FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL- TERRITORIAL CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

Press Release

Grande Prairie, Alberta
February 18, 1995
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MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR
SPORT, FITNESS AND RECREATION

"Sport, recreation and active living contribute significantly to the health and lives of Canadians of all ages."

Ministers Responsible

Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Fitness and Recreation today discussed a number of issues of importance. Sessions were co-chaired by the Honourable Michel Dupuy, Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Diane Marleau, federal Minister of Health, and the Honourable Gary G. Mar, Minister of Alberta Community Development. This meeting was held in Grande Prairie in conjunction with the 1995 Canada Games.

HIGHLIGHTS

► Commitment to Canada Games reaffirmed
► Unanimous support for Quebec’s bid to host 2002 Winter Olympics
► Youth study confirms activity can reduce risk factors facing young Canadians
► Significant health risks associated with physical inactivity
► Strategic partnerships for sport and physical activity
► National planning framework for sport endorsed
► Minimum coaching certification standards encouraged

Canada Games

Ministers agreed on the importance of the Canada Games as a major component of the Canadian Sport Development System. A renewed commitment was made to participation in the Canada Games into the future. The Canada Games are an essential tool for sport development. Over the years, more than 35,000 young athletes have been involved in the Games, which have been a stepping stone for many of Canada’s top competitors. One third of the 1992 Canadian team participating in the winter Olympics in Lillehammer had their start in the Canada Games.
The next Canada Games will be held in Brandon, Manitoba in 1997. Yukon has requested to be included-in the Canada Games hosting cycle. Ministers endorsed adding the Yukon to hosting cycle in 2007.

Quebec 2002

Ministers also unanimously agreed to support Quebec City’s bid to host the 2002 Winter Olympic Games and wished Quebec City the best of success in Budapest in June 1995 where the decision on the host city will be announced.

Support for Indigenous Athletes

The Ministers directed federal/provincial/territorial officials to work in cooperation with national Aboriginal sport representatives to develop joint strategies to eliminate barriers to participation in sport and recreation.

Athletes

Ministers discussed several issues relating to the educational concerns of high performance athletes. At the request of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, provincial/territorial Ministers agreed to raise these concerns with their education colleagues.

Youth Recreation Initiative

Ministers discussed ways to use recreation, sport and physical activity to reduce and remove risk factors facing youth in Canada today. A study conducted on behalf of the federal government, provinces and territories, and the Canadian Parks/Recreation Association indicates that recreation and physical activity has a significant positive effect on the lives of young people. The study involved discussions with youth, parents and community leaders in every province and territory.

The Ministers agreed to the development of a framework on which future collaborative activities could be built and that community-driven youth initiatives will be pursued by all parties.

Ministers asked that their officials give particular attention to the removal of barriers to participation. These barriers affect a significant number of youth, including girls, young women and Aboriginal youth.

Impact of Inactivity on the Health of Canadians

According to national and international research, inactivity is an ever increasing health and social issue. Ministers emphasized that inactivity is preventable and the resulting risks are significant. Also, the payback in economic and quality of life benefits is substantial.
The Ministers agreed that physical inactivity is a serious problem facing our country. Inactivity is a major factor in conditions ranging from coronary heart disease and stroke to osteoporosis and hypertension.

For example, a ten per cent increase in the number of Canadians who are physically active would result in decreased treatment costs for heart disease of $150 million each year. In addition, annual costs of over $300 million for treating fractures associated with osteoporosis would be reduced substantially.

Ministers are concerned with growing evidence that shows the costs to society of physical inactivity rank along with other health issues such as smoking. Ministers noted the strong connection between physical activity and self esteem. Ministers concluded that inactivity endangers an unacceptably large portion of the Canadian population. They agreed to create an action plan to effectively tackle the problem of inactivity.

Sport and Physical Activity: The Education Partnership

There was concern over the implications of limited physical education and sport programs in schools, considering the education reforms occurring across Canada. Ministers agreed that positive results could be achieved by broadening access to participation in sport and physical activity and refocussing curriculum to instill a lifelong interest in active living.

Ministers expressed strong support for partnerships with physical and health education programs, municipalities and school boards, and interscholastic sport associations.

This initiative would address issues such as escalating health care costs and social issues arising from disenfranchised youth. It can help to maximize the use and accessibility of school and community resources and facilities as well as build life long positive values, skills and attitudes toward physical well being.

A Planning Framework for Sport in Canada

This national framework represents the collaborative efforts of federal/provincial/territorial governments and the Canadian sport community. It is a generic framework rather than a detailed sport plan and reflects the vision, themes and goals for Canadian sport.

This plan will be a tool for sport administrators at all levels. It will provide a focus for the expenditure of scarce resources, and will also bring about a sense of unity and purpose to Canadian sport as well as a sense of shared accomplishment as national goals are achieved.

Among the issues discussed were:

Athlete centred system - The primary focus of sport should be to contribute to the all-round development of athletes as whole, healthy people through sport.
Equity and access - Equity and access in sport leads to allocating resources and making decisions without prejudice or favouritism for any one group, while addressing the removal of barriers in sport.

Ministers endorsed the Planning Framework for Sport in Canada and agreed to pursue this initiative on a "best efforts" basis.

Coaching Certification Standards

One of the priorities identified in the action plan endorsed by the Ministers for Sport and Recreation in 1990, was the implementation of a set of training, certification and evaluation standards for coaches.

Through a minimum level of coach education and qualification, the safety and well being of the athlete would be better protected, the sport environment would be more ethically sound, and it would ensure, as much as possible, that athletes have a positive experience.

At this meeting, Ministers endorsed the development of strategies to encourage minimum standards for coaches thereby promoting qualified coaches at all levels of the sport system.

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