

IWF Women's Commission Report
Almaty, KAZ - November 2014

The IWF Women's Commission was formed in August 2013 and due to circumstance, which I will touch on with recommendations further in this report, we have yet to meet. A very small group of us will meet here in Almaty. It must be noted that it was not without great efforts that we endeavored to be a full complement. That said and although the Commission has never formally met this does not mean we have been less attentive in getting the message of the women's weightlifting out to the international sport community and the general public.

As stated publically via my IWF Magazine (Spring 2013) interview, I affirmed the areas which I wanted to focus my energies as Chair of the IWF Women's Commission. Some of those areas noted in this report are the steps we, as a sport, and myself, as an individual have or will take. A few key areas have progressed on target and are noted below.

Firstly, a seemingly easy focus of mine was to link our sport with a network of likeminded organizations thereby creating an affiliation community. Within this effort, our greatest asset has been social media and the current global trend of women in sport. My social media attention has been on the Twitter platform. Daily on Twitter, an individual sees multiple stories about women in sport which I, or others, incorporate weightlifting within story lines, imagery, and video or vines. All this, as well as for us, the added benefit of our sport getting a 'twofer', meaning a two for one benefit from the Cross-Fit community. The Women in Sport movement, which essentially started via second-wave feminism has skyrocketed through third-wave feminism and we, as a sport, benefit greatly by this compounded messaging of weightlifting. As a sport we categorically state that women compete in weightlifting; women coach weightlifting; women officiate weightlifting; women administer weightlifting; and women govern weightlifting.

As an example of the outreach that this type of social media presence has, by both blatant and insidious promotion, from my own personal Twitter account (@moiralassen) where it states that I am both an IWF Executive Board member as well as IWF Women's Commission Chair, I engage with the following fourteen organizations culminating in the accessing of 53,631 individuals/organizations. The 50k plus engagement has a multiplier effect as the listed individuals/organizations followers are also potentially engaged; this reach is incalculable.

- ✓ @WomenSportsNet
- ✓ @Women and Sport
- ✓ @Women & Sport
- ✓ @AusWomenSport
- ✓ @WomenSportsNews
- ✓ @AnitaWhiteFoundation
- ✓ @ScottishWomeninSport
- ✓ @WomeninSportBC
- ✓ @WISIBlog
- ✓ @Sport Canada
- ✓ @Sport Europe
- ✓ @Sport Australia
- ✓ @Sport Asia
- ✓ @Sport India

As well, our messaging has a social development twist as I comment, regarding greater societal messages, such as the International Women's Day and most recently the International Day of the Girl. (*See below*)

Oct 10

As Chair of the [@iwfn](#) Women's Commission I wish the world a Happy International Day of the Girl! [#IDG2014](#) [#weightlifting](#) [@Wsnet](#) [@UN_Women](#)

The messages are clear and concise, and culminated with the second screen generation, the message is constant.

Secondly, last July, a report entitled 'Gender Balance in Global Sport' was released, many recommendations were provided by the authors, one of which, not surprisingly is 'lead by example'; a message I continually promote. With that, I encourage all IWF Member Federations, Continental Federations as well as Regional Federations to adopt the same practice as, or use as a guide given your own governance model, the **IWF Election of Executive Board Members**. The principle remains the same; women hold up 50% of the sky, it takes leadership to ensure they are holding their fair share.

8.2.6 Election of Executive Board Members:

The IWF encourages the presence of women within the bodies of the Federation. Therefore, if none of the people elected as President, General Secretary Treasurer, 1st Vice President and Vice Presidents is a woman, the first of the eight (8) Executive Board Member positions shall be attributed in preference to a woman. To that effect, only female candidatures shall be admitted to take part in a first round of vote regarding the first of the eight (8) positions of the Executive Board. If there is only one (1) female candidate, such candidate shall be tacitly elected. If there is more than one (1) female candidate, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. If there is no female candidate, then the eight (8) remaining seats of the Executive Board shall be attributed in accordance with the rule below.

My personal congratulations and gratitude to those Federations who have taken this responsibility to heart and have committed to the advancement of our sport by enabling women's voices to be heard at the decision making table.

Thirdly, weightlifting has developed exceptionally well in recent years with the increase of women as athletes ranging in the 40 percentile for participation. And as I continually mention, we must increase our female presence in the areas of coaching, officiating and decision making roles. That said, before we get to where we want to go, we must know where we are. Engaging with the world of academia, it is my objective to involve two or three Professors and their upstarts to locate where we are. By this, I mean, enable research of statistical analysis, research of written publications with 'untruths' regarding women weightlifting, including our own IWF resources, as well as, psycho-social factors for women and girls participating in the sport. Discussions are continuing with interested colleagues situated internationally at a variety of reputable universities.

As an aside, grippingly and most recently we have seen Women's Tennis Association Tour (WTA) lead by Canadian CEO & Chair, Ms Stacey Allaster, fine IOC member Shamil Tarpishev (RUS) \$25 000 USD and suspend him for a year

for “*allegedly making sexist and insulting remarks about the Williams sisters during a television interview*”. This action, and the subsequent still ongoing reaction of the IOC, is a watershed moment for women in sport and the Olympic movement as a whole. Ms Allaster is holding the leadership to task; an extremely brave move. All sport watches closely on the outcome of this matter.

(Also for note, on October 25 the President of the Professional Golf Association (PGA) was removed from his role due to “insensitive gender-based statements” via social media regarding one of their players) There is a pattern developing which we all must be aware of.

Finally, the reason which the IWF Women’s Commission has not currently met, to date, is largely financial constraints for the Commission members. A recommendation to ensure that the IWF Women’s Commission is an active and contributing body is to allocate a budget line item to ensure that the IWF Women’s Commission members; Karoliina Lundahl (FIN), Celsa Alvarez (ESP), Pawina Thongsuk (THA), Gardencia Du Plooy (RSA), Oxana Solonenko (RUS) are able to attend, at minimum, one meeting per year. The fascinating paradox for the IWF Women’s Commission is that this group of individuals comes from the most underrepresented, non-positions of power as well as traditionally societies lowest paid ranks. It is difficult to effect change when an individual is unable to get to the influencing table in the first instance. Allocating a budget line item will safeguard the face-to-face meetings moving forward.

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