



at the heart of horse sport

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**FEI PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**Speech by HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein of Jordan**  
**2006 FEI World Equestrian Games, Aachen**  
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Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for coming and I am delighted to have the opportunity to be able to share my thoughts with you.

I have great respect for the people sat in front of me here. Your job is never easy and you are helping us to take the sport to a larger worldwide audience than ever before.

I will concentrate today on the FEI as an organisation, as I believe from discussions over the last few days that this is the area that you would be interested in and I will outline clear deliverables and the approach.

As a result I will speak less about horses than perhaps I would like – but that is because it goes without saying that they are the reason that we are here – and their partners are those we, the FEI, ultimately are here to celebrate and serve.

My own experiences as an athlete mean that this is never far from my mind – my experience of this at grass roots level and my many friends in the sport mean that I am privileged to be able to keep my fingers on this pulse – and I am aware, as true friends are, of what they are critical of in the organisation. My vision for them is similar to that of the IOC – “for the athletes by the athletes”. I hope that by the end of my tenure as President, I will not only have created an organisation that walks this road hand in hand with them, but also that we will have created through them a future generation equipped to run and serve the horse world by allowing them open entry into the ranks of the organisation, and give them the tools in addition to those of their field to do this with complete professionalism.

This week there are discussions between our Pony Committee and Strategic Planning Committee to layout ideas and mission statements for our new FEI Youth Department – whose primary goal will be to create a new young face for the FEI – and to prepare young lovers of horsesport to also have an opportunity to take part in the administration .... Who knows, maybe your next President will be younger than me!

I am here today specifically addressing you – my colleagues, members of the media and so allow me to begin by addressing the key aspect of our relationship....



I am not expecting that you will always praise the FEI or the plans we have in store and I appreciate this. Your constructive criticism will only serve to make me work harder – and spur the organisation to greater success through the inspiration that is often derived from necessity. I would encourage you though to try and see this FEI as one that is trying, hoping and striving to transform – and judge us from what we do today and tomorrow – and please set aside ideas of the past.

I am the first to admit that we have our faults and I am afraid that we will make mistakes, but we will try to make them moving forward and be vigilant to rectify them without being reactive. We are attempting to change perception and provide a heavy dose of reality and pragmatism to everything we do.

I promised leadership that was guiding and sustainable. I promised hard work and energy, I promised to fulfil this and to give my successor an organisation that can be run based on sustainable principles and that is what I will deliver.

My personal communications strategy and that of the FEI is now clear .... Our face is that of horsesport. That is what we seek to glorify and promote.

Previously the FEI saw branding itself as a priority. I see their direction but my mandate is to first brand our product, which is the horse and our sport, to put the heroes of championships like this one in the limelight, those with two and four legs. The FEI's face will become that of an efficient servant to horsesport and in time the FEI will attain its own positive identity as it is recognised.

If you want to know what drives me the answer is simple, I am doing something I love. In the turbulent world we live in today, we have to be thankful that we are involved in a sport that brings out the best in people. The wonderful and peaceful setting of Aachen is in deep contrast to the troubles that afflict many of the people that the FEI is trying to reach out to.

Take Lebanon, for instance. As the Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations World Food Programme, I recently visited the refugee camps in Syria and Northern Lebanon. Once again it put into perspective why I wish to serve the FEI and the equestrian community. Sport bridges the vast separations that politics creates. Horses bring people together and bind our diverse community in the FEI from Mongolia to Jamaica, from Jordan to Germany – and they unite us.

When I was considering whether to run for the position of FEI President, my search for information took me to the doors of management consultants, sports entrepreneurs and international federations. Armed with this perspective I then turned to those who had a vote in our General Assembly – the National Federations and I listened and learned from both inside and

outside our world and produced a manifesto I hoped would address the will of the electorate through feasible achievable.

I soon realised that we were in danger of becoming an inward looking and that we were trying to solve our problems with a narrow perspective by persuading ourselves that we were and could always be right.

With this in mind my manifesto was based on how others viewed us and analysing, from this standpoint, our failings but, importantly, our massive potential.

The first thing that was abundantly obvious is that we are in a competitive market place. Successful International Federations run their administration in a business like fashion, are striving to be heard by the media and hungry for revenue to feed the insatiable demands of the modern sporting world. Many of them have been hugely successful.

Let us make no mistake that we are in a tough environment and competing with many sports for sponsors, media coverage, commercial advantage, global awareness and leadership. Our slice of the cake, quite frankly, can improve but with the right initiative we have the opportunity to take our sport to far greater heights.

While acknowledging that horsesport is slightly different in many aspects, I was struck by how much we could learn from other international federations. They have highlighted to me the binding principles that we must adhere to – namely;

- Ensuring that development of the sport is of paramount importance so that we can achieve universality
- Making the International Federation a beneficial partner to National Federations, athletes and organisers, adding value rather than just collecting taxes to administer the sport
- Putting the word Integrity into sport to ensure that it is clean and provides an effective deterrent to corruption or behaviour that might bring the sport into disrepute
- Driving a hard commercial programme that provides a competitive advantage over other calls by the community on corporate interest
- We need to look at less taxation of our members and more support and interaction with them
- We need to include our stakeholders who are the National Federations, athletes, organisers and the media in a meaningful way

All these lessons learnt form part of my thinking for the future. My philosophy reached from these lessons is simple; to succeed, the FEI needs to add value to everything and everyone it touches. We need to be a goal oriented organisation that is agile and achieving.



If we add value then we will bring organisations and individuals along with us. If we do not do this, then internal friction will prevail and outwardly we will be seen as a member of the Dinosaur sporting community!

And what of the future? Like everything in business, we have to have a clear idea of where we want to end up and then how we will get there. This forms the basis of the FEI Business Plan which is being prepared with the active involvement of the National Federations.

And how will I judge the FEI's and my success in four years time? I will be looking to achieve the following at the very least:

- 133 functioning and participating National Federations. We need our current National Federations participating and engaged. We need established and professional national federations actively promoting their sport through a financially supported development culture that emulates the larger international federations. We must see universality and not polarisation of the sport.
- We are one sport, eight disciplines. We need to realise that together we are a commercial power house; if we split into our constituent parts then we will be marginalised – apart, one discipline competes against another – together we are in a position to compete with other International Federations
- The sport must have a competition structure that provides a clear and easily understood message that is well supported by all the stakeholders. Heroes will be born and celebrated as a result
- Let's provide a clean, disciplined sport that provides a lifestyle platform for the brand conscious individual – and that really highlights our case that horses teach social responsibility
- We need to have FEI Championships that are well defined and valuable to sponsors and television.
- And my final benchmark will be an FEI that is revenue based and adds value to all its constituent parts and in so doing so increase our revenue streams by 2010 by at least 300%

The FEI Business Plan is based on the Manifesto I presented to the General Assembly in April. For the first time we had an election and election campaigns. I was elected on a clear mandate for change, a change that protects our traditions in horsesport but modernises our organisation and its culture. BUT I am not change, change comes from within, my job is to guide it.

I based my election platform on six pillars, or if you like, foundations for the FEI. Governance, National Federations, Development, Commercial, Welfare and the International Olympic Committee.

The good governance of the FEI must underpin all the other activities because only if we can get the core right do we have a chance to influence the rest.



So who is the FEI – This faceless, nameless ivory tower we are so often accused of being ... let me start by telling you – there are some very colourful faces indeed! For me the FEI was this dinosaur that never told us what we could do but instead told us what we could not.

The FEI I see today has a Bureau and an Executive Board that are policy driven supported by an FEI headquarters of professionals whose role it is to drive that policy forward. We look now to a body where all involved will have role descriptions and will be accountable for fulfilling the mandate given to them by the General Assembly through me.

Having come to know the team I know that they are relishing the opportunity to rise to this challenge and it is a pleasure to work with them.

Now to our National Federations, the watchword here is unity; I believe that they are the centre of gravity for our organisation it is their FEI and, therefore, the critical success factor for horsesport is the health and professionalism of our national federations. The national federations are the portal for the FEI and, as such, are our representatives nationally. Too often the cry is that they are not heard. Under my Presidency they will be heard and treated in a fair and equal manner. They will be allowed access to more information and receive more than patronage from the organisation and I hope they feel that the FEI is one they take pride in because it belongs to them and not the other way round that they belong to it.

We will do our utmost to assist developing national federations so that the professionalism that you see in the larger equestrian nations is replicated around the world and so that the larger national federations provide sound counsel and guidance. We need to create a benchmark to strive towards so that development is a pyramid that protects the elite and does not lower the bar to include countries which do not reach the standard.

Which brings me onto development. The other international federations I have studied allocate at least 15% of their overall budgets into development. Development as a definition therefore includes development of the FEI, of the national federations, sport and disciplines.

So the FEI's development aspirations are not simply an altruistic or feel good ambition. If our sport does not develop tailor made packages that work in our emerging nations then our sport and the disciplines within the FEI will be polarised around comparatively few nations. This would strike our pockets when looking for global sponsors and would make us vulnerable within the IOC. If we do not reach true universality – which means more than just having numbers of national federations on the books – then we will always struggle to be heard.

The brand of the FEI has grown in stature since the establishment of its Commercial Division in 2002 and we are seeing more commercial support

come into horsesport thanks to their activity. Our focus now needs to be on glorifying the horse and the sport at the same time ensuring that the FEI provides the base from which commercial activity can take off and provide real benefit to national federations, athletes and organisers. We are increasing our pool of sponsors and in doing so the FEI needs to work with organisers as it is doing with Kentucky

There will be more money coming into the FEI but we have to be responsible with it and ensure that we develop strategies that make the revenue sustainable over the long term.

Welfare must always be at the forefront of our minds. We always have to protect the innocent animal in our pursuit of glory and to provide the rules in which our athletes operate in a fair and equitable environment. However, I believe that it goes further than the traditional understanding of welfare. We have to make sure that integrity is introduced at every level in horsesport. This will include welfare, integrity, education, deterrence and, ultimately, punishment. Therefore, think integrity in horsesport – it will become a mantra of the FEI very shortly.

Let me now talk about the last pillar – the International Olympic Committee.

It is a deep rooted conviction of mine that the IOC is the bedrock of our sport. It is immensely important as a shop window to new audiences, countries and future athletes.

The IOC have some 30+ criteria that they demand and use to benchmark us against other international federations. We need to improve under every one of those headings. So our standing in the IOC should not depend on a political approach or personal relationships it should be founded in what we deliver.

The FEI is developing a strategy of how we make our IOC goals a reality. Jacques Rogge, the IOC President, is coming to Aachen on Saturday and I am sure that this will mark a new chapter and a binding and fruitful relationship. As he says himself, the horse is the only true amateur of the Olympic Games! We must capitalise on this and make it the unique selling feature within the Olympic Movement, without compromising our values.

I have given many pledges during my election campaign, which I am determined to honour as I will be judged against them and rightly so. I am focused and target driven and have instituted a 150 day plan, which for you mathematicians ends on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

At the end of this period, I will draw up a report together with the staff and it will be published. I have tasked members of the Executive Board and the FEI Staff to develop my Manifesto into policy, which is providing the foundation of the Business Plan and will give us sustainable targets.

Much has already happened and is happening to give you a flavour:

- The modernisation process is now on track
- The FEI Business Plan will be presented at the Bureau Meeting in November and then will be put to the General Assembly in 2007 for approval
- New Draft Statutes which will streamline the organisation's constitution have been distributed for National Federations to comment on.
- Communications with National Federations are now firmly on the agenda, and we are steps away from approaching global IT network providers to institute this programme
- A strategy for Development has been written and will be presented as part of the Business Plan
- We have worked with the team in Kentucky to great success and in June were delighted to announce Horsesport's biggest ever sponsor in Alltech, to the tune of \$10 million
- We have also instituted the new Equine Anti-doping and Medication Control Regulations which we are confident will radicalise how equine medication control is dealt with and communicated
- And as a very tangible achievement, it gives me great pleasure to announce that, of the 10 million Swiss Francs I pledged to raise, 6.1 million Swiss Francs is already with the FEI although I would add that it remains for the General Assembly to approve the Business Plan. I would also like to say that I have no doubt that the remaining 4 million Swiss Francs will be raised by the time of the General Assembly as I pledged

In summary, I have given you why we need to change, how we are going to change and where we hope to be within five years.

It is a bold project but we will fulfil our ambitions if we understand the path that we need to follow. We have the Business Plan, we know where we need to be and we DO have the means to do it. We must not fool ourselves into thinking that horsesport will be bigger than football, but it can achieve considerably more than it is currently.

In horsesport there should be no fragmentation, marginalisation or discrimination. If there is, then our sport will not grow stronger.

I see my job as keeping the pedal down and the speed up. It has to be controlled and processes have to be followed. But in the spirit of celebrating the horse, Meredith Michaels had a great horse whose name encapsulates what we need to do: he was called 'Just Do It'.

I sincerely hope that I have shown you the direction we wish to take under this Presidency. Thank you all for your time and I look forward to answering your questions.