, in addressing these problems. There is no doubt that special measures have been effective for those NOCs that have adopted them. NOCs that have not yet met the 10% minimum target could learn from the experiences of NOCs that have taken special measures, both formal and informal, to successfully recruit women Executive Committee members.

## 6.4 The Nature of Women Recruited to NOC Executives

The data for the study provides a clear indication of the quality of the cohort of women recruited. They are very well educated as a group (66% had degrees and / or teaching qualifications). They are very busy (63% of the questionnaire sample had jobs 48% of them full time) and many have family obligations also. Indeed where traditional patterns of household labour prevailed life could be very pressured and many women referred to the fact that support from partners and family was crucial to allowing them to make a significant contribution in the world of sport. They also include a disproportionate number of elite athletes (46% had competed for their country in international competition). They were on the whole very hard working (General Secretaries indicated that 51% of the women on their Executives were in the top quartile in terms of the most active members of their Executives, 78% in the top half). This is also borne out in the qualitative comments of both male and female interviewees. Many of the women also came from a professional background in which valuable transferable skills had been developed.

Thus the introduction of the targets policy has helped to unlock the source of a skilled, educated, and committed workforce which has considerable potential to grow.

## 6.5 The Impact of Women on NOC Executives and Difficulties Experienced

Sixty four percent of women and 71% of Secretary Generals perceived that the work women did in the NOCs was largely or solely concerned with general rather than women's issues, although half of the women served on Women's committees. Both men and women reported that the impact of women's committees had yet to be felt and there is clearly work to be done to ensure these committees ( many of which have been established very recently) are effective.

Though some questionnaire respondents argued that women's contributions were simply the same as men's, a majority of the female interviewees and a number of questionnaire respondents ( male and female) suggested that having women on Executive Committees kept policy concerns of women and sport to the fore, influencing on-going policy debates.

In terms of style, some female respondents also argued that women were more adept at certain aspects of the work – working collectively, thinking more about policy values (policy effectiveness) than simply about costs (policy efficiency), promoting their arguments in less confrontational styles etc. Such outcomes are rather nebulous and difficult to evidence, but are nonetheless significant in terms of the effectiveness of the committee in promoting appropriate policy outcomes, as well as in terms of the 'quality of life' on committees and executives.

Women experienced a number of difficulties in working on Olympic Committees. Where traditional patterns of household labour prevailed, life could be very pressurised and many women referred to the fact that support from families and partners was crucial to allowing them to make a significant contribution to the world of sport. Some had made huge sacrifices to their personal lives in the service of sport. A number of women interviewees referred to the frustrations they experienced caused by unequal treatment within the NOC where apparently less qualified male members were given preference for responsible posts or as delegates to conferences.

## 6.6 Training, Support, Networking and the Promotion of Good Practice

Major sources of policy ideas on the development of women and sport were seen to grow directly out of the IOC organised regional seminars and other international forums on Women and Sport. These meetings provided two critical ingredients for the development of policy – a source of policy ideas for from other contexts which may be adapted and reshaped for local application elsewhere, but also as a source for promoting confidence and creating networks among women who may often be working alone or in small numbers on the Executive Committees. The importance of providing moral support for women seeking to make a contribution as a minority in the context of their own organisation should not be taken lightly. Time and again the women interviewed referred to the importance of confidence in relation to their willingness to submit themselves for election, and in relation to their willingness to speak out in promoting policies for women and for the general population. It was equally clear from the feedback of Secretary Generals that while they understood the significance of the Women in Sport conferences and seminars for promoting policy ideas, the issues of confidence building, and networking were not always fully appreciated.

The nature of the training needs cited by women was not unexpected. Management, sports administration, technical skills (sports law, sports medicine, coaching) were mentioned together with the need to learn about successful initiatives elsewhere. However a key element of the training and support requested was the exchange of ideas in seminars and workshops etc (rather than the passive receipt of ideas) such that networks might be established and maintained. Internet communication could be built into these initiatives to allow networking and mutual support groups to flourish outside the context of face-to-face meetings. Such networks might require some (light touch) management but would have the potential to capitalise on the investment made in training

While the IOC Women and Sport seminars have been a very important means of support in facilitating confidence building and networking among women, it may be appropriate to consider organising seminars that include more men in the future. Several respondents pointed out that if gender issues are to become mainstream concerns and real progress made, men and women must work together to take responsibility for promoting gender equality in sport. So far women's awareness and understanding of gender issues has been raised through training but there has been limited engagement of men.

In terms of building from the base the Sports Administration Manual produced by Olympic Solidarity contains germane material in relation to Women and Sport. The prominence given to material in national courses is however variable since NOCs run their own courses and determine content on the basis of their view of local need. One way of ensuring that more exposure is given to these issues would be to ensure that in 'training the trainers', the national course co-ordinators, emphasis is given to the importance of gender equity. Olympic Solidarity records of male / female attendance at such courses are dependent on the conscientiousness of NOCs in keeping and filing attendance records. Nevertheless, despite decentralisation of decision-making to Continental Associations, consideration could be given to the establishing of incentives for gender equity in recruitment to such courses.

## 6.7 Cultural Values and Religious Differences

As previously stated, there are significant challenges in implementing a single target approach to representation across the entire spectrum of cultural contexts in which NOCs operate. Among the questionnaire respondents and the interviewees there was a huge variation of attitudes to women in Olympic governance. It must also be remembered that though the questionnaire return rates were respectable for this type of research, it is likely that there are a number of countries and NOCs that have chosen not to engage either with the research or the IOC policy. Continuing to implement the policy in a way that is sensitive to

cultural differences but which still acknowledges the principle of gender equality and the desirability of women in decision making positions will continue to be a challenge.

While it was acknowledged by respondents that religious differences were significant there were also important intra-group variations which could be more significant than inter-group contrasts.

## **6.8 Next Steps**

The research has provided evidence of the way in which the policy targets have been successful, and sought the views of those most involved in its implementation – women Executive Committee members and NOC Secretary Generals. Many examples of good practice have been identified. Dissemination of the findings of the research should assist the Olympic Movement in the continued implementation and development of the policy. The areas in which further work would seem appropriate include work with Continental Olympic Associations of NOCs, Women's Committees of NOCs, and other members of the Olympic family, in particular International and National Federations. It is hoped the experiences of those who have contributed to the research as respondents will assist in taking forward this work and be used to help NOCs achieve and exceed the 20% minimum target in the months leading up to December 2005.