



CARDINAL RAVASI WELCOMED AT IOC HQ BY PRESIDENT BACH

18 April 2016



International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach met Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council, on 18 April 2016 to discuss the collaboration between the IOC and the Vatican, both of which have permanent observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN).

The discussions centred on the first global conference on faith and sport that is scheduled to take place in October 2016. The conference, called "Sport at the Service of Humanity," is a historic event supported by the IOC and the United Nations that will gather leaders from all areas of society to look at how faith and sport can use their respective influence to promote positive values, especially among young people. It will be opened by His Holiness Pope Francis. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and IOC President Thomas Bach will deliver keynote addresses.

Following the meeting at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne, President Bach said: "As I stressed during my address to the UN General Assembly in New York last year, the role of sport is always to build bridges, it is never to build walls. Sport stands for dialogue and understanding which transcend all differences. Sport, and the Olympic Movement especially, understands the global diversity of cultures, societies and life designs as a source of richness."

"The first global conference on faith and sport will be the perfect opportunity to reflect how sport and its values can support social change, community development and the promotion of peace and human rights along with faith principles across all religions," President Bach continued.

Cardinal Ravasi added: "It will be an occasion to come together to face up to the great challenges of contemporary society, which are shared interests for the world's sporting and religious communities: how to live with respect for all, with increased understanding of each other's traditions and values, more full and healthy lives, more integrated communities. Sport is also of such fundamental importance for education, allowing young people especially to open up to the trials of life, putting themselves to the test, crossing boundaries, meeting opponents on a fair playing field while striving to the best they can be, in some sense aiming for the Transcendent."

The “Sport at the Service of Humanity” Conference is scheduled to take place from 5 to 7 October at the Vatican Synod Hall. In view of the conference, the IOC and the Vatican signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2015.

Also attending today’s meeting was the Permanent Observer of the IOC to the United Nations Mario Pescante.

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