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Olympic Summit Principles Helpful ... But Not Sufficient

“Protecting clean athletes is an absolute priority for the entire Olympic Movement.” So begins the Declaration of the 5th Olympic Summit which took place yesterday, October 8, 2016, in Lausanne. However, the Declaration is not sufficient to achieve that aspiration.

Said Joseph de Pencier, CEO of the Institute of National Anti-Doping Organisations: “The International Olympic Committee’s track record since the release of the McLaren Report has only confounded the global anti-doping system. With this latest Declaration, the IOC only comes part way to restoring its credibility for the clean athletes of the world.”

Constructive principles are stated in the Declaration, such as the requirement for anti-doping to be independent, enhanced funding for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), improved support for whistleblowers, WADA to maintain and enhance its regulatory role with strengthened governance, more clarity in anti-doping organisation roles and responsibilities, and more standardised testing among IFs to produce better anti-doping equality for athletes around the world. All this is encouraging, even if the devil will be in the detail.

But the positive aspects of the Declaration are overshadowed by several troubling omissions, including:

- Nothing explicit about state-sponsored doping in Russia, or about the moral responsibility of the IOC to push Russian sport and sport leaders to necessary cultural change in that country for genuinely protecting clean sport.
- Nothing acknowledging the findings of the McLaren Report as demonstrable facts and not mere allegations.
- Nothing deploring the Fancy Bear cyber-attacks (which of course started against the IOC’s Rio ADAMS account and not against WADA) and the illegal abuse of the privacy of clean athletes.

Moreover, further principles contained in the Declaration will need to be clarified to be useful. For example:

- “A new anti-doping testing authority within the framework of WADA to be established.”
 - This must mean under WADA’s regulatory jurisdiction, which should go without saying. However, some will see this as a call for WADA to operate a new testing unit. But it would be a clear conflict of interest for WADA to do so and then regulate

its own operations.

- “The anti-doping system to be more independent from national interests. WADA to be given stronger authority over National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs).”
 - WADA already has extensive authority to oversee NADOs, as well as International Federation and Major Event Organisation anti-doping programmes, when it comes to compliance with the World Anti-Doping Code (Code). If what the IOC means is that WADA should have the authority to deal with state-sponsored doping, and how it corrupts a national anti-doping program, and what the Russian state did to the Russian NADO, then iNADO agrees whole-heartedly. But why not say so to make it clear that WADA should have this additional jurisdiction? Why not propose specific changes to the Code to make this a reality?

So the IOC has taken some steps in the right direction – but other steps are needed urgently. If, as expected, the second report from Professor Richard McLaren details considerably more conclusive evidence of the corruption of Russian anti-doping, then it will be even clearer that the IOC has much more to do to protect clean athletes “as an absolute priority.”

iNADO is the international member association of NADOs. NADOs have the sole and unequivocal mandate to protect clean athletes, without conflicting responsibilities such as promoting sport. iNADO's 59 Members represent all Olympic Regions and conduct the majority of anti-doping work world-wide each year.

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iNADO is the Institute of National Anti-Doping Organisations. It promotes best practices by NADOs and RADOs, and is their international voice.