London 2012: An Historic Step Towards Gender Equality

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IOC announces all nations – including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Brunei Darussalam – to send female athletes to Olympic Games for first time in history

Saudi Arabia:

Training shots of Sarah Attar training at Triton Track and field stadium at University of California, San Diego, USA she will be competing in the 800 metres competition in London 2012

IV “A big inspiration for participation in the 2012 Olympics for me, is being one of the first women for Saudi Arabia to be going – it is such a huge honour and I hope that it can really make some good strides for women over there to get more involved in the sport”

“I definitely think that my participation in this Olympic games can increase women’s participation in sports in general - I can only hope for the best for them and that we can get some good strides going for women in the Olympics and just in sports in general”

“To any women who want to participate I say go for it and don’t let anyone hold you back – we all have the potential to get out there and get moving so I just really think we should do the best we can”

Qatar:

Training shots of Bahiya Al-Hamad. Bahia who will be competing in the shooting competition at London 2012
Shots Bahia studying in library
Shots Bahia shooting

IV Bahiya Al-Hamad: (Arabic) ”Any Championship I participate in , whether Arabic or Gulf championship, I feel that I represent Qatar and that I have to achieve something that makes my country and parents proud of me”

IV Bahiya Al-Hamad: “Each female athlete has a dream that she wants to achieve. I had a dream and I made it to the Olympics, so I hope all the other athletes that have a dream that God helps them and they get to fulfill it as well.”

Training shots of Nada Arakji who will be competing in the swimming competition at London 2012.
IV Nada Arakji (in pool) : “Everything happened so fast, it is like a dream as when I was younger I always said to myself – Oh I wish I could be in the Olympics, and look at me now- I am very happy”

IV Nada Arakji (outside pool) : “It is pretty tough – I train every day – 6 times a week for 2 hours except for Fridays and I think closer to the time I am going to train twice a day so in the morning as well as the afternoon.- so I think 4hrs in total plus lung training, I do lung training now but I am sure it is going to get tougher at the time.

Brunei Darussalam:

Training shots of Maziah Mahusin who will be competing in the athletics competition at London 2012
IV Maziah Mahusin: "I feel very proud of myself and I feel honoured for being the first female athlete to represent my country for the Olympic Games and it is like being Ambassador for my country."

"The main reason to take part in London 2012 is that I want to make history for my country in Brunei for being the first female athlete to represent my country for the Olympics and I am looking forward to set my new record for my personal best and also for Brunei."

Interview Jacques Rogge – President of the IOC (English and French)

English:

"It is very important because it is a human right – women have the right to practice sport and they want to practice, they love sport, they are attracted to sport and we must make sure that barriers are broken down."

"Well we have a good dialogue with them and we were able to persuade them to send women to the Games and this is a very important decision because it is a very symbolic one: these are the first women of these countries to participate in the Games and they will be seen in the home countries as role models and more will follow of course."

"So we were able to revise the number of women in sport from 10% in Amsterdam 1928 Games to 44% in Beijing, we believe that within a decade or maybe 20 years there will be gender equality at the Olympic Games – so that is the first part, The second part is that we have supported together with National structures the emancipation of Women in many many countries, we have also done a lot of education of women coaches, women trainers, womens sport administrators, and this has brought good results."

French

"Écoutez, c'est un début, c'est un début qui va donner un signal très fort dans le pays concerné. Je crois que le meilleur exemple est celui de notre collègue du CIO, Nawal El Moutawakel qui a été championne olympique du 400 mètres haies à Los Angeles en 1984, c'était la première musulmane à gagner une médaille d'or, c'était la première femme marocaine à gagner une médaille. Elle a eu un retentissement extraordinaire non seulement dans son pays, mais dans le monde arabe. Ça a véritablement ouvert le sport à la participation féminine."

"Nous investissons beaucoup dans la formation des futurs dirigeants sportifs féminins. Nous faisons des cours pour entraîneurs, pour, pour l'encadrement, et aussi des cours pour, administrateurs du sport. Et ensuite nous adaptons le programme olympique, toute épreuve masculine, et son pendant féminin. Et nous avons fait beaucoup de progrès en la matière. Nous avions 18% de femmes qui ont participé aux Jeux de Moscou en 1980, nous étions à plus de 44% à Pékin."

Archive Material:

Fanny Blankers-Koen - Won the women's 100m, 200m, 80m hurdles at the London Olympics in 1948, 1999, was voted Female Athlete of the Century

Wilma Rudolph - Winner of ladies 100m & 200m sprints at Rome Olympics 1960
Overcame polio to become an Olympic sprint champion.

Nadia Comaneci - the first gymnast in Olympic history to be awarded the perfect score of 10.0 for her performance on the uneven bars at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games
She went on to record the perfect 10.0 six more times and became the youngest all-around Olympic gold medallist ever.
Nawal El Moutawakel - Gold Medalist 1984 Los Angeles Games in Womens 400m
First woman from an Islamic nation to win an Olympic medal and the first Moroccan athlete of either sex to win a gold medal

Hassiba Boulmerka - Gold Medalist 1992 Olympics Barcelona. Had to train away from her homeland Algeria during the civil war there

Ghada Shouaa - Gold Medalist - Women's Heptathlon 1996 Olympics Atlanta
Won first and only ever Gold medal for Syria

Cathy Freeman - Silver Medalist - Women's 400m, 1996 Olympics Atlanta, Gold Medalist - Women's 400 m, 2000 Olympics Sydney. Cathy, an Australian Aborigine raised the profile of indigenous peoples worldwide and made an indelible mark on women’s athletics.

Footage of young athletes from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Brunei Darussalam competing at the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, 2010

Dalma Malhas, Saudi Arabia competing in the Youth Olympic Games Singapore 2010
Bahiy a Al-Hamad Qatar, at the Youth Olympic Games Singapore 2010
Shaden Wohdan, Qatar, at the Youth Olympic Games Singapore 2010
Maziah Mahusin, Brunei Darussalam, at the Youth Olympic Games Singapore 2010

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