

## **The Östersund Declaration**

### **A Joint Commitment to a Strengthened Athlete Pathway in Para Winter Sports**

Representatives of 26 National Paralympic Committees (NPC) and National Federations (NF), 3 International Federations (IF) and 5 IPC Sports conclude during a workshop in Östersund 22 – 24 April 2016 on a number of measures needed for a strengthened athlete pathway in winter sports, leading to an increased recruitment, more participating athletes and better results in sports.

#### **Background**

The workshop came up as a response to the Strategic Plan of the International Paralympic Committee 2015 – 2018 and beyond to consolidate the Paralympic Winter Games as a premier sporting event and to empower athletes and support the development of para winter sports.

A survey was held to get a better picture of the actual status of the para winter sports. 23 Participants responded on the survey and the results were used as a basis for discussion during the workshop.

The workshop was presented to the IPC as a gift during its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by the County Administration of Jämtland, the city of Östersund, Mid Sweden University and NPC Sweden.

#### **Orientation**

*The participants;*

**Recall** the present Strategic Plan of the International Paralympic Committee

**Note** that the Paralympic Movement on the one hand provides a Paralympic Games that are of the highest standard and that, on the other hand, consists of NPCs and IFs that often face challenges in quality of programmes, quantity of number of athletes, lack of financial and human resources

**Endorse** the ongoing work done by the IPC, IFs, NPCs and NFs to raise the number of athletes and improve quality of support to athletes in their development

**Acknowledge** the need for an effort to increase the number of girls, young women and women participating in para winter sport,

**Recognise** the importance of providing para winter sport opportunities for all individuals with an impairment

**Stress** that growth and expansion of para winter sport starts with a multi-sports grassroots approach including a focus on the individual, providing a wide range of fun and play para sport activities and opportunities for later specialisation

**Support** the ambition to expand the sports programme of the Paralympic Winter Games

#### **Call for action**

*The participants;*

**Respecting** the various roles of the below organisations

**Call** upon the NPCs and NFs

- To establish, and continuously develop, formats for recruitment, meeting individuals with an impairment from all the society, offering opportunities to try different para sports
- To establish partnerships with the surrounding society (including schools, health care, local government, social authorities, businesses, research providers) and offer through them opportunities for para sports
- To secure para sport activities across the country, providing a pathway from fun and play activities all the way up to international elite
- To develop cooperation with able-bodied sport federations offering fully integrated events, education and awareness raising for para sports
- To create international regional cooperation in delivering para winter sport programs
- To provide a framework to address education, research and measuring results

### Call upon the IFs

- To secure a good understanding of the situation of its para sport in all levels of the federation and provide support where it is required
- To provide an expanded competition calendar of events with high quality, preferably by encouraging merged able-bodied events and para sport events,
- To cooperate with other IFs in offering multisport events
- To continuously provide, and further develop, sports specific, evidence based classification
- To initiate and promote research and development to support NFs to grow the number of athletes in the para sport
- To have a plan to support nations to develop para winter sports

### Call upon the IPC

- To establish a framework of continuous development of para winter sport by providing regular dialogues between the IPC, NPCs/NFs, IFs and other stakeholders in para winter sport
- To develop tools to support IFs, NPCs and NFs to strengthen organisational capacity for para sport, including guidelines for successful integration of para sport in able-bodied structures
- To lead integration processes and clarify roles and responsibilities between the IPC, IFs, NPCs and NFs
- To take the lead in the formulating a ten-year action plan, based on this declaration, in dialogue with IFs, NPCs, NFs and other stakeholders
- To provide a multi-sport opportunity, including Paralympic and non-Paralympic winter sports, involving the best of the elite as well as providing opportunities for development for young and new athletes
- To use Paralympic Winter Games media attention to lever other events and by that increase sponsor opportunities for all parties

### Call upon third parties

- To establish partnerships with the para sport for improved health and participation for individuals with an impairment
- To provide accessible facilities and events for winter sports, research and development, and support in reaching out to the target groups for para sport
- To develop programmes and structures for the development of equipment for para sport, and for making it available for all athletes
- To improve the economic and social framework for the development of para sport

## Conclusion

*The participants;*

**Express** their gratitude for the efforts put into this Declaration by all parties

**Declare** its commitment to realise the actions described in the declaration by putting forward this Declaration for formal endorsement through their respective governing bodies no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016

**Bring** this Declaration to other NPCs and NFs to seek their endorsement

**Commit** to monitor the progress of work outlined in this Declaration by meeting again

**Thank** the IPC, the Region of Jämtland-Härjedalen, the City of Östersund, the Mid-Sweden University, NPC Sweden, Parasport Jämtland-Härjedalen, the Jämtland-Härjedalen District of the Swedish Sports Confederation and Peak Innovation for all the efforts put into making this Declaration possible

Östersund 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016