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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025: AYA MEDANY OLY (EGY)

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From 15-year-old Olympian to membership of global sport's most prestigious club, **Aya Medany of Egypt** has already enjoyed a remarkable and inspiring journey.

Still a young woman but with a unique breadth of career experience already behind her, the 36-year-old proves that there is no limit to an individual's potential when staying focused on goals.

Medany (EGY) competed for her country in three Olympic Games in the early years of Olympic women's pentathlon – the youngest member of the Egyptian Olympic team at Athens 2004. She became an athlete representative, elected as Chair of the UIPM Athletes Committee before being appointed to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Athlete Commission.

The experience gained in these voluntary positions, alongside her professional career as a university lecturer, led to Mrs Medany being appointed as a Member of the Egyptian Parliament in 2021. Three years later she became a Member of the IOC, assuming a share of responsibility for the future of Olympic sports governance.

In this exclusive Q&A, Aya Medany tells UIPM News about her personal motivations and reflects

on why it is so important that girls and women are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential.

How important is it to have strong female role models in sport?

It is very important, it encourages the young female to believe that nothing is impossible.

When you started in sports, who did you try to follow and did you have many female role models?

I remember being inspired by Zsuzsanna Vörös from Hungary, who was gold medallist in my first Olympics Athens 2004, but it's true that I didn't have many female role models.

What do you think are the main barriers to females progressing in sports worldwide, and how can they be tackled?

Nowadays I think the barriers are the same for men and women, except for some countries who are treating females differently and don't provide equal opportunities in travel and funding.

How do you feel about the responsibility of being an IOC Member, and what advice would you give to a young female looking to progress in sport leadership?

To be an IOC Member, in my opinion, is the most prestigious position in sport. I feel very responsible representing my country and my sport. In every decision I make, I must think about all the surrounding factors – but athletes always come first, and anything else comes next.

My advice is to keep working on yourself as long as you love sport, you need to keep learning and to be close with the athletes, and never stop believing in yourself. You can achieve a lot for yourself but you can achieve more for others, and this is the true spirit of sports leadership.

Finally, what would you like to see change in the next 10 years in terms of female participation and progression?

To see more female coaches and administrators in our sport. We have great coaches in Germany and France, but most of the countries don't provide as much opportunity. That said, from the athlete perspective in our National Federation in Egypt, I see that everything is 50/50 and we are doing great in this part.