



The President's report

21st Council meeting - May 2021

Please find below the report I presented at the opening of the 21st Council, held by videoconference on 20–21 May 2021.

The long night into which the COVID-19 pandemic plunged us is coming to an end. Last year, the FIG did not invoice national federations for membership fees – a gesture to help them get through the darkest hours.

The FIG also decided to release a special aid fund which provides support to Gymnastics family members who have been severely hit by COVID-19. An overall total of CHF 302,000 has been granted to 26 federations.

I know that in addition to support from the FIG, many federations support each other. It makes me happy to be part of this Gymnastics family.

1) Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

Hopefully we will see the sun rise over the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. I believe that people need the light of Tokyo 2020, because the world remains partly in darkness. IOC President Thomas Bach hopes that the



Olympic Games will be held. The government of Japan, sponsors and, of course, athletes all hope too that the Olympic Games will be held.

Some of the media have negative opinions, but deep down, they want Tokyo 2020 to go ahead. The IOC, the Japanese government – all have been making great efforts to reduce the risks of COVID-19 infections at Tokyo 2020.

While the Olympic Games will surely be held, they will be different from previous Olympics. Overseas spectators cannot enter Japan. Athletes and people involved in the organisation who enter Japan cannot go out to places other than the competition venues and their own hotels. There are many restrictions, but the important thing is to hold the Olympics for the athletes.

2) Olympic qualification events

A few events have not been held as per schedule due to COVID-19. We have to accept this; we have no choice. Some national federations have complained and asked for exceptions. But we cannot make any allowances. We must be fair to all 148 national federations. If we allow a single exception, the entire system will fail. As one of the largest international federations in the world, the FIG shall strictly follow the rules.

3) 2021 World Championships

TOKYO 2020

LEGACY
WORLD GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

18th Oct. ~ 31st Oct.
Kitakyushu City JAPAN

世界体操 WORLD GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

10月開催
福岡県・北九州市
テレビ朝日系列 独占放送

世界新体操 RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

5 GENDER EQUALITY

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

For the first time in the FIG's history, the Artistic and Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships will be run one after the other in the same host city: Kitakyushu, Japan, in October.

This is happening because the national federation which was initially allocated the 50th Artistic Gymnastics World Championships stood down from organising the event due to COVID-19. The Japanese Association

helped solve this problem by offering to organise two World Championships in one host city in the same period. This is a new opportunity, and it leads me to dream: one day, like the Olympics, the World Championships of all our sports – Artistic, Rhythmic, Trampoline, Acrobatic, Aerobic and Parkour – as well as the Gym for Life Challenge might be held in one host city all at once. This kind of “Gymnastics Olympics” will surely help to raise the value of Gymnastics.

How many costs can we reduce by organising the Artistic and Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships together? We will analyse and evaluate the positive impact of such joint events.

4) Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals

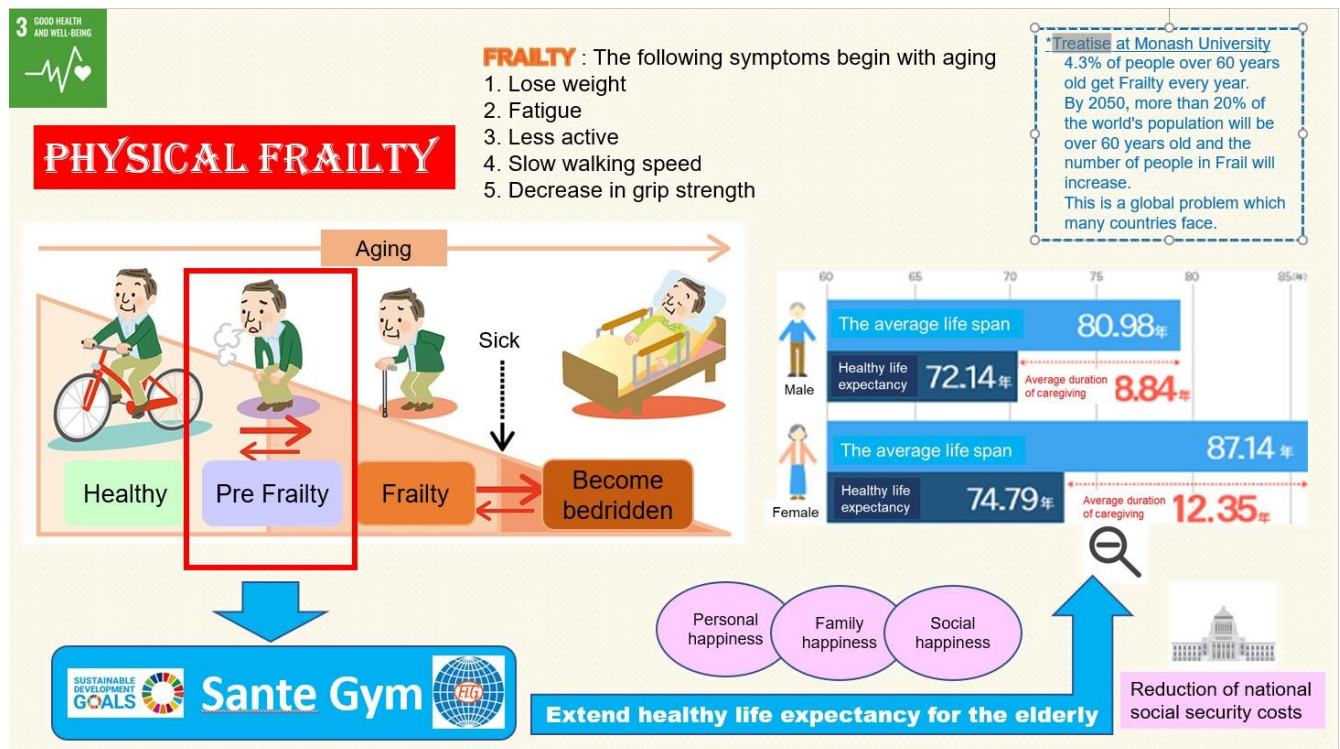
The Artistic and Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships will also be a first in the sense that we will try to further raise the values of sport by promoting the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The first goal (SDG 5) is gender equality. There will be strict gender equality among the board members and staff of the Local Organising Committee. We have invited Lydia Nsekera, the chair of the IOC Women in Sport Commission, to lead a gender-equality forum during the Championships.

The second goal (SDG 16) is to contribute to peace. Vera Caslavskva, the All-Around champion at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, always promoted peace. We, the Gymnastics family, must be inspired by her spiritual heritage. The FIG may appoint the All-Around Champions as “Gymnastics Peace Ambassadors” and encourage them to participate in global peacekeeping activities.

The third goal (SDG 3) is contributing to people’s health. Gymnastics has a reputation for being a demanding Olympic sport. However, Gymnastics is the basis of many people’s lifestyles. And it is a sport which can be helpful for society.

The World Championships in Kitakyushu will try to demonstrate this. A project named “FIG Sante Gym” is expected to be introduced by the Local Organising Committee in several cities before, during and after the



Championships. “Sante Gym” is the location where the FIG can promote exercises for elderly people to help them remain healthy and active.

It will provide many elderly people with the opportunity to experience Gymnastics with the aim of extending their healthy life span. Until now the FIG has focused mainly on Olympic sports and children, but we can show that Gymnastics can also be instrumental in lowering medical costs in ageing societies.

The World Championships directives at this moment are based on the rules of Tokyo 2020. However, by the time the World Championships are held the situation will surely improve, and hopefully we will be able to have more of a party than during Tokyo 2020. Kitakyushu is the city where I was born, and I hope that we will have a great celebration of sport there.

5) Safeguarding

I have been calling for separation of powers into three branches – administration, legislation, and judiciary – for the FIG’s structure because good governance relies on the separation of powers. With the aim of preventing abuse and harassment, the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation was established in 2019 as an independent judicial body. While the FIG has the administrative role, I have been highlighting the need to also have an enforcement unit within the FIG.

Eventually, the setting up of a Safeguarding Working Group will meet this need. The working group must have education – of gymnasts, coaches and officials – as its primary focus. On the one hand, the Safeguarding Working Group will ensure education and on the other hand, the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation is the place to report cases and seek legal assistance. I believe they act as two vital cogs in the engine of the FIG vehicle.

To conclude this report, I know recent months have been difficult and full of uncertainties for many of you. I wish to thank all of you once again for your tremendous efforts during this unprecedented period.