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UIPM SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE: THE MOST ACTIVE UIPM CONGRESS IS COMING SOON

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Having been Secretary General since the end of 2012 after the London Olympics, and involved in UIPM since 2008, I've never seen so many motions and proposals sent by so many National Federations ahead of a Congress.

While it means there will be a lot of discussions during the UIPM 2022 Congress on November 12-13, it is a vibrant sign that our stakeholders care about the sport and they are more and more active and engaged in the movement.

Clearly some motions are tough and assertive, but a productive debate will help all sides, increasing our mutual understanding, and it will strengthen the outcomes and implementations of this very important Congress.

I still remember well the discussions when UIPM changed from standalone shooting and running to a combined event in 2008 in Antigua (my first UIPM Congress), and from shooting lead pellets to laser beams in 2009 in Copenhagen – we had less than 40 NFs discussing the items, debating

and defending, and in both 2010 and 2011 we had protests from athletes.

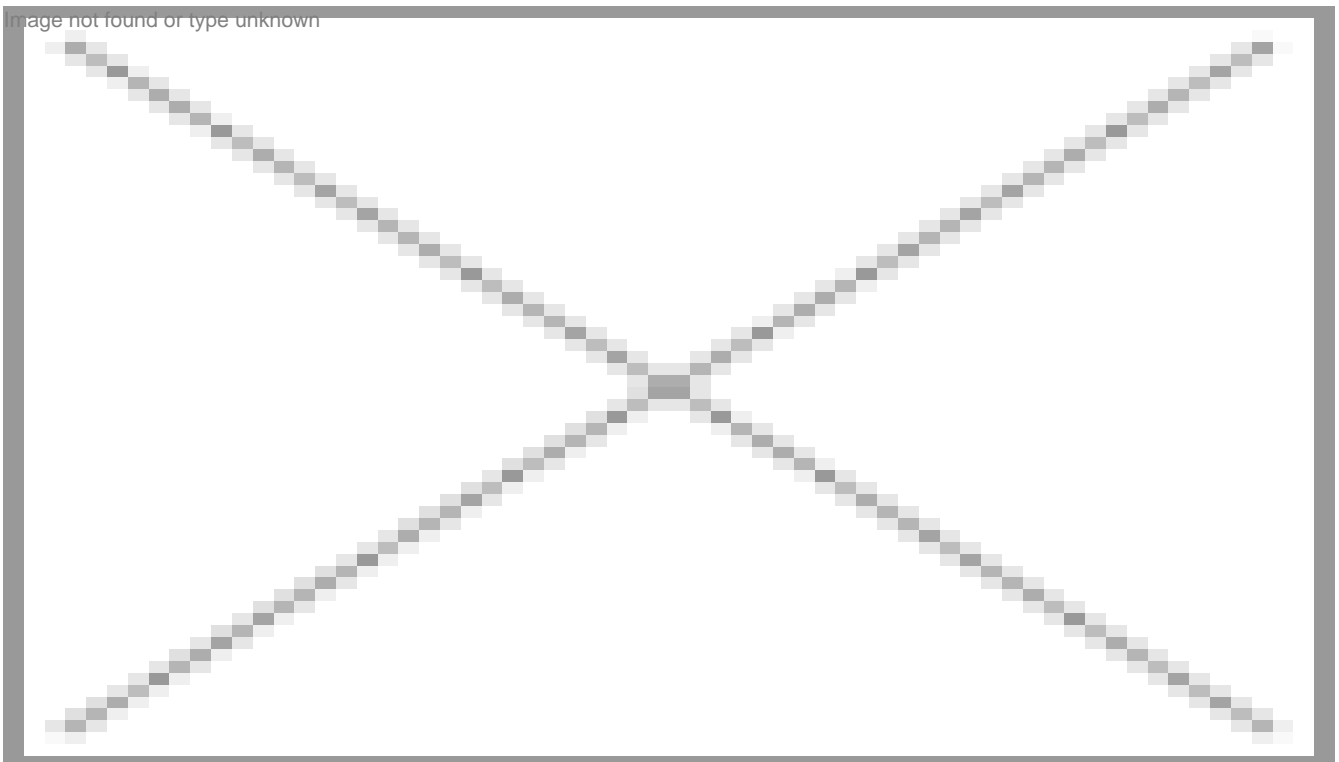
Today, we are talking about 129 NFs with two new NFs subjected to be approved in the forthcoming Congress to become a global sports family of 131 nations. Was that because of the introduction of Laser Run, with environmentally friendly shooting, easier transportation and higher accessibility? I would say that is a big part of the reason. And the hard fact is that UIPM Laser Run events have reached around 100 countries, while the full Modern Pentathlon has only reached half of them.

Some might argue that laser shooting is still shooting, but Obstacle Discipline is not Riding. Well, very true, and once again, if keeping Riding with improved riding ability and horse and athlete welfare could solve our fundamental problem, we would never give up trying. But it can't.

From a total of 205 National Olympic Committees, we have reached a saturation point by planting the sport in 131 countries, because it's a non-starter for the other 74 countries when talking about MP with its current five disciplines, and their first point is always "we have no horses". And within our 131 countries, half of them will tell you that they can conduct any of UIPM's multi-discipline sports except a Pentathlon with Riding.

Shall we ignore these facts and let Modern Pentathlon belong only to rich countries with an established equestrian scene or belong only to continents that have a strong horse culture? I believe you would agree the answer is no.

Our mission as a global governing body is to develop our sport worldwide, and to bring the sport to all corners of the planet and to all social classes of people. Hard as it is to say goodbye to horses, this should not be an elite pastime – it needs to be an accessible, non-discriminatory sport or we will walk a narrow path until the sport disappears.



Back to the Congress happening in five weeks' time, it is a forum for different opinions and a chance to reach final agreements. It is a place for democratic voice and a chance to hear from everyone, including the silent majority.

As long as we have the same goal of preserving Olympic status, I know this community can engage in a mature dialogue, debate the issues and own the final result together.

Can we channel all our strengths in the same direction after this Congress? I hope we can, and I believe we can, and it's very important if we all want to keep the Olympic dream alive for future generations.