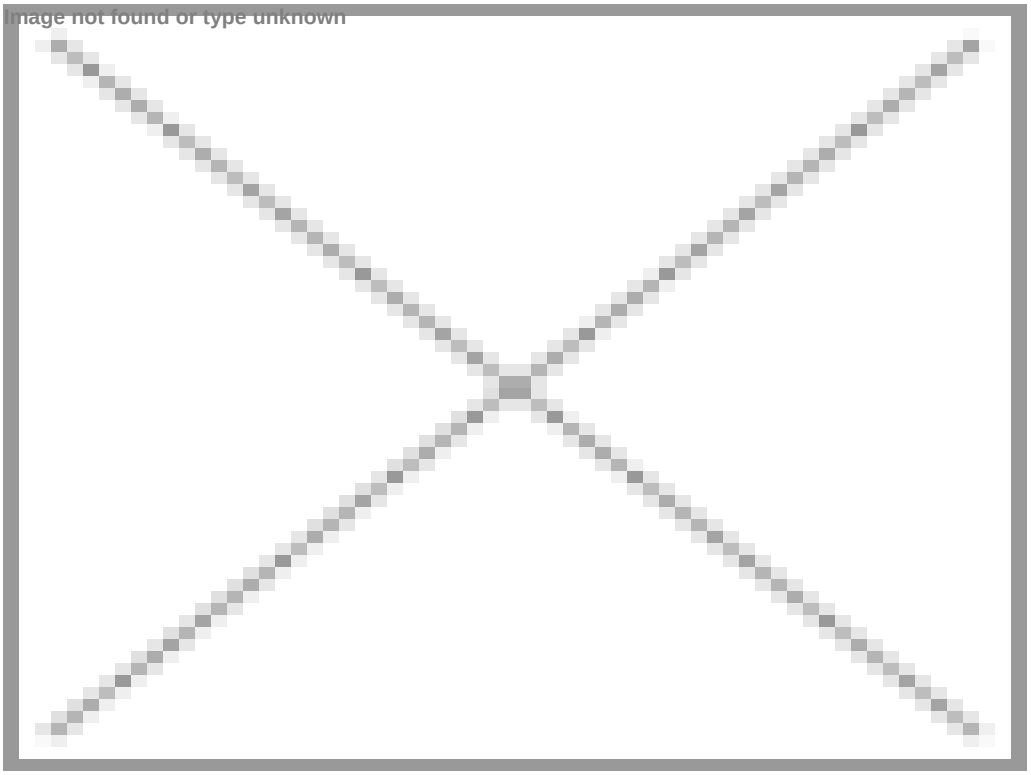
17 DEC 2024

UIPM SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE: MY UNDERSTANDING OF DEI – DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



When we talk about **diversity**, it can always be interpreted in different ways and with multiple dimensions. As a multisport world governing body, including both Olympic and non-Olympic sports, I believe our level of diversity could be defined by:

- Where our athletes come from – it is indeed diverse, and also changed a lot following the rule changes and sport innovation trends.
- How the leadership is composed.
- Is there enough variety among the management team?
- Does the sport have diverse events and organisers? And so on….

In addition, it is certainly worth mentioning that after the historical 73rd UIPM Congress, the new Executive Board comprises multiple strands of varied experience, knowledge and individual talents. It raises the angles and views when discussing matters.

At the same time, it would need more coordination and balance to be fully effective; frankly, these

are new challenges for an International Federation that has been subject to the same leadership for the past three decades.

Equity of course goes far beyond gender – it should also include rights, treatments and standards, such as:

- If there are equal rights among National Federations and stakeholders
- If the same treatments and attitudes apply to all people working for the IF whether they are elected, appointed or employed, with no one respected less than others
- If the evaluation standards are the same, between event organisers and different groups
- If the same type of stakeholders have the same or at least similar opportunities.

Bringing the focus back to gender equity, within the Executive Board, we currently have a ratio of 6:13 (more than 30%) in terms of women versus men. It is substantially improved, but those elected are not on the EB because they are female, but more based on their professional knowledge, expertise and capacity. Meanwhile, we do recognise that more female coaches and technical officials need to be identified and supported.

At the end of the day, we are in a professional world, and rather than absolute equity, the key is that an equal provision of opportunities is made more available to more people.

Inclusion,

- yes, by embracing the new discipline/sport of Obstacle, our sport is definitely becoming more inclusive, reaching a bigger participation base as well as welcoming new communities.

- However, anything started from scratch is never easy, not for those who favour the original concept, nor those who favour the new one. It is also natural that such a process could produce unexpected situations, and leave some people unhappy.
- Therefore, a lot of work lies in front of us to implement, improve and to justify this fundamental reimagining of our sporting movement.
- It is up to us to better serve and service the existing community as well as new community members.
- The difference will be seen at the end, but it will inevitably take time, and constant efforts, unity and solidarity are the base…

In a word, achieving DEI in any organisation or company depends on the original reality and status quo, and how change can be reached via smooth pathways. It is not something that can be rushed out.

Aiming big and achieving stability with every step taken will be the key!