



# FIH President's report



FIH President's Report – 47<sup>th</sup> FIH Statutory Congress,  
New Delhi, India – 22 May 2021

Dear Members of the FIH Congress,

I hope this report finds you well and safe!

Since our last Congress in New Delhi in 2018, FIH has launched its global home-and-away league - the **FIH Hockey Pro League** -, created other new events – the **FIH Nations Cup** as well as the **FIH Hockey5s World Cup and World Tour** -, approved an **8-year global hockey calendar**, staged numerous **online Development courses**, signed **new commercial partners**, **increased** its **social media audiences**, produced a global and modern digital home of hockey – **Watch.Hockey** -, **engaged with athletes** to have hockey benefit from their **influencers'** status, **improved** its **good governance**, **pushed** its **digitalization** and decided to get developed waterless turf for Hockey in the near future, just to name a few of its recent achievements and decisions.

In the following pages, I will elaborate on those achievements, and more.

One point is certain: none of this would have been possible without **your strong commitment and support**, which is even more remarkable while the world – including the global hockey community of course - has to deal with **unprecedented challenges** due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Please accept my **sincerest gratitude** for this.

**(A) Hockey Development**

Development is the mission number one of every International Federation. The same goes for FIH. At the last Congress in 2018, a five-year strategy to promote and develop hockey at all levels throughout the world was



introduced to you: **Hockey 2024**. This strategy provides a clear direction for global hockey development and enables us to raise the global status and popularity of hockey.

This strategy, based on the four areas of Participation, Education, Infrastructure and Inspiration, is the overarching framework from which derives a number of projects and activities, some of which I would like to highlight.

In order to continue to provide the global hockey community with courses despite the hurdles caused by the current pandemic, the FIH Academy - the education & development home of FIH – has put together a digital offer. Honestly, when works started on this project, it was difficult to estimate how successful these courses would be. After a couple of weeks, the answer was clear though: the attendance was impressive! I would like to thank all those of you or your members who've been involved in giving these **online courses** but also all those who've registered for these courses, as this shows the vitality and commitment of our community!

Last year, FIH created the **FIH World Hockey Club**, which you are invited to join as a Guest, Coach, Official or VIP Supporter. All hockey volunteers, players, officials & coaches can join the FIH World Hockey Club and help promote and grow the game globally. All members have access to specific benefits. Do not hesitate!

FIH has designated **2021** as the **#HockeyInvites Year of the Youth**. With this in mind, the FIH Academy is inviting project proposals from Continental Federations and National Associations that are aimed at youngsters and have inclusivity, learning, development and progression at their heart. The projects can focus on grass roots hockey, elite development or a combination of both, the main aim is to show young people what a fun and progressive sport hockey is. I can only encourage you to register your projects!

Still for the youth, FIH has developed the **FIH Young Athlete Academy Diploma** which is an online learning programme for hockey players aged



14 to 18 years who are serious about becoming the best they can be. All sessions are live and interactive with FIH Academy Coaches and International Athlete mentors. Here again, please take the chance to involve your young athletes.

While talking about growing our sport, I'd like to make a specific reference to **Hockey5s**. I am absolutely convinced that Hockey5s has the power to open new doors to expand our sport and invite new people to join hockey. With less players and infrastructures required, it facilitates access to hockey. It can even be brought in the heart of the cities! It is also a format which will appeal to numerous people thanks to its almost non-stop action and prolific goal-scoring. I see it as a perfect complement to the other hockey formats. Therefore, I am really pleased that FIH has, since our last Congress, decided to create an FIH Hockey5s World Cup as well as paved the way for a Hockey5s World Tour.

## **(B)** FIH Events

After magnificent **FIH Indoor World Cups** in Berlin, Germany and **FIH Women's World Cup** in London, England, as well as fantastic 2018 **Youth Olympic Games** in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where hockey registered the highest attendances among all sports, the year 2018 ended with a thrilling **Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup**, in Bhubaneswar, India. Played in the state-of-the-art Kalinga Stadium, in front of a passionate and vibrant crowd, the event was brought to no less than 194 countries around the world, thanks to media rights agreements signed by FIH with over thirty broadcast partners – twice more than for the 2014 edition - worldwide. This represented a 150% increase compared to 2014!

Shortly after, our new global home-and-away league, the **FIH Hockey Pro League**, started in Valencia, Spain, with an outstanding match between the home team and the newly crowned World Champions, Belgium. It was a perfect start for the league. Since then, "Hockey at its Best", as the league is promoted, has provided dozens of remarkable matches, involving the vast majority of the best teams and athletes in the world, therefore giving hockey a regular exposure like never before.



Boosting the promotion of our sport, bringing numerous top-flight matches in front of home crowds, offering the possibility to hockey fans to watch their beloved sport regularly on TV or on our OTT platform, ... All that is the essence of the launch of the FIH Hockey Pro League. And this has been done! Of course, the global COVID-19 pandemic has put big hurdles on our way. But thanks to all involved, in particular the National Associations of the participating teams (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, China, Germany, Great Britain, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, USA) we can look forward to the further seasons of the FIH Hockey Pro League with optimism.

2019 was also a qualification year for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. The **FIH Series Finals** were hosted in Malaysia, India, Ireland, Japan, France and Spain. Great events which provided many teams the possibility to showcase their level, ambitions, progress. A time of joy for some, a time of disappointment for others, as is always the case with such events. But, first and foremost, great hockey moments!

The final stage of the qualification to the XXXII Olympiad were the **FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers**. 28 teams – 14 Men's and 14 Women's – battling it out for a ticket to Japan's capital city. The motivation of the teams was extreme, the atmosphere in the stadiums electric, the fans watching from all over the world, with a TV coverage reaching 116 countries. High level of play, high emotions, high intensity!

Now, looking at the upcoming events, the first one is the next Olympiad, precisely. For reasons which are known to everybody, the **Olympic Games Tokyo 2020** have – fully understandably - been postponed by one year and we're looking forward to exhilarating & enthralling Hockey Olympic events in a couple of months! I would like here to thank wholeheartedly the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Tokyo Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (TOCOG) and the Japanese authorities for their tireless efforts and immense support. The Olympic Games are massively important for hockey. They are a wonderful opportunity to showcase and promote our sport. I therefore call upon



everyone within the hockey community to engage with the Olympic Games, by watching matches on the rights-holding broadcasters' channels, sharing posts on social media, visiting regularly the IOC and TOCOG's digital platforms, since this plays a significant role for the overall success of hockey at the Olympics. I wish all participating teams the very best!

Shortly after the quadrennial mega sporting event, FIH will organise its first ever senior World **Hockey5s** event, in **Lausanne**, Switzerland. In the near future, a Hockey5s World Tour, which will consist of events similar to the Lausanne's one, will be launched.

Later in the year, we will be enjoying the **FIH Hockey Junior World Cups** – the Men's event will be held in India and the Women's event will be held in South Africa – where so many talents of our sport have emerged in the past.

And looking further, we have a range of remarkable FIH events ahead of us, including the **2022 FIH Hockey Indoor World Cup in Belgium**, the **2022 FIH Hockey Women's World Cup in Spain and the Netherlands**, the **2022 FIH Hockey Nations Cup**, the **2023 FIH Men's World Cup in India** and the **2023 FIH Hockey5s World Cup**.

As you know, the **FIH Hockey Nations Cup** is a new competition. Its aim is to offer a top-level competition to the best-ranked teams not yet participating in the FIH Hockey Pro League and give the winners the option to be promoted to the FIH Hockey Pro League the next season, precisely.

The **FIH Hockey5s World Cup**, which is also new, will enable a number of National Associations, smaller ones in particular, to participate in a World Cup - or the qualifiers of a World Cup – which is really positive for the overall growth of our sport, I am sure.

At this stage, I would like to extend my **sincerest thanks to all National Associations who have hosted or will host any FIH event**. Without your commitment and passion, coupled with that of your fully dedicated volunteers, these events quite simply could not happen!



### (C) Sport

The recent approval by the Executive Board (EB) of an **8-year global hockey calendar** establishing dates and windows for FIH and Continental Federations' events, as well as multi-sport events where hockey is included, is a major step for hockey. Not only will it help scheduling competitions in a coordinated manner worldwide, but it will also immensely benefit all of you for devising your plans with existing or potential future partners. I am really glad that we could achieve such a milestone together and here too, my thanks go to everyone who contributed to this great outcome.

A new system for the **FIH World Rankings** has come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. The new individual match-based World Ranking system has been developed with the aim of moving away from the previous tournament-based system, so that all international matches are meaningful, with world ranking points at stake. Amongst others, it increases opportunities for all National Associations to gain ranking points, accurately reflects current performance and provides weekly rankings and live narrative to every official match with the impact of the result on the world rankings table being known immediately.

Another important development is that FIH and World **Masters** Hockey (WMH) signed in 2019 a ground-breaking Memorandum of Understanding bringing all the Masters hockey under a single organization within the global FIH hockey community. Hockey is an inclusive sport. Masters are a very important part of the global hockey community. They play an essential role, in particular in transmitting the passion and values of our sport to the younger generations.

The infrastructures needed to practice hockey – and their evolution - are also an important topic. Last year, FIH managed to **expand from ten to eleven the number of Preferred Suppliers** of the **FIH Quality Programme** for hockey turf (with Act Global, AstroTurf, Edel, FieldTurf, Forbex, CC Grass, Greenfields, Lano, Polytan and Tigerturf being joined on the list by Domo Sports Grass), the internationally recognised quality assurance



scheme designed to guarantee the construction of good quality fields from community development right through to elite level competition.

Furthermore, suppliers are making progress in developing a **dry hockey turf**. As you know, at the last Congress, FIH had revealed its will to find an alternative to watered pitches by 2024, therefore contributing significantly to a more sustainable environment. This process is being conducted with all relevant stakeholders being consulted - first and foremost the athletes - with a view to reach the same quality as the current water-based fields.

#### (D) Promotion

Promotional activities are key for hockey to grow. To this end, FIH has been working on two main areas:

- participation increase – in other words, getting more men and women, boys and girls to play hockey
- fanbase increase.

In 2019, FIH launched its global **#HockeyInvites** campaign to push these two objectives, precisely. Based on the values of our sport, and especially its social ones – respect, fair-play, community-building -, the campaign aims to “invite” people to join the global hockey community, as player, fan, volunteer, etc. The branding of the campaign is visible on most marketing-communications outputs and has been shared with all Continental Federations and National Associations, in order to maximise its impact worldwide. It is also intrinsically linked to our Development activities.

In that same year, and together with the birth of the FIH Hockey Pro League, FIH launched its very first **OTT platform**, “**FIH.live**”, a global broadcast platform for hockey, streaming FIH events live. FIH.live would enable FIH to engage more with the global hockey community, hockey fans and anyone who has not had the chance to discover the sport yet.

In some way, it was the precursor of an even bigger ambition: a platform combining an app and a web version at the same time, giving, amongst others, the option to know our audience better by getting relevant data. This is how, thanks to a partnership with the world's leading independent





provider of content protection and multiscreen video solutions, NAGRA, the new “digital home of hockey” for fans and players alike – **Watch.Hockey** - was launched last year.

Today, not only it gives anyone the possibility to watch FIH events such as the FIH Hockey Pro League but I’m really pleased to see how **a number of National Associations have engaged with Watch.Hockey to have their own events**, sometimes even practice or test matches, **streamed** on the platform. I can only encourage you to do so! This is a great opportunity for you to promote your events and for our sport in general to show hockey from different countries, from different levels, from different perspectives. This is truly community-building.

Another major avenue that FIH has been increasingly using is that of **social media**. I will not underline here how crucial a strong digital presence is today for any organisation wishing to grow and reach out to bigger audiences, but I want to stress upon the fact that since our last Congress, our social media **audiences have grown by 26% (including 47% on Instagram!)**, and this despite the adverse impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. After a couple of years where the focus was put essentially on Facebook, we have decided to concentrate most of our efforts on Instagram, without minimising the other platforms of course. And this is bearing fruits.

A significant part of this positive evolution is due to the involvement of the **athletes**. Indeed, on the basis that athletes are so important ambassadors of hockey, FIH has contacted a number of them around the world to invite them to help us promoting hockey, in particular by sharing our social media posts or informing their fans about the content available on Watch.Hockey, for example. Their support has been tremendous and **I would like to thank them all for their continuous dedication!**

To honour the best athletes – and coaches –, FIH has pursued its yearly **FIH Hockey Stars Awards**, crowning the FIH Player of the year, the FIH Rising Star of the year, the FIH Goalkeeper of the year, the FIH Coach of the year – all for Men and Women, of course – as well as the FIH Best goal of the



year (as voted by fans). The event has successfully moved to a digital one, with increased participation in the voting.

Contributing to the promotion of hockey, **numerous media rights agreements have been signed with new broadcast partners since our last Congress**, including Astro (Malaysia), Spark Sport (New Zealand), Ziggo Sport (Netherlands), Eurosport (Spain), DAZN (Germany-Austria-Switzerland), ESPN (South and Central America), SuperSport (Africa), Flow Sports (Caribbean), beIN SPORTS (Turkey), TDM (Macau), FTF (USA and Canada) and FOX Sports (Asia).

They all come in addition to the media rights agreements previously signed with Star Sports (India), BT Sport (UK), FOX Sports (Australia) and Telenet (Belgium).

I would like to thank all our broadcast partners for helping us growing hockey worldwide.

### **(E) Finances**

FIH has made some important investments in 2019, essentially linked to the launch of the FIH Hockey Pro League, which is a major vehicle to drive the growth and awareness of hockey globally. Therefore, investments were needed to put this competition together and it was not foreseen to have a positive financial result or even a break-even in year one. However, thanks to our learnings from the first season and the responsible management of our resources, our budget forecast for the second edition already shows a break-even.

In terms of the overall finances of FIH, we have a **clear and sound budget plan** for the upcoming years. As mentioned above, we even have the capacity to launch new events in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

A detailed financial report will be given to you at the Congress.

Furthermore, since the last Congress, FIH has succeeded in bringing **new partners** on board including:



- **Odisha**; India's state is providing tremendous support to hockey, both nationally and internationally, having hosted numerous FIH events and welcoming the next FIH Men's World Cup in the cities of Bhubaneswar and Rourkela;
- world's leading independent provider of content protection and multiscreen video solutions, **NAGRA**, developing FIH's new digital home of hockey with Watch.Hockey;
- India's biggest sports game, **Dream11**. This is the first time in its history that FIH has associated with a fantasy game platform for hockey matches;
- hockey fashion and equipment brand **Osaka**, making Osaka an FIH Global Supplier in the category of manufacturers and/or wholesale distributors of hockey sporting apparel and footwear and hockey equipment;
- **Sportradar**, a global leader in understanding and leveraging the power of sports data and digital content;
- award-winning provider of digital inventory management in sport, **Horizm**, enabling FIH to use Horizm's Artificial Intelligence powered platform to help hockey's world governing body unlock new digital revenues;
- official licensed products leader **Kayford Branding**, which will be offering official licensed products across multiple categories for hockey fans across the world.

Such new agreements are really encouraging signs for the future of our sport and I am confident that additional partners will soon be joining us.

All these partners have joined the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturer, **Hero**, who has been supporting FIH and the development of hockey for more than a decade now, and world-renowned hockey turf manufacturer **Polytan**.

My sincerest thanks go to all our commercial partners for their invaluable support and commitment. Their role in the growth of hockey globally is absolutely essential.



## (F) Integrity and Good governance

In 2018, FIH stepped up its good governance by creating an **Integrity Unit** (FIU), under the chairmanship of Australia's Wayne Snell, an international expert in integrity and sports. The FIU is an independent body which role is to protect the integrity of hockey and to establish effective mechanism for enforcement of the FIH Integrity Code and sanctions for its breach.

Any allegation or suspicion of a breach of the Code (or any other matters relating to integrity) must be reported to the FIU, whether by confidential email to [whistleblowing@fih.ch](mailto:whistleblowing@fih.ch) or brought to the attention of the FIH CEO.

As a confirmation of the progress made by our Federation in terms of good governance, **FIH scored higher marks** than before **in every section** (Transparency, Integrity, Democracy, Development and Control Mechanisms) of **ASOIF's third governance review** of its full and associate member federations, published in 2020.

Of course, there is room for improvement. Therefore, we need to pursue our efforts for a steadily improved good governance going forward.

Reasserting its unequivocal **commitment to clean sport**, FIH has decided to have its entire **anti-doping programme run independently by the International Testing Agency** (ITA). This includes in- and out-of-competition testing, athlete blood passport administration, therapeutic use exemption management, risk assessment, test distribution planning, whereabouts and compliance management. FIH maintains the results management within its structures.

## (G) Hockey and society

I am convinced that sport has the power to be a **catalyst for positive social change**. In this regard, hockey has an important role to play.

**Gender equality** is a paramount principle in hockey. While this is true on the pitch, we still have some efforts to do off the pitch. Nevertheless, I am really glad that **FIH created** in 2019 a new Committee, namely **the Women in Sports Committee**, chaired by FIH EB Member who is also a member of



the IOC Women in Sport Commission. The overall aim of this Committee is to assist the EB to raise awareness about gender equality, inclusion and promote diversity in sports practice and governance.

An important work done by the Committee has been the **review of the FIH Gender Equality Policy**. In doing so, FIH has reiterated its commitment to reach a gender-equal representation off the field of play (for example, in the composition of its Committees). The reviewed policy also stresses the need to implement gender balance across all hockey institutions (FIH, Continental Federations and National Associations). Furthermore, FIH has been holding a number of continental webinars to promote gender equality. And the EB approved the amendments in the FIH Statutes concerning gender-neutral terms, which will be presented for approval to you at the Congress.

In order to further **promote inclusion** in our sport, we have decided to do more to **encourage ParaHockey ID** (or Hockey ID). This includes, amongst others, creating and delivering Coach and Officials courses for Hockey ID, developing new Hockey ID nations, developing and designing FIH Hockey ID website resource or delivering Hockey ID at the Special Olympics World Games 2023.

Indeed, **Hockey ID will be included in the 2023 Special Olympics World Games** in Berlin, Germany, as a demonstration sport. This is the first time that hockey will take part in the flagship event of the Special Olympics movement, which is wonderful!

FIH has also been proactive on another essential topic for and with society: sustainability. In order to shape the future **sustainability strategy** of hockey around the world, FIH has decided to create a **Sustainability Task Force** – chaired by FIH EB Member which will be responsible for setting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measuring performance, including publishing a biennial Sustainability Report to be presented to the FIH Congress as well as to the wider sporting community. It will include representatives from National Associations, athletes, officials, event organisers and suppliers as well as external experts. We all have to make a contribution to this!



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At this stage, I would like to renew my sincerest thanks to our commercial and broadcast partners, our preferred suppliers, the Continental Federations, the National Associations, the committees, the athletes, the volunteers, the fans and everyone within the hockey community!

Since this Congress will be hybrid hence, I will not be reading the complete report but only share bullet points with you during the Congress. In case you have any questions in relation to my report, please feel free to write to me and I will be very happy to respond/clarify the same to you and shall remain at your disposal for any further information you would need.

I want to reiterate the opening words of my report: **without you, these accomplishments would not have been possible!**

I wish all of you good health and I look forward to exchanging with you at the upcoming 47<sup>th</sup> Congress of FIH!

Yours in hockey,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N. Batra', written over a long, thin horizontal line that extends to the right.

Dr Narinder Dhruv Batra  
President  
Date: 13 April 2021