



## **International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability**

### **PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2008**

#### **Introduction**

Since my last newsletter in February, there have been meetings of both Executive and Technical Committees; championships in athletics, cross country, cycling and tennis; and a second meeting of the joint INAS/IPC working group, seeking the re-inclusion of athletes with intellectual disabilities in future Paralympic Games.

Clearly, there is a lot happening, but equally clearly there is a lot still to be done and, as I intimated in February, there is an urgent need to engage the WHOLE membership (and not just the Executive) in leading INAS-FID towards a better future.

#### **Executive and Technical Committees**

As next year's Global Games will take place in Liberec, it was really useful that, in April, our Czech colleagues were able to host meetings of both Executive and Technical Committees. During this time it was possible for both committees to meet separately; to undertake a joint 'site visit' to the Global Games facilities in and around Liberec; and to meet together on matters of common interest.

In separate sessions, the Executive was able to concentrate on membership, finance, strategy and constitution, whilst the Technical Committee focused on the events calendar and sports development. Meeting together provided an opportunity for both groups to consider the handbook, the Global Games, progress towards the inclusion of ID athletes in the Paralympic Games of London 2012 and what I have come to describe as 'sharing the load' (see below).

With luck, the next meeting of the Executive will take place in Rome during November, to co-incide with Italy's hosting of INAS-FID's world basketball championships.

#### **INAS Handbook**

During recent months, considerable progress has been made in our efforts to ensure that the INAS Handbook is accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date. For this, I am grateful to Tony Guihot, Jos Mulder, Karon Nicol and Geoff Smedley, the last of whom has agreed to lead this project towards its proper conclusion. Early drafts have been reviewed and amended and a revised draft has been circulated for comment. The intention now is for an entirely new version of the Handbook to be produced in time for ratification at next year's General Assembly.

## **Global Games**

As you know already, the next Global Games will take place at Liberec, in the Czech Republic, from Sunday 05 to Tuesday 14 July 2009. The sports to be contested will include athletics, basketball, cycling, futsal, judo, swimming, table-tennis and tennis and the organisers are expecting in the region of 2,000 competitors from at least 20 countries.

The local organising committee is led by Alena Erlebachova and the INAS games liaison group is chaired by Bengt Lindstedt. Recent site visits made a positive impression on Executive and Technical Committee members alike and all member nations are advised to put these dates in the diary and, if you have not already done so, to start preparing your team!

## **Paralympic Games**

Although this summer's Paralympic Games in Beijing will, once again, be contested without the participation of athletes with intellectual disabilities, it is essential that INAS-FID is visible at the Games and, to this end, it will be represented by me as President, Bengt Lindstedt as Vice-President and Geoff Smedley as President (Europe).

Immediately before the Games, Beijing also plays host to the next meeting of IPC's Governing Board. I have already suggested to IPC that this would be an excellent opportunity for me to present a progress report on joint INAS/IPC efforts to secure the re-inclusion of ID athletes in Paralympic Games in time for London 2012 and I am optimistic that a formal invitation will be received shortly.

At the time of writing, the joint INAS/IPC working group has met twice, with a third meeting scheduled for late July/early August. I remain encouraged by the commitment of both organisations and all members of the working group to enabling athletes with intellectual disability to participate in the Paralympic Games of London 2012. The group has a clear perception of what is required and an action plan is being prepared that anticipates the re-inclusion of ID athletes in IPC-sanctioned events from the beginning of 2009. With luck, my next newsletter, following my visit to Beijing, will be able to confirm significant progress in a number of related areas.

## **Sharing the load**

I mentioned in my last newsletter that, one year on, I was concerned by the number of problems, weaknesses and challenges (quite apart from our Paralympic Games exclusion) that still require urgent attention. I developed this theme further at the last Executive meeting and I am pleased to be able to announce that the following commitments have been made by individual members of the Executive:

Database	Karon Nicol
Fundraising	Katalin Gruiz
Global Games	Bengt Lindstedt
Handbook	Geoff Smedley
Paralympic Games	Bob Price
Registration	Karon Nicol
Strategy	Bob Price

In future newsletters, I hope to be able to report on progress within each of these areas. However, I cannot emphasize too strongly the need for greater involvement in the determination of INAS-FID's future by the entire membership. Unfortunately, even now I am unsure what form this extra commitment might take and I would welcome suggestions from any part of the membership on how this situation can be improved.

## **Communication**

Despite biennial General Assemblies, bi-annual Executive meetings, quarterly newsletters and an ever-growing website, I still hear indirectly of complaints that our members do not know what is being done on their behalf. Communication is a two-way process and I am unsure whether I should be pleased or concerned that, after 15 months as President, I have received not a single comment from any member organisation on the content of these newsletters. If you have views on the adequacy of our championship programme, the quality of our website or the progress being made towards re-inclusion of our athletes within the Paralympic Games, please ... let me know what you think.

## **General Assembly 2009**

So far, there has been only one expression of interest in hosting next year's General Assembly: from Puerto Rico. If other countries are also interested in hosting what is a very important event in the INAS calendar, they (and Puerto Rico) should notify the Secretariat formally and in writing.

With very best wishes ...

**Bob Price**  
**President INAS-FID**