

NEWS RELEASE ON THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING CALLED BY AFFILIATES ON THURSDAY, MAY 16,2013 AT THE FORT YOUNG HOTEL

THE DOMINICA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (DOC) IS THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AUGUST BODY – THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC). THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE DOC AS SET OUT IN ITS CONSTITUTION; SUBSUMED UNDER THE OLYMPIC CHARTER, INTER ALIA;

ARTICLE 5.1.1 – TO AFFILIATE WITH THE IOC AND COMPLY WITH AND OBSERVE THE OLYMPIC CHARTER IN DOMINICA AND ENFORCE ALL ITS RULES AND REGULATIONS AND TO SAFEGUARD ITS AUTONOMY AND RESIST ALL PRESSURES WHETHER OF A POLITICAL, LEGAL, RELIGIOUS OR ECONOMIC NATURE WHICH MAY PREVENT THE COMMITTEE FROM COMPLYING WITH THE OLYMPIC CHARTER;

ARTICLE 5.1.5 –TO ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT AND SPORTS AND GAMES IN GENERAL, AS WELL AS;

ARTICLE 5.17 –TO EDUCATE PUBLIC OPINION, PARTICULARLY THE YOUTH OF DOMINICA AS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPERLY ORGANIZED PHYSICAL RECREATION IN IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF THE COUNTRY, THEREBY DEVELOPING CHARACTER AND THE SPIRIT OF CITIZENSHIP, THAT IS PROMOTING AND SUSTAINING OLYMPISM.

OLYMPISM IS BASED ON THREE CORE VALUES NAMELY FRIENDSHIP, RESPECT AND FAIR PLAY. THEREFORE, IT IS AGAINST THESE VALUES AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT THAT ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO OLYMPISM MUST BE CONDUCTED.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE DOC RECEIVED A LETTER SIGNED BY 13 AFFILIATES ON MAY 2, 2013 INSTRUCTING IT TO CONVENE A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING. THE PURPOSE OF THAT MEETING WAS TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

- 1.THE COMPOSITION, ROLE AND FUNTION OF THE ATHLETES COMMISSION
2. THE LEGITIMACY OF THE ATHLETES REPS WHO VOTED AT THE 2013 ELECTION OF OFFICERS
3. THE DENIAL OF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS FROM VOTING AT THE 2013 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

4. THE NON-ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED BY A NUMBER OF AFFILIATED MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS
5. INCONSISTENCIES WITH THE NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED BY ASSOCIATIONS
6. FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE D.O.C. FROM IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE 2012 OLYMPICS UP TO THE PRESENT TIME.

ACCORDING TO THE OLYMPIC CHARTER AND AS SET OUT IN ARTICLE 18.1, A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL BE CALLED BY THE EXECUTIVE OR UPON A REQUISITION SIGNED BY AT LEAST 51% OF THE VOTING MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF WHICH FIVE MEMBERS MUST BE FROM AFFILIATES ON THE OLYMPIC SPORT PROGRAMME. SUCH REQUISITION STATING THE REASON FOR CALLING THE MEETING SHALL BE SENT TO THE HONORARY GENERAL SECRETARY WHO SHALL FIX A DATE FOR THE MEETING WITHIN 15 DAYS OF RECEIPT. ONLY THE BUSINESS FOR WHICH THE MEETING IS CALLED SHALL BE DEALT WITH THERE AT.

THAT SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING WAS CONVENED AT THE FORT YOUNG HOTEL WATERFRONT RESTAURANT AND AFTER ALMOST TWO AND A HALF HOURS ONLY THE FIRST TWO ITEMS WERE ADDRESSED, AS A RESULT OF STALLING AND RESISTANCE BY MEMBERS TO PROCEED WITH THE OTHER FOUR ITEMS. IN CLEAR BREACH OF THE DOC CONSTITUTION, A NEW ITEM OF MOVING A RESOLUTION TO HAVE FRESH GENERAL ELECTIONS WITHIN 21 DAYS WAS INTRODUCED. MEMBERS WERE REPEATEDLY REMINDED THAT AT A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING WHEN CALLED ONLY THE BUSINESS FOR WHICH THE MEETING IS CALLED SHALL BE DEALT WITH THEREAT.

SINCE FEBRUARY 2, 2003, THE IOC MANDATED THAT ATHLETES SHOULD BE WELL REPRESENTED AT ALL LEVELS OF SPORTS MOVEMENT INCLUDING NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES AND THE IOC ITSELF. THEREFORE DOC WAS ENCOURAGED TO FORM A NOC ATHLETES COMMISSION. DOMINICA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE IS ONE OF THE FEW NOCS IN THE PAN-AMERICAN CONTINENT TO ATTEMPT TO FULFILL THAT MANDATE. THAT PROGRESSIVE IMPLEMENTATION WAS DONE EVEN WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN CAPACITY THAT EXISTED. THERE HAVE BEEN FEW PARTICIPANTS WHO HAVE COMPETED FOR DOMINICA AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES. THEREFORE, THE IOC ADVISED IN TERMS OF COMPOSITION, THAT A MAJORITY OF ATHLETES WHO AT THE TIME OF THEIR ELECTION/NOMINATION, ARE AT LEAST PARTICIPATING AT A NATIONAL LEVEL IN A SPORT WHICH IS ON THE OLYMPIC PROGRAMME BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ATHLETES COMMISSION.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION SHOULD BE NATIONALS AND BE ELECTED BY THEIR PEERS. THE ATHLETES COMMISSION IS REPRESENTED AT THE NOC GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY AT LEAST TWO OF ITS MEMBERS, ELECTED BY THE ATHLETES COMMISSION, WHO SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY. THE ATHLETES COMMISSION IS REPRESENTED WITHIN THE NOC EXECUTIVE ORGAN BY AT LEAST ONE MEMBER.

IN LIGHT OF THE FORGOING, THE DOC HAS REASONABLY ATTEMPTED TO ENSURE ATHLETES RIGHTS. THEREFORE THE DOC IS NOT WRONG OR ILLEGAL IN ATTEMPTING TO DEVELOP AN ATHLETES COMMISSION WITHIN ITS EXISTING LIMITATIONS. ALL VOTING AT DOC GENERAL ELECTIONS IS DONE BY SECRET BALLOT THEREBY CONFORMING TO THE OLYMPIC CHARTER PRINCIPLES BASED ON TRANSPARENT AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES. AT THE ELECTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON JANUARY 24, 2013, THE MEMBERSHIP ENDORSED THE ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS. WHAT THEREFORE WAS THE MOTIVE(S) OF AGITATORS WHO ATTEMPTED TO OVERTURN THAT DEMOCRATIC PROCESS ALMOST FOUR (4) MONTHS AFTER?

ATTENDEES AT THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING RESISTED GOING ON TO DISCUSS THE OTHER ITEMS BECAUSE THEY FEARED THAT THEIR ARGUMENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN CONTRADICTORY. WHEREAS THE ATHLETES COMMISSION IS SET UP TO REPRESENT ATHLETES INTEREST, MANY OF THE AFFILIATED MEMBERS (I.E NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS) DO NOT MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS THAT QUALIFY THEM TO BE BONA FIDE MEMBERS. THEY HAVE TO BE ACCOMMODATED TO ENSURE THE EXISTENCE OF A DOMINICA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE. FOR EXAMPLE, MEMBERS OBLIGATIONS ENTAIL:

ARTICLE 7.2.1 - TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THE COMMITTEE AND ACCEPTED AS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, WITH A RIGHT TO VOTE, A NATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATION MUST EXERCISE A SPECIFIC, REAL AND ON-GOING SPORTS ACTIVITY, BE AFFILIATED TO AN INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION RECOGNIZED BY THE IOC AND BE GOVERNED BY AND COMPLY IN ALL ASPECTS WITH BOTH THE OLYMPIC CHARTER AND RULES OF ITS INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION.

ARTICLE 7.2.2 –THE CONSTITUTION GOVERNING THE NATIONAL SPORT ASSOCIATION MUST BE APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL MEMBERS OF THAT ASSOCIATION AND MUST UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLES OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT, THE WORLD ANTI-DOPING CODE AND THE RULES AND ETHICS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS. THE RECOGNIZED AND ACTIVE MEMBERS MUST HOLD ELECTIONS FOR OFFICERS OF THEIR NATIONAL SPORT ASSOCIATION, AT LEAST ONCE EVERY FOUR (4) YEARS, COPY OF THESE MINUTES, CERTIFIED BY THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY GENERAL MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COMMITTEE.

ARTICLE 7.2.3 –ALL NATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS, AS RECOGNIZED AND ACTIVE MEMBERS, MUST BE OBLIGED TO HOLD ANNUAL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS BARRING MAJOR DISASTERS AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS IN ORDER TO PRESENT TO THEIR MEMBERSHIP THE ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT AND COMPILATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, COPIES OF WHICH MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE DOC. THE ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT AND COMPILATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS MUST BE DULY SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS.

ARTICLE 7.2.4 –MEMBERS OF CATEGORIES “A” AND “B” ARE REQUIRED TO PAY ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEES WHICH WILL BE RECOMMENDED BY THE EXECUTIVE AND APPROVED BY THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP AT ANY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT WHEREAS THE EXECUTIVE MEETS ALL THESE OBLIGATIONS FEW BUT TWO (2) MEET THOSE OBLIGATIONS.

ON THE QUESTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY THE DOC EXECUTIVE HAVE SUBMITTED ANNUAL AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS EVERY YEAR OF ITS EXISTENCE. IF FIVE OLYMPIC SPORTS ARE NOT FULFILLING THOSE AFOREMENTIONED OBLIGATIONS THEN DOMINICA SHOULD NOT HAVE AN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE BECAUSE IT DOES NOT MEET THE PRINCIPLES ENSHRINED IN THE OLYMPIC CHARTER.

REASONABLENESS AND ACCOMMODATION MAY BE THE GUIDING IDEAS THAT PREVAIL IN ORDER FOR OUR SPORTS MEN AND WOMEN TO BE PART OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD AND TO BE ABLE TO SHARE THE BENEFITS OF GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT IN AN AUGUST INSTITUTION AS THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE.

THE MEMBERSHIP NEEDS TO RECOGNIZE THE STRUCTURED DEVELOPMENT AND FOUNDATION OF THE DOMINICA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE GUIDED BY AN ASTUTE EXECUTIVE THAT IS KNOWLEDGEABLE IN SUSTAINING THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT IN DOMINICA. WE SHOULD BUILD AND NOT ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE GAINS THROUGH SELF-CENTERED AND MYOPIC EXPLOITS.

REPEATED APPEALS WERE MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE FOR THE MATTERS RAISED AT THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE BROUGHT TO THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE FOR A CIVIL RESOLUTION; HOWEVER, SOME MEMBERS FEARED THEIR INTERESTS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SERVED. THE QUESTION; IS THERE ANY NEED FOR ELECTIONS IN 21 DAYS?

THE DOC HAS REFERRED THE CURRENT DISPUTE TO THE IOC, AS IT IS AUTHORISED TO DO BY VIRTUE OF THE OLYMPIC CHARTER, AND IS AWAITING THE IOC's RESPONSE. IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT AS TO THE SIGNIFICATION OR INTERPRETATION OF THE STATUTES OF AN NOC, OR IF THERE IS A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN SUCH STATUTES AND THE OLYMPIC CHARTER, THE LATTER TAKES PRECEDENCE.

SIGNED:

FELIX A. WILSON

PRESIDENT OF THE DOC

THOMAS B. DORSETT

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE DOC