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Mr. David Howman
Director General
World Anti-Doping Agency
Stock Exchange Tower
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Canada

Dear Mr. Howman

Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games

We write to acknowledge receipt of the formal report of the Independent Observer Team appointed by WADA in relation to the conduct of the Anti Doping Programme during the XVIIIth Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. We have a number of specific observations that we would like to make however before doing so we would like to express our thanks to WADA, the IO Team and the Outreach Team based in the village for the excellent level of cooperation we received from them in the lead up to and during the Games.

We feel as evidenced by Appendix 1 of the IO Report significant progress has been made across a number of areas since Manchester 2002 when of course the WADA Code was not even in place. Looking ahead, as for 2002, we will approach the specific recommendations made in this report in the same positive manner, looking at all times to enhance the quality of our Anti Doping Programme at the Games.

Turning to the report itself we would specifically comment as follows:

1. Blood Testing Procedures

The report states on page 6 that:

- a. *“the CGFMC was not clear in its own mind what this part of the programme was meant to achieve*
- b. *the decision-making processes were driven by problems rather than policy*
- c. *the changes confused athletes, teams and sampling officers”*

We do not agree with these observations by the IO team. The CGFMC, following a number of complaints from teams and athletes, raised with its contractor concerns as to some of the procedures they were deploying in relation to the collection of blood samples and in the interest of athlete welfare some common sense procedural changes were agreed by consensus. We note that the WADA Code itself provides for such an approach.

The IO chair was present at all these deliberations and we believed that he would have appreciated the need for these steps to taken.

2. Results Management

We do not accept the IO reports observation that in relation to the results management procedures that *"the enormous media interest resulted in some difficulties for the CGF"* nor do we accept that *"In the end, this was resolved when CAS released the names of the athletes later on 24 March 2006."* The latter comment of the IO report pre-supposes the accuracy of the first comment and also that CAS resolved something. CAS, by its actions, may have satisfied media interest however the CGF strictly adhered to its agreed protocols which we note were confirmed by WADA itself prior to the Games as being Code compliant.

The procedures whilst they may have appeared *"cumbersome and slow"* to members of the IO team were consistent with many International Sporting Federations as subsequently verified to us by WADA during the Games.

Whilst making the above observations for the purposes of accurately reflecting the CGF's position at Games time the CGF accepts that, in the context of a major multi-sport event such as the Commonwealth Games, the recommendation of the IO team is valid and this review will occur.

3. Laboratory – Equipment Failure

Whilst we note the point being made we feel this specific recommendation is somewhat outside our purview. Whilst the recommendation is a matter we will pursue going forward, it is, in our view the primary responsibility of the WADA/IOC accredited laboratories and the testing agencies contracted to address.

4. General

A recommendation that we would have and indeed did convey to WADA following the Games in Manchester is that whilst accepting the role of the IO team is largely to observe there must still be a certain level of open dialogue and interaction at the time of the Games. If legitimate observations are made that give cause for concern or indeed have been misinterpreted these should be raised with the Chair of the CGFMC so that appropriate action can be taken or clarification given. This is a matter we would ask WADA to consider in its planning for future IO teams.

Finally, as observed within our opening comments above, we will approach the specific recommendations made in the IO report in the same positive manner as we did following the 2002 Commonwealth Games, looking at all times to enhance the quality of our Anti Doping Programme at the Games. We note with pride the statement made by the IO team in the opening sentence of its *"Overall Evaluation"* when they say ***"the doping control programme at the XVIIIth Commonwealth Games was conducted in such a way that the integrity of the programme was preserved"***.

Yours sincerely



Michael Hooper
Chief Executive Officer