



IASI GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF THE IASI PRESIDENT 1997-2001

It is with mixed emotion that I table this Presidential Report to the General Assembly. On the one hand I am presenting the report with sadness as it will be the last Presidential Report which I will table as my term as President comes to an end, yet on the other hand I present this report with a great deal of happiness and satisfaction as I reflect on what IASI has been able to achieve during the past four years.

For an organization which operates on a purely voluntary basis, in all parts of the world, on a limited financial basis and in these rapidly changing times, particularly in the field of information, IASI has had a remarkable record of achievement in all of its key areas of activity.

At the last General Assembly meeting in Paris in 1997 IASI established a Working Program with 4 key objectives, so it is appropriate for my report to assess the performance of the Association against these key objectives and to highlight some of our achievements.

Objective 1: To Service the needs of the IASI members through an efficiently administered Association which provides regular communication and professional development for members.

Over the past 4 years IASI has had the services of an exceptional Secretariat in Mr Albert Remans who has maintained IASI's records in a meticulous fashion, who has managed IASI's financial resources and ensured efficient and regular communication with the membership and those organizations that have a relationship with IASI. Through the efforts of Albert Remans I am pleased to say that the administration of IASI's affairs has been efficient and exceptional.

Services for the members of IASI have been improved through greater use of email and through the introduction of credit card payment facilities. The IASI Bulletin has been regularly distributed through hard copy and electronic means with the use of the listserv and the placement of current and past issues of the Bulletin on the IASI website.

A key focus for IASI in the last 4 years has been the development of the IASI website as a communication tool, the website is now accessible in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese thanks to the work of dedicated IASI members who have worked towards universal accessibility of the website. The Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC) has provided invaluable assistance in developing the overall IASI website which now operates under its own domain name www.iasi.org.

The IASI Listserv so ably maintained by the Wingate Institute continues to provide a valuable communication service to the increasing number of members who have access to the internet. With this tool members are able to provide assistance to each other and to provide updates on specific activities and resources.

Face to face communication for IASI members has been facilitated through meetings in Europe, Asia, North America and South America. All of these meetings have been highly successful and each has incorporated an element of professional development activity whether that was through an accompanying seminar or observations of practices in sport information management. The fact that IASI meetings have been held in 4 continents reflects the growing internationalisation of the Association and has provided an opportunity to expose the activities of the Association to a wider group of people with an interest in sport information.

Objective 2: To encourage and support national, regional and international initiatives in sport information development and to provide guidance and assistance in this development.

Over the past 4 years there have been numerous IASI activities and activities carried out by IASI members at the national, regional and international level.

At a national level there have been seminars and initiatives organised by IASI members such as the Sasakawa Sports Foundation Seminar on the establishment of a Sport Information Centre for Japan held in Tokyo, the inaugural Australian Sports Information Network meeting, the 'Sports Russia' national sports information network, the formation of the Sports Information and Communications Association in Chinese Taipei and the establishment of a Slovenian National Sports Information office, to mention just a few.

At the regional level there have been a number of activities which will be reported on in more detail by the Vice Presidents, however I would like to make mention of some of these initiatives because I think that they demonstrate that IASI 's structure has served it well and shows the dedication of IASI members in all parts of the world to the development of sport information services

In North America the North American Sport Library Network (NASLIN) continues to operate as an effective sport information network with a range of activities including a biennial conference and an excellent Newsletter, which is widely distributed to IASI members. In the Asian Region, the Asian Sport Information Association has established its Preparatory Committee and with the assistance of IASI has produced 4 issues of the ASIA Bulletin, which is being widely distributed in the Region. In Europe the Sport Information Officers Network (SIONET) met and IASI has taken a role in the SportCompass project to coordinate the collection of sports participation information. In the Oceania Region we have seen the establishment of the Oceania Sport Information Centre in Fiji, which the IOC has agreed to continue support until 2004. In Latin America we have seen the establishment of the Asociacion Iberoamericana de Informacion Deportiva – Sportcom and the initiation of a number of sport information training courses and workshops and there is a proposal before IASI to establish a Portuguese-speaking network for sport information.

I am also extremely pleased to report that after a number of efforts particularly by the former IASI Vice President for Africa we have seen the first IASI initiative in Africa. In April 2000 the sport information workshop on the establishment and management of an Information Centre for Nigeria in Lagos was held which was attended by 31 participants and which made a number of recommendations regarding sport information services in Nigeria.

At the international level IASI has participated in a number of meetings including the Forum for Sports Development in Kuala Lumpur in 1998, the Pan American Congress for Physical Education in 1999, the ICSSPE Pre-Olympic Congress.

Whilst IASI has not been in a position to provide financial resources for all of these initiatives IASI has provided support in the promotion, the provision of personnel or in the provision of resource materials such as the IASI brochure, the IASI PowerPoint Presentation and the Manual for many of these initiatives.

Objective 3: To apply new technology for the effective management of sport information and to facilitate the sharing of information in all parts of the world.

IASI has over the last 4 years become a much more technology aware organization, using technology to communicate between members and increasingly using technology to facilitate the sharing of information.

Individual members of IASI have taken on a range of initiatives to further develop their databases and have made these available through CD-ROM products and increasingly through the Internet. The bringing together of the SPORT, Heracles and Atlantes databases has been a major break-through in providing multi-lingual information access in sport. Through the provision of Internet sites many IASI members are providing access to their catalogues of resources and to the full text of a range of sport information resources.

Whilst international contributions to the SPORT database have been limited to a small number of countries it is hoped that in the future the implementation of recommendations resulting from the review of SIRC/IASI relations carried out in 2000 will lead to a higher level of contribution from a wider range of countries.

Other initiatives undertaken by IASI members to promote sport information resources include the further development of the Scholarly Sites website by the IASI Vice President North America, the development of Topic Specific Internet resources for the Pre-Olympic Scientific Congress by the Australian National Sport Information Resource Centre and the development of a searchable database of sport information centres currently being coordinated by INSEP on behalf of the IOC.

Of course technology is not a global panacea for the provision of sport information with some areas of the world unable to access such technology and IASI must always be mindful of this. With the implementation of the Sharing the Knowledge Program in cooperation with ICSSPE and Human Kinetics IASI has endeavoured to ensure that

printed sport information resources are available when access to electronic sources of information is limited.

Objective 4: To develop strategic alliances with other organizations operating in the field of sport and physical activity and to promote an awareness of the activities of IASI to these organizations.

I am pleased to report that over the past 4 years IASI has strengthened its relationship with the two key international organizations with which IASI is aligned, the IOC and ICSSPE. Our relationship with the IOC has become more formalised over the past 4 years and IASI has had regular contact with Mr Fekrou Kidane and more recently Mr Filliau to work on concrete projects. The publication of the Manual for a Sports Information Centre in three languages is the product of a cooperative venture with the IOC, which I hope will lead to other projects to facilitate access to sport information.

The support of the IOC to IASI is manifest in the fact that we are here today in this magnificent facility and have the IOC as the financier and sponsor of the IASI Congress and the Olympic and Sport Archives Workshop.

Co-operation has also strengthened with ICSSPE and this is manifest in concrete projects such as the Share the Knowledge program for the distribution of Human Kinetics books to developing countries and the Pre-Olympic Scientific Congress Cybercafe, which was an outstanding success. IASI has contributed an entry to the ICSSPE Vade Mecum: Directory of Sport Science, has provided regular updates to ICSSPE publications and has put forward proposals through SIRC for the development of a system to present reviewed electronic resources in key sports science disciplines. ICSSPE's approach to IASI to produce a Perspectives publication on Sport Information is a clear indication of the value that ICSSPE sees in being aligned with IASI. It should be noted that IASI's relationship with ICSSPE has been greatly facilitated by Mr Albert Remans who in his personal capacity was Deputy Secretary to ICSSPE and who participated on ICSSPE's Editorial Board.

Over the past 4 years IASI has also made efforts to form alliances with other relevant organizations in the field of sport and physical education. In Europe a cooperative arrangement has been established with the European Network for Sports Science in Higher Education (ENSSHE) with IASI's participation in a workshop in Finland. In Latin America Sportcom is working cooperatively with the Latin American Network of Sport Sciences University Centres. In North America NASLIN has worked closely with the International Association for Sports Museums and Halls of Fame.

In 1999-2000 a comprehensive review of the relationship between IASI and SIRC was undertaken which has resulted in a range of recommendations which reflect more realistically the status of sport information services today and which should pave the way for a new relationship between IASI, and its members and SIRC.

Other organizations such as the European Sports Management Association, International Association for Women and Girls in Sport, International Working Group for Computer Science in Sport and a number of commercial organizations have contacted IASI in recent times wanting to discuss cooperative ventures. These

approaches are indicative of the fact that IASI has become an organization, which is recognised as a significant player in the world of sport information.

SUMMARY

I think that you will agree that the major achievements against the objectives which we the members of IASI set ourselves 4 years ago indicate that we have a dynamic Association which has continued to move forward and to provide value-added services not only to members but to the constituents who those members serve as part of their professional roles in sports information.

Of course no organization should rest on its laurels reflecting on past achievements, what we also need to do is to look to the future of our Association in the 21st century.

KEY ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

Whilst I do not think that there should be change for change sake particularly within an organization like IASI which has existed for over 40 years and has evolved into a respected international professional organization, I would like to leave the position of President with the identification of some key issues that I think IASI might wish to address in the future. These issues include:

- The structure of IASI including the status of regional sports information organizations in relationship to IASI;
- The possible closer alignment of IASI to the sports media and sports computing organizations;
- The development of more concrete projects through the IASI website using the shared expertise of members;
- The financial arrangements for administration eg Secretariat
- More concrete proposals for developing countries possibly through grant application processes;
- Arrangement with commercial organisations such as Sports Business for the provision of information services particularly in electronic format;
- The development and implementation of a concrete marketing and sponsorship plan.

Whether these suggestions are appropriate for IASI to adopt in the 21st century is a matter for the next IASI Executive however I believe that all organizations should constantly reassess their objectives and look at new ways of doing things. There is no doubt that the last 4 years have been a success for IASI, however it must be recognised that many of these achievements are attributable to the hard work and dedication of our individual members who in many cases with the support of their institutions gather under the professional banner of IASI.

In conclusion I would like to express my thanks to all the members of IASI and the Executive Committee for your support and friendship during the 6 years of my Presidency, to the IASI Vice Presidents who have been wonderful colleagues and who have achieved so much in their Regions and lastly a heartfelt thank you to my absent friend and colleague Albert Remans who has tirelessly performed the duties of Secretary Treasurer with a level of professionalism and commitment which has made my job as President such an easy and rewarding task.

Nerida Clarke
IASI President
15 April 2001