

FIH Acting President's Report

48th FIH Statutory Congress – 5 November 2022

Dear Members of the FIH Congress,

I hope this report finds you well!

Since our last Congress in May 2021, FIH, together with the Host National Associations, has organised numerous thrilling events, and this, despite the adverse effects of the global COVID pandemic.

Hockey's world governing body has also continued to deliver tailor-made development programmes, defined a global strategy for sustainability – including the use of a dry turf for one of its tournaments – and enhanced its commitment for a positive impact on social change, through various bespoke initiatives.

My report will give you more details about these achievements.

At this stage, I'd like to extend my sincerest **thanks to all of you:** without **your commitment and passion for hockey**, none of these achievements would have become reality!

(A) FIH Events

Just a few weeks after our last Congress, all eyes of the hockey world turned to Tokyo for the **32nd Olympiad**. We all know how challenging it was for the organisers but also for us and for all the teams to prepare for the quadrennial mega-event because of the huge adverse impact of the global COVID crisis. Nevertheless, thanks to the gigantic efforts of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Tokyo Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (TOCOG) and the Japanese authorities, but also our own efforts and the remarkable commitment of the participating teams and officials, these very special Olympic Games, which sadly could not be held with fans in the stands, still produced amazing matches and ensured a true hockey festival of absolutely top-class level! I'd like to take this opportunity to extend, once again, the sincerest thanks of the global hockey community to the IOC and our Japanese friends, including all lovely volunteers, for having put together such outstanding Games despite incredibly tough circumstances. Similar thanks go to all teams - in particular the athletes – and officials for having showcased so much talent and passion!



In 2021 and 2022, we managed to deliver Season 3 of our global home-and-away league, the **FIH Hockey Pro League**. Here also, despite the many challenges caused by the COVID crisis, “Hockey at its Best” was to be seen, from the first to the last match, throughout the season. Congratulations and thanks to all participating NAs for their commitment to host matches or travel abroad with their teams at these challenging times.

2021-2022 also gave us the opportunity to discover the “Rising Stars” of our game in action. First, the **male Juniors** gathered in Bhubaneswar, India, then the **female Juniors**, in Potchefstroom, South Africa. The **FIH Hockey Women’s Junior World Cup** was actually the very first FIH Hockey World Cup staged on African soil. This was a real milestone for the development of hockey on the global scale and for me personally, as African and President of the African Hockey Federation, a very special and rewarding moment.

In June, planet hockey was blessed with a very promising event: the first-ever world **Hockey5s** tournament organised by FIH with “senior” teams. With the aim to “bring hockey to people” in mind, the tournament was staged on one of the main squares of Lausanne, Switzerland, where people are used to enjoying a walk near the gorgeous shores of Lake Léman on weekends. Curious to know more about what they were coming across, many of them stopped for a while and decided to take a seat in the stands (for free) to watch and discover more. The event was a true success and clearly must be repeated, not only in the Olympic Capital but in so many other cities in the world, as it will for sure play a key role in the growth and attractiveness of our sport, especially among the youth.

But the real highlight of the year was to come just a few weeks later with the 15th **FIH Hockey Women’s World Cup** played in Spain and in the Netherlands. Needless to say that the show surpassed even the highest expectations thanks to absolutely amazing performances showcased during the whole tournament. “Where legends are made”, the slogan associated with this event, was, once more, true to its very essence. Such events are not only a delight to experience, but they also contribute massively to the promotion of hockey.

Last but not least, hockey was again very prominently represented at the XXII **Commonwealth Games** which took place in August in Birmingham, England.

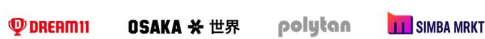
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Looking ahead, we will enjoy another set of magnificent FIH events in the upcoming months with the **FIH Hockey Nations Cup** – a brand-new competition whose winner will have the opportunity to join the FIH Hockey Pro League in the subsequent season (the Men’s event will be hosted by South Africa, the Women’s one by Spain) -, the 15th **FIH Hockey Men’s World Cup** in Bhubaneswar as well as in the new Rourkela stadium – that I’ve recently visited and which will be a true jewel for hockey for decades to come – and the **FIH Hockey Indoor World Cup**, which, after having been postponed due to COVID, is finally back on the agenda and will take place in South Africa.

On behalf of FIH and in my personal name, I would like to extend my **sincerest thanks to all National Associations who have hosted or will host a FIH tournament.** Your dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm provide the best mindset and conditions to put together memorable hockey events!

(B) Hockey Development

With the worldwide development of the game being the primary mission of FIH, the last 18 months have been very active on that front again. Just to name a few of the initiatives taken:

- **“Start Hockey”** matched funding programme for National Associations launched, with first 5 projects. Projects receive support in the form of Experts + Equipment + Education. Specifically targeting initiation of new hockey activity for young children
- NAs supported to access **Olympic Solidarity** DNSS (Developing National Sports Systems) and **Team Support Grants via NOCs** to develop hockey structures and international participation
- 242 courses and workshops delivered by the **FIH Academy**, including a return to face-to-face programmes (over 4000 individuals have accessed FIH education since January 2021)
- New FIH Academy platform to be launched in December, with **brand new e-learning programme** across all hockey functional areas

(C) Sport

Significant steps forward have been taken to **develop dry artificial turf** for elite hockey, with research by a number of manufacturers and testing institutes, including the first ever FIH event held on a prototype non-watered turf, developed by long term FIH partner Polytan, namely the Lausanne Hockey5s event, played on a dry, drop in pitch.

The return of hockey has also seen **new nations** competing in officially sanctioned matches and therefore **joining the FIH World Rankings** for the first time, or returning after a number of years absence. It's fantastic to see the likes of Malawi, Serbia, Bermuda, Iran and Portugal all now with an official world ranking and having the opportunity to climb the rankings table as their performances develop.

All our events are made possible thanks to all of our volunteer umpires and officials around the world, that enable our athletes of all ages and nationalities, to showcase their skills and do what they love doing – playing hockey. Without our huge **global volunteer workforce**, hockey simply could not exist, so on behalf of everyone at the FIH, **thank you to all of you** for your commitment to our sport!

(D) Integrity and Good governance

End 2021, FIH concluded a partnership with **Sportradar**, a leading global sports technology company that provides integrity service. Sportradar's Universal Fraud Detection Service (UFDS), a proven bet monitoring system, helps **maintain the integrity of FIH competitions** and protect them from match-fixing and other risks.

The FIH Integrity Unit (FIU) composed of international experts in integrity and sports pursued their commitment to supporting the FIH meet its governance, member protection and integrity duties. In 2022, **FIU revised the Integrity Code** in a continued effort to preserve the integrity of hockey.

The **ASOIF's** Fourth Governance Review published in 2022 **confirmed the progress made by FIH in terms of good governance**. However, there are still some areas of improvement, therefore we will put all our efforts into enhancing good governance.

Support is provided by FIH to enhance the governance of members. Also, FIH established a risk management program.

(E) Hockey and society

Determined to contribute to the positive impact that sport has to foster social change, FIH has undergone a number of initiatives.

Inclusion and Diversity: Ahead of both the inaugural FIH Hockey5s event in Lausanne and before the FIH Hockey Pro League matches on this day, FIH launched its very **first Inclusion and Diversity Day**, with the following statement being read out by players of the national squads:

'Today is the first Inclusion and Diversity Day of the International Hockey Federation.

No matter your gender ...

No matter your ethnic background ...

No matter your physical or intellectual abilities ...

No matter your sexual orientation ...

No matter your age ...

... EVERYONE is welcome in hockey!

Diversity is wealth.

Inclusion must be the norm.

YOU, WE, EVERYONE is #HockeyEquals!'

Gender equality: on the occasion of the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup, FIH has organised a **"Women in Sport" webinar** in Terrassa, Spain, to discuss about solutions that could be identified for three key challenges that women face in sports: leadership barriers, lack of role female models and cultural stigmas.

This event resulted in truly inspiring talks from a particularly rich panel comprising of Marijke Fleuren, EHF President and Chair of the FIH Women in Sports Committee, Mutsa Bera, Zimbabwe's Captain at the 2022 FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup, Mireia Gali Reyes, President of the hockey section of Atlètic Club Terrassa HC, Berta Bonastre, Tournament Director of the 2022 FIH Hockey Women's World Cup and former Spanish international player, Janneke Schopman, Head Coach of India's Women's Team and Adrian Lock, Head Coach of Spain's Women's Team.

Sustainability: I'm really glad that the **Sustainability Task Force** – chaired by FIH EB Member Clare Prideaux and including representatives from National Associations, athletes, officials, event organisers and suppliers as well as external experts – has delivered the first **sustainability strategy** for hockey globally. The strategy is **aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the IOC Sustainability Strategy**, and focusses on three key pillars: People, Planet and Prosperity.



It includes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure performance going forwards as well as celebrating historical and existing sustainable development projects, and the publication of a biennial Sustainability Report to be presented to the FIH Congress as well as to the wider sporting community.

On behalf of FIH, my sincerest thanks go to the Continental Federations, the National Associations, the Committees, the athletes, our commercial and broadcast partners, our preferred suppliers, the volunteers, the fans and everyone within the hockey community!

I look forward to a fruitful 48th FIH Congress.

Let's all be ***stronger together!***

Yours in hockey,

Seif Ahmed
Acting President

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