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Media Release

IPC Decides on Participation of Athletes with Intellectual Disability

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – During the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the IPC membership today decided in favour of the re-inclusion of athletes with an intellectual disability (ID athletes) in competitions, including the Paralympic Games.

Said IPC President Sir Philip Craven: “Today’s achievement is the outcome of a unique and excellent co-operation between sports governance and the scientific community. I want to thank all parties involved, especially the scientists, for their contribution and commitment over the last two years”.

“I wish all ID athletes the best of success in their attempt to set world class performances at future Paralympic Games.” he continued.

This decision opens the participation of ID athletes in Paralympic Sport in a two-step process. At first, the procedure of classification will require the submission of the appropriate medical files to the INAS-FID International Eligibility Committee for review.

Once an application is approved by this Committee, INAS-FID will issue a letter to the athlete stating the athlete is found ‘eligible’ and is allowed to proceed to the next step of the classification process. The athlete then will proceed to on-site testing by a classification panel, appointed by the International Federation which governs that sport. The on-site testing will focus on ‘sports intelligence’, and will include tests relevant to that particular sport.

Test scores will be evaluated against sport-specific minimal disability scores and the athlete will be allocated the sport class that applies to ID athletes in a particular sport.

As of this autumn, no sport-specific minimal disability scores are available yet. This requires the full analysis of all data collected from the 2009 INAS-FID Global Games and other competitions, and it is expected that criteria will be made available mid 2010.

It is guaranteed that the ID Athlete Classification System is developed in accordance with the IPC Classification Code, has an evidence-based methodology, and thus strengthens the decisions on the right for ID athletes to be included in a particular sport.

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As a consequence, ID athletes will from now on be eligible to compete at the discretion of the International Federation being operationally ready with the classification system.

The President of INAS-FID, Bob Price, said: "Naturally, I am delighted with the outcome of the vote. Even though they themselves did nothing wrong, for nine years since Sydney 2000, ID athletes have been excluded from the Paralympic Games and other IPC sanctioned competitions".

"This resolution brings this unfortunate episode to an end and re-introduces ID athletes to their proper place within the Paralympic Family. I am hugely grateful to the Joint Working Group and its associated research teams and I look forward to seeing ID athletes competing on the world's stage in London in 2012," Mr. Price commented.

Paralympic sports that target the inclusion of ID athletes in future events and competitions, should extend their classification system on the basis of the above model.

The decision on the events to be included in a competition will be made in accordance with the set forth provisions. This is for the determination of that competition's medal events and the respective qualification criteria, which is no different than any other event for any athlete. The inclusion of ID athletes will not reduce the number of athletes from other classes in events at the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

Notes to the Editor:

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is the global governing body of the Paralympic Movement. The IPC organizes the Summer and Winter Paralympic Games, and serves as the International Federation for nine sports, for which it supervises and co-ordinates the World Championships and other competitions. The IPC is committed to enabling Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and to developing sport opportunities for all persons with a disability from the beginner to elite level. In addition, the IPC aims to promote the Paralympic values, which include courage, determination, inspiration and equality.

Founded on 22 September 1989, the IPC is an international non-profit organization formed and run by 162 National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) from five regions and four disability specific international sports federations (IOSDs). The IPC Headquarters and its management team are located in Bonn, Germany.

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