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(International Olympic Committee)

“Women in Sport”

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Good afternoon everyone. Like she said, my name is Nawal al-Moutawakil and I am in the Guinness Book. I am only 5”1 and normally sportive are very high, very strong. From where I come from, it was very unusual to see some unveiled athletes running the 400m hurdles which was my *spécialité*. 400m hurdles is an event that combines between dedication, strength, technique, high technique and strong will. It is very difficult to win: there is a start, there is a finish, and in between there is a long path with barriers, hurdles. And for me, there are hurdles of life. So I had to overcome every hurdle (there are ten of them) and it was a real *école de la vie* – school for life.

Today, as I speak and stand before you, I would like first of all to say thank you to Sara whom I have know for four or five years now. I admire her. Why? Because when I first saw her in Lausanne, she came the way – she took the train from London – to meet me in Lausanne, because she said she was preparing her thesis on women – Arab women –, and here I am, I was admiring an Arab woman doing all this heavy job to try to know each of us, all these pioneers, everyone in her field. And we promised each other to see each other again. We did not know when but we kept contact and this was because of **LORIS, LORIS** organisation that I represent and I am co-founder of this foundation. And she had met one of my colleagues in New York I believe or in London, and they were telling me “You must meet this lady called Sara”; and they were telling her “Sara, you must meet this lady called Nawal, you have to meet!” And I believe with Sara, with all of us, we can be a very strong group into making a change in this world. She came to Lausanne, and we exchanged many ideas. And she sent me later all the thesis, the report that I am using for all my presentations with her approval. And listening to all the previous speakers, I could see myself; I could see “women in sports”.

Maybe I was a legend, maybe I am still a legend, but believe me, when I won in 1984 – I usually like to speak about my experience because it is an unusual one –, I run in 1984 in Los Angeles – your state in Los Angeles in the Olympic Games – and for the first time in history, an Arab woman competed in such a game, and won in such a game. It was something very surprising: I was not physically, mentally, spiritually prepared for it. I knew it was among my dreams to win the golden medal at the Olympic Games, but I did not know how

and when. But all I knew was that I had a dream and wanted to go for it. Like she said, men go straight to the principle, I wanted to win that golden medal, no matter how, and no matter how difficult it was going to be.

I come from a very open-minded family. My father was a banker, my mother was a banker. My father is a banker in the bank where you came to visit me, Reema, in the BMCE Bank, and a few years later I worked in the same bank also. And you can see that both my parents were very open-minded parents. My mother played volley-ball and my father judo. And imagine when I first told them that I wanted to do track and field. They said "Come on, only guys and boys play soccer, and run, and play volley-ball. I said "Mum, look at you, you did volley-ball; and dad, look at you, you did judo. Please, help me to continue in my dream." And I had lots of support from my family. We did not have enough financial support, even though they were bankers. I used to run bare-foot because I did not have the money to buy my shoes. And, when I used to be in the national selection, we did not have the money that is given today to our champions. So, the support was financially very limited, but my family's support, the government's support, my federation's support, and my little club's support were very strong. Because when you do not have an environment, that positive environment, I do not think that you can go any further. So that support for me was very **detrimental (I guess that she means beneficial)**.

I started collecting titles within the Arab world. For the first time, I competed in Tunisia, Algeria, and in Egypt, in Arab championships, in the Mediterranean championships, I competed in Africa – fifty-three strong countries – and I won and broke many records. So the newspapers started writing about "the Gazelle of Atlas is born", "A new star is born". So, imagine how happy my parents were when their colleagues would bring the newspapers' clips, telling them "Is this your daughter?" And my father was so happy; he said "You know, I do not think that I chose the wrong choice for my daughter. I think one day, even though she is short, she can win against those tall Americans and strong East-Germans." And he used to tell me one thing – which maybe I told you: "Best gifts do not come in small packages." He used to tell me "Look, I believe in you." And I was like "Dad, I am too short, look at those Americans; look at those East-Germans." He was like "Look at diamonds and rubies, they come in small packages, you will do miracles." Communication between parents and daughters in our Arab world is very fundamental because if my father was not communicating with me and my mother, maybe at the age of sixteen, even though I was going to school, maybe I would have been married like my cousins and my sisters, like my neighbours or my

friends, my schoolmates. Maybe I would have reached just the baccalaureate's level and gone with the wind, like the movie. But because of communication, because of my parents making me believe in myself and not underestimating my dream, this made me very strong in my future life.

I started being offered scholarships to go and study in France, but I was young. I started running at the age of fifteen, and at the age of sixteen, I was already very well known in the Arab world, Africa, and the Mediterranean. And I was offered scholarships to go away. My father had to think twice and he prevented me from leaving the country, he prevented me to leave the house. Why? Because to deserve going and train, first of all I had to do the housework: I had to cook, I had to wash – we did not have washing machine and I had to do it like this – and I had to excel in everything as a young girl, to prepare me to be married. He did not let me leave because of what the others could say, the neighbours, the family. He said “Listen, you are too young to go away and I want you to stay with me, let's wait a little bit.” Americans could not wait. I was offered seven scholarships two years later to go and study in the United States because of my performances, because of my athletic abilities, and because of my grades in my school. And I said to myself “How can I announce this to my father?” I could not speak English – we only had one hour of English in High School – so I took these scholarships which were written in English and put them underneath my bed's mattress. I had this professor who used to teach me English and with whom I kept in touch, called Mr. Ryad and he is from Yemen. Three months later, I said “Could you please translate these papers for me because they say something.” He goes “Nawal, these are Americans giving you full scholarships. You must take your chance and go to the United States and study.” I am like “I do not think my dad would accept. I need your support.” So, he came and he spoke to my father. And after many meetings, family meetings between my brothers, my mother, he accepted, everyone accepted.

So, I flew to the United States. But until then most of my training was in Morocco, barefoot, sometimes with some shoes that I bought that lasted for many years. With my small club which I will never forget because with my small club I could wear our Moroccan outfit, I could carry our Moroccan flag, because of my national team, I could excel overseas. But then came the decision to change because I was good and well within my people, within my competitors in Morocco, within Africa because most of the time when I was running in the front, I would look back and when I see competitors way in the back, I would slow down. That's why most of the time I also competed with guys that were my age and girls that were

even older than myself. And I say “Why is the situation like this in Morocco? Why is the situation like this in the Arab states?” When we had Arab competitions, there was only Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt, very few other countries. I was like “Lord, only three countries? And, for your record, performances, to be accepted, you have to be at least five to six competitors in an eight-line stadium. But we were very few all the time, and I never understood why. I was innocent, a young and innocent athlete. And I turned around: no woman coaches, no woman journalists specialised in sport, no woman doctors. I was a young female athlete; I had things happening to me while I was growing a teenager. But I never wanted to speak to my coach because I was embarrassed, because I was told to always look down, to respect. For me my coach was my father, my teacher, he was everything, he was God. But I could not tell my coach what was happening to me and to my body and why I could not exercise that same day. So I said “Things have changed because there are things that I cannot tell my coach; I want a female coach, but there were nowhere to be found: no female coach, no woman journalists, no women in sports decision places.

I went to the United States. I arrive in the airport, maybe it was minus sixteen below zero. I did not know what was happening to me. I was coming from Casablanca, big huge city; I landed in **Aims**, Iowa – do you know where **Aims**, Iowa is? That's where Reagan used to be a TV commentator. I did not know where that was, it is not even on the map! And I looked at these girls – like yesterday at the Heathrow airport – carrying my name. And I was like “Oh, photo is me; name is me.” So she goes “You follow me, I have to take you to the stadium, I have to take you to the university.” I arrived to the university and all coaches were expecting this huge tall and strong athlete, and when the elevator opened, they saw this 5’1 young athlete coming out of the elevator and I could see chock in their face. They were like... I mean it feels like the scholarship is cheated. I was like “No, why?” “These performances cannot be your performances, these are your sisters’ or your brothers’, or someone else’s; it cannot be yours.” So I had to prove that it was me and that I deserved the scholarship. They took me straight to the stadium and I had to do drills, and exercises, and run fast, and long distances, and prove that the performances belong to me.

The very first week, my father passed away, and I did not know. It was so difficult for me to go out to the United States. A week later when my father passed away, it was hidden from me, no one told me that my father had passed away. I was calling and they were telling me “He is taking a nap, he is at work and he cannot speak to you.” For three months... But during these three months, I was working really hard, taking English classes, learning how to

say hello to Americans, not to kiss, not to speak to them – cultural studies! I was being taught so many things, interesting things, but yet I was thinking about my family. I moved, I was young, not speaking English, on scholarship, I was not sure whether it was the appropriate choice, but I was breaking really fast the university records – the NCAA records, it is a movement association which is a very strong association in the United States. Everywhere I went in the United States, I broke a record. And they said “Wow, an Arab woman, we cannot believe it, she is an Arab woman, how can she beat us Americans.” And too many questions like this: “Where do you come from, did you live in Paris?” I was like “No I live in Casablanca in Morocco, North Africa.” And the media started to write about me “A new cyclone”, “The African cyclone”, they called me “The Arab sirocco”. And they called me names like this, and I was happy, I was quite happy, you know. I was wondering if my family was following all this but it was a long distance and at the same time they were hiding the news, the bad news from me. The Olympic Games, eight months later, came, and I won. I won through the heats, I won through the quarter finals, I won through the semi-final and the final. The entire media worldwide were speaking about the Americans, about the Romanian called Cojocaru – she is a champion –, about an Indian, about an Australian, Katarina, about... we were eight in the finale. But before the finale, my coaches said to me – I had the two American coaches follow me to Los Angeles –, they said “Listen Nawal, we have seen you for eight months and we believe in you and we think you can win; so now we want you to stand on the chair – remember, I told you this, I do not know if you remember –, we want you to stand on the chair. This was the night before the final. I said “I will look stupid”; they said “No, you will not look stupid because we are only the three of us” (my two coaches and myself, the American coaches, one is called **Pat Monihill** the other one is called **Ron Ringgold**). So I stood on the chair and they said “Now, we want you to sing your Moroccan anthem because we believe in you and tomorrow you are going to win. I said “Come on, this is stupid, I cannot do this”. They said “You must do it, you will become the hero of the next century; you must win although we know there is an American at least who is capable of winning because this is her country, but we still believe you can make it. So say “I am the strongest, I can do it because I have to do it; I must win because I have to win; I am number 1.”” I was so embarrassed to do all that and to say all that. I felt so stupid and I was looking around. They said “No, it is only the three of us. You have to say this.” And to me, the way I was educated, I could not be doing all this and saying all this, and I ended up going up on the chair and singing my Moroccan anthem, the night before the race. And you know what they

offered me? A TWA chocolate that they were given in airplanes, enveloped in a golden paper – it is like a gold medal –, and they gave it to me as a gift. They said “Do not eat it now; you will eat it after you win because you will win.”

So the day of the competition here I am. I forgot to tell you one thing, it is that before we left Morocco to the United States to compete in the Los Angeles Olympic Games, I was the only one in a hundred and twenty-six delegation, all men, the only female. I was sitting there not knowing what to do, where to go. I was so scared. For the first time going to the Olympic Games is everyone's dream, every athlete's dream. And I was worried whether I was going to succeed or not. And our King, our late King Hasan II, had said – as we were all in front of him, he was here with a microphone, and I was away pushed in the back, and all of them dressed in ties and suits (I was also given a tie and a suit, they forgot there was a girl in the team! I did not wear it and I wore something red) –, and he saw me, took the microphone and he said: “I welcome you to my palace; I wish you good luck, you are all going to Los Angeles, and I know that one boy or one girl will win and bring the golden medal at home.” So that means he saw me when he said “one girl”. So, all in a sudden, everybody pushed and said to me “You have to come to the front because he means you!” I was the only one! And since then, I was having all the necessary care and affection from every athlete: every football player, every judo player, everyone in the delegation.

When I won that gold medal, for me it was something magical. I went to the press conference; you know what the first question that I was asked was? “Where is your hejab? Are you Moroccan? Why are you wearing shorts? Why are you showing your arms?” We cannot understand that you are a Moroccan and running this way, an Arab and running this way, a Muslim and running this way!” Like I said at the beginning, I was not physically prepared, so all this huge impact it had on my life, I grew up differently. And here I am, sitting there in front of the media of the entire world asking me questions, fighting to see who is going to ask me the proper question. One thing they did not know is that in Morocco and in the Arab world also, starting in the 1930s with Egypt – Egyptian women started to compete in the Olympic Games back in the 1930s –, what they did not know is that in our Islam, our Prophet used to run with or against his wife (wa sabaqathu wa sabaqaha wa sabaqathu hatta kanat hamil). They used to run against each other and she always used to beat Rasul (‘alayhi al-salat wa al-salam), until she found out when he won that she was pregnant. So this shows that in our Islam, way ages back, women used to run and do sports and exercise, and go in the field and everything. And also, our Islam teaches our kids – our Islam did not say “our boys”

or “our girls” –, our Islam emphasises teaching our kids horse-back riding, swimming and archery (wa ‘allimu awladakum al-sibaha wa rukub al-khayl wa al-rimaya). This they did not know. So they said “So, in your country you can exercise? Women can exercise?” I said “Not only in Morocco, in every Arab country! Maybe it is still under represented, but in every region, every country in the Arab states, women have been exercising for many years; maybe between themselves, maybe outside, but they are exercising, believe me. I know, in Dubai they are about to organise one of the largest women’s race; in Qatar they are doing things; in Kuwait also they are about to organise big events, and so forth.

I decided, after returning to Casablanca, to celebrate the victory of my golden medal in Los Angeles. And I could see in the face of many Moroccans, of many Arab leaders, of those who are involved in the sports arena that another era had started for women. And the next day of my victory, thousands and millions of women started exercising in the streets, in La Corniche in Casablanca, in Rabat, South, North, East, West. And maybe Mr. Iron, Mr. Silk can tell you this, women are no more feeling bad about their shapes, about their body, about their belly, about how big they are, about how fat they are; they go and they exercise early in the morning before they go to their jobs.

But I had to stop at the age of twenty-four – nowadays women continue until the age of forty. I do not know if you know about this Marlene Ottey, the Jamaican beautiful runner, she continues and she is forty-five today and she runs at the elite level, at the highest level which is the Olympic level and the world championships. But I said to myself “Why am I going to support this pressure myself? Why am I the only one?” Wherever I go and get to the microphones: “Where is your hejab? Why are you wearing shorts?” And I said “I am sick and tired of this, I want other women like me to compete; I want other Arab women, Muslim women, African women to be with me in the scene. How can I do it?” I decided to stop competing because I wanted to do something else with my life. I stopped at the age of twenty-four which was relatively young. I got everyone angry at me in Morocco, every single one: they were not happy about my decision. I was many times injured, in my back, in my knees, in my elbow. You know when you get sick, when you get even a cold, it is all your career that is gone. You have to be very well educated, very well disciplined about your sleeping habits, your eating habits, your studying habits. And I just could stand and live with that rigidity while I wanted to do something else with my life. I did not for instance know what the movies were, going to dance with my friends, going to restaurants, many things that I had to sacrifice because of sports.

But I decided to stop because I wanted to do something else with my life and see how I could bring other women and motivate other women, in Morocco and around the world, specifically in the Arab states and in Africa. And I started thinking about how I can do it. It was very difficult. The first thing I did was to create this women's race, a mass race. And I started speaking with sponsors telling them that I wanted to organise the biggest women's race in the country. Everyone laughed at my face; they said "How could you bring women outside in the streets and occupy Casablanca; this you cannot do." So I had zero sponsors. You know who helped me? Majallat Sa'idati. I do not even know the guy! I wrote to Majallat Sa'idati and I said "Listen, I want to sell you this project. Would you accept?" So they gave me some money. And I spoke to this hotel's manager, my friend, who gave me a few rooms. And I spoke to the airline companies in Morocco and they gave me a few tickets. For me it was a challenge: I organise the race. You know how many came? three hundreds competitors, all women. I was very happy. I was pregnant then, and my husband said "You are crazy!" I was seven months pregnant. I wanted to show that I am not a sick woman; I am fit although I am pregnant; I can organise; I am a woman and a wife. My husband was also supporting me in my dream, which was very good, because imagine if he would have said "No, I do not want you to be doing this, I want you to take care of your body and your baby." But for me it was a challenging thing. I said "I was not expecting three hundreds, I wanted to have more women, but I am sure that next year, I will have even more women." I started speaking about my women's race ahead of time, and I had other sponsors believing in me. For the second edition, we had three thousands women coming to compete; the third time, we had five thousands coming, and so forth. And last year we had twenty-five thousands women: all Moroccan, a few coming from the United States, from the UK, from France, from Spain, from Italy, from Zimbabwe, from Kenya, from Ethiopia, from Egypt, from South Africa, from Namibia, from every single country in the world. We have been filmed by CNN to show how tolerance, how sport can bring people together into a community because when you are together there is no barriers, there is no hate, there is only love. We want to show that we have our rights, our rights as women and that women can exercise in a peaceful way. And men, for one Sunday, they are there waiting for their wives, their fiancées, cheering for them, and it is a beautiful event which I would like you to come to and enjoy sometimes. Today we are trying to duplicate the same event in Kenya, in Senegal, in South Africa and call it "The Great African Women on the Move". But before then, I had invited my good friend from Dubai, her name is Munira and she works with the Federation of Track and Field. She has seen what I have

organised and we want to do the same thing in Dubai and I hope it will happen very soon. And I went to Qatar and now I am working on the Arab states to see how I can also make this area dynamic in terms of having women competing.

Not too long ago, I think about two or three months ago, Qatar organised the Asian Games and it was a fantastic event. Imagine who won the 100m and 200m? an athlete from Bahrain, a woman, strong one. She shook my hand and I was like “arghh”. And a good performance! With veil, and she was running so strongly and very fast. I had met this lady in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens – I think her name is Huda, Hind or Huda. I was standing in the Olympic stadium and she was running the heats in the hundred meters in Athens’ Olympic Games 2004 and she was running against Marlene Ottey from Jamaica – who is now from Slovenia, you know Jamaican from Slovenia because she is running from Slovenia –, and she was in the starting line. For the first time in the history: one athlete from Iraq, one athlete from Bahrain, one athlete from Jordan and one athlete from Afghanistan, and Marlene Ottey from Slovenia. All the cameras of the entire world were filming this unique event. And I was there waiting. Marlene Ottey ran the 100m, she finished her race first, and the second, and the third, and the fourth were of course those I named now. The entire cameras and journalists came to the Bahraini girl, came to the Iraqi girl, to the Jordanian, because they had never competed in the past! There was only East Germans, there was only Americans, only Russians, only Czechoslovakians. And for the first time you see this combination of emerging countries because today the sport does not any longer belong to Europe and North of America but it belongs to every country.

I want to talk to you know about the Olympic Movement. It is a movement I belong to. I decided to stop competing because I wanted to do something else with my life: How can I promote the participation of women in the Arab states, in Africa, and in the Mediterranean area, and worldwide? I started speaking – no one ever prepared me how to speak, I did not know what to say –, but all I knew was that I wanted to speak about my experience because it was a unique one. If I did it, then everyone else can do it, even within Morocco. Now in Morocco, we have women – do you remember twenty-two years ago when I went by myself? Today in our team there is half and half, half women and half men; not only women competing track and field, they compete in weight lifting – which is an ugly event, I do not like it –, in taekwondo, in swimming, and in gymnastics. This is fantastic: remember, from one sport to a variety of sports now. To qualify for the Olympic Games, believe me, it is not easy because you have to go to trials within the Arab states, you have to go to trials within

Africa, you have to go to trials at many many levels before you can reach the peak which is the Olympic Games. And just being there, for me, is a success. I wanted to show the world that our women are capable. We just have to give them time.

When I won my medal, it was in 1984. Women in the last century started competing in 1900. Why? They were very few. This man chairing the International Olympic Committee called Le Baron Pierre de Coubertin, he was the one who modernised the Olympic Games from the antique games to the modern games. But he was against women; he said "They go to hell! They have to go back to kitchens. We do not want them to come here, not only as spectators, they need to be banned. Women running, women competing, not only this is un-aesthetic but it is inappropriate" and this is his words: "Women should go to hell and go home." And imagine, more than a hundred years later, they are the one making the show, not only are they making the show, but they are breaking records and barriers; records that were run by men not too long ago in the Marathon and other events. He was against women so badly that in 1920, this lady called Alice decided to create her own organisation called "Fédération Mondiale des Femmes Sportives". It is an international federation for sports women. They started organising their own world championships, but he did not want them to use the Olympic term. So when this organisation started growing he said "Hum! This is serious, I have to do something to either let them come in with us and try to channel them." So he decided to let them do tennis, you know with their big, long 'abaya – you know they had long long skirts with heavy hats and they were doing tennis; and they had heavy suits, and they were doing swimming with it, and they were drowning when they were swimming. But there is always a start, you know. I have a film which I cannot show you because it is not working... So they started doing archery, swimming, they started doing track and field. But athletics are wide wide sports: there is twenty-one events for men and twenty-one events for women. When I say event, it is the 100m, 200m, 800m, all the way to the Marathon which is more than forty-two kilometres. But women were only given the choice to do short distances because they were worried that they would collapse. In the 1930s Olympic Games he extended to the 800 meters and allowed them to run. Unfortunately they were not well prepared and they collapsed because they were busy cooking maybe, or busy raising their children. And the first one before reaching the final line collapsed, and the second one collapsed, the third one collapsed. He said "Hey, you stop this business because this is too much for women." And imagine, for many years women could not do long distances. Today they are doing ultra Marathon which is more than hundred kilometres. This is amazing... I

still do not know how I did it in 1984. When I look at my performances, at my pictures, I say “How did I do that?” because you really have to sacrifice, to go through so many heavy training sessions, in the morning, in the afternoon, you have no week-end, no religious holidays. You just forget about you teenage hood, about your period, you know. You become responsible and adult because you have to run, fight for this gold medal for your country, for the flag and all that stuff, and for all these women who look up to you.

So I started belonging to organisations very quickly, very young. People started listening. I said “Yes, there are some Arab women that exist, but how come they are not in the scene? There are no Arab journalists; there are no Arab sports leaders.” And I had to look at the foundation. What is the foundation? You remember I spoke about the club: the club composes the federation, and the national federation goes higher to the international federation. And this is how it goes to belong to the Olympic Movement. But when you look at the club you do not see many women, as coaches, as sport leaders, as journalists, as doctors, as physiotherapists. And this is where it hurts, because if you do not have women at low levels, you cannot build at the higher levels. So you have to educate, and this is a recommendation that I like: education and training sessions. Because, if a woman does not believe in herself while she is an athlete, as soon as she reaches the age of eighteen, she just goes away. She is married, she has kids, she has no time to go back and coach. She has the element, the basic element; she just needs to improve herself to stay in the field. That's why when you as a parent, Eugene, you come and bring you two daughters, but you do not want to give them to a man because you do not want them to train until eight or nine in the evening, and you do not want them to travel one hundred and twenty kilometres with the coach in his car, and you do not want to let them go overseas with the coach, so many things that we take into consideration as an Arab and Muslim society, and I agree. That is why now time is changing and I do not let my daughter go and exercise and do track and field. Yes, because things are changing today, it has nothing to do... you know I used to go to my school and it takes me ten kilometres, walking distance, at eight in the morning, back at noon, and two o'clock and six o'clock, so that is forty kilometres altogether in one day, alone. There is no bus, no taxi then, my parents did not take me every day, I was doing it myself. I was seven years old. Today I cannot let my daughter do that in a busy Casablanca with many buses and cars – Mr. Steal knows all this in Casablanca.

I decided, I said to myself: “These women need to be aware about the importance of being involved in the field. So we started imagining with the Olympic Movement to see how

we can create a dynamic to have more women involved in sports. Like I said in the beginning, I belong to the International Olympic Committee which is an organisation based in Lausanne. In 1994, finally, women said in the Olympic Movement “We need to do something about ourselves.” We created this commission, the International Commission for Women in Sports, for the first time of our history of the Olympic Movement. Our chair is an American, she is called **Anita De France**, she is an Afro-American, and she had won in rowing. We are perhaps fifteen members of us within this commission. We had strongly encouraged the entire national Olympic committees around the world – there are about two hundred and three of them – to create their own national Olympic committee and to create their own working group on women and sports or commissions on women and sports. We spoke about the quota. We said “We cannot wait another one hundred years! We refuse to wait for men to tell us to go to hell, we just want women to compete, we just want women as our sports leaders. We decided to think about a quota otherwise no men chairing an organisation can tell you “Hey Nawal, I think that I like you. You want to chair, take my seat?” No, you have to fight for it and even if you fight for it, you will not get it because there is a strong movement among men and sports is a society that is a men-dominated thing. I do not think that any men can let me seat there. So we had to think about these ten percents. And it was a riot: “Oh ten percents, no, maybe the President will bring his wife and ask her to seat because of the quota; maybe the Secretary-General will bring his wife also, or his sister or his neighbour because women in the Gulf states, or in the Arab states, or in Africa, are not qualified; so anyone will be using the ten percents.” We had to use that ten percent quota until 2000, the 31st of December 2000. We were a bit disappointed: a few countries had few women, but the majority did not have women. Among our recommendations – because we had our own congress in Lausanne in 1996 where we came up with this recommendation, and every four years we decided to have this congress to see the advancement of our women –, we realised that it was very static, that there were not much improvement. We decided afterwards to rise the ten percents to twenty percents. But how? We started thinking about having training sessions. And now I am going to make my recommendations. Training session, to see how you can do it, go to the Gulf states, go the African states, go to the Mediterranean region, go to the Eastern bloc, to the Asian, to the French-speaking, to the Portuguese-speaking, the Arab-speaking countries, by region, and see... because women, when they are among themselves, then they feel much better, they can speak more freely, there can be much easy discussion instead of having a big congress when there is a one guest speaker and everyone is listening. We all have the same

problems, they say that we are all in a male-dominated society and we cannot go out there and cannot stay in meetings up until midnight, and we cannot do this and we cannot do that, we cannot go to far places on the day of a competition. We finally felt that the problems were similar, everywhere we would go. But we had to do a strategy, how women can improve themselves, how women can improve themselves. And we decided to go to twenty percent. Today, believe me, there is a big improvement: we have a lot of countries respecting that quota. Not only that, we decided to impose the quota in National Olympic Committee, in international federations, and there are many international federations like boxing, soccer, athletics, swimming, gymnastics, archery. And now to accept this federation as a full federation, we ask them... or to accept a new sport like roller blades which is waiting out there, golf is waiting, rugby is waiting, karate is waiting, all these new sports, they want to become in the Olympic program; you know what we tell them? "Bring women in your program; if you do not have women we do not accept you." There are fighting to get women, not only women from Europe or the United States, women from the five continents – just like our Olympic rings, they are five. We are like a family, there is solidarity, and if we are lacking women from one continent, we cannot accept that sport.

So we are working on this, training sessions and networking. All the previous speakers spoke about networking. What I am doing today, I like to share with the other, with all the others from other countries. It is very important because without networking I do not think that you can go any further. I think you can stay because you are the only one who knows the solution and you are giving it to yourself, you are not giving it to your neighbour, to your friend. Some of the previous speakers had said that we are our own enemies; women, we are our own enemies. Most of the time unfortunately when you see a woman excelling, and another one excelling and another one excelling, you try to unite yourselves. But most of the time, it is too difficult because of their susceptibilities: I am from Morocco, she is from Tunisia, she is from Algeria. We try to do action together, we try to unite our efforts, to go forward. Sometimes it is very difficult, that is too bad, but it is very difficult.

I wanted to say something: Dr. Nabila when you said about your husband, when you receive an invitation "Mr. Nabila and partner", I do the same thing. I belong to these organisations, and most of the time, when I receive an invitation, it is "Mrs. Nawal al-Moutawakil and Mr. Nawal al-Moutawakil". My husband's name is Mounir Banis and you know, the first time, he was offended. I had to make him understand that he has to do with this, that things cannot improve and change overnight, it takes time. Even when we used to

walk outside in the streets of Morocco: “Oh this is Nawal, give me a kiss” and they would come and kiss me, and he was like “Oh! She is my wife, she is my wife, please, respect”. And they tell my husband “We have known her before you have known her; we have seen her on TV, she is a hero, so please, sorry.” Well he had to fight. But now he is used to this, and he sees people who are like “Hi Nawal” and he is just waiting. It is such a difficult situation: this is all the way around!

Maybe I should stop here, if you have any questions.