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April 26, 2017

Mr. Hoacio Muratore, FIBA President  
International Basketball Federation  
Route Suisse 5 - PO Box 29  
1295 Mies, Switzerland

*Via Email*

Dear President Muratore,

The Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) urges the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) to overturn its ban on headgear in all sanctioned competitions.

The WSF has a strong history of promoting diversity in athletic uniforms in order to fit athletes' needs. Our long-standing position statement on appropriate athletic attire states that rules must accommodate women whose sports gear does not:

- provide participants with an unfair competitive advantage,
- interfere with the performance of an opponent,
- inhibit the effective officiating of a contest,
- cause injury to the competitor or his/her opponents, or
- cause an inability for players and officials to readily make a distinction between opposing teams.

We resolutely believe that participants wearing a headscarf during basketball competition would not violate any of the WSF's athletic uniform guidelines. An athlete wearing a headscarf would not gain an unfair advantage from its wear; it is exceedingly unlikely that a headscarf would cause an injury or interfere with play to either her or those on the court with her. Additionally, we do not believe a headscarf would interfere with the proper officiating of a competition.

It is our position that competition attire is sufficiently "uniform" when players can still be distinguished one team from another. This includes when some players of a team wear head scarves and some not. For example, track and field athletes from a single country will wear many different-but-matching uniforms, from throwers who want their arms and legs well-covered to distance runners who wear not much more than underwear and a sports bra. It would be arbitrary to allow some athletes to cover their arms and legs, and not allow others to cover their heads.

We feel that the benefits of allowing an athlete to wear a headscarf during basketball competition far outweigh the minute risks that may exist. As is deemed by Article 1 of the UNESCO International Charter for Physical Education and Sport, "The practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all." The Women's Sports Foundation agrees and

implores you to reconsider your ban on headgear during sanctioned competition.

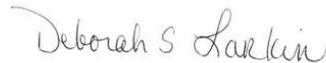
Nearly 650 million women wear headscarves throughout the world. A prohibition on what many religious people see as non-negotiable will exclude hundreds of millions of potential athletes and supporters world-wide. By banning the headscarf, you impede these women's access to an experience that could change their life. Sports participation is a benefit to not just those participating but to their country as a whole, with better health and better educational outcomes. Indeed, women's robust participation in sports challenges many of the stereotypes that hold women back in society.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and once again, implore you to abolish FIBA's ban on headgear. All women deserve the right to play.

Sincerely,



Deborah Antoine, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer



Deborah Slaner Larkin  
Chief Advocacy Officer