



Antonio Urso

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT





A new model for international weightlifting

My main goals:

- 1) development and efficiency
- 2) reciprocal collaboration and involvement
- 3) enhancement and meritocracy
- 4) transparency and communication
- 5) representativeness
- 6) doping
- 7) how I would like weightlifting to be



There can be no development without involvement and without strategy, values cannot be created without mutual respect and careful planning.

This is a programme. But not just any programme my **dear Friends**, it is a real commitment, as a moment of reflection and a means of communication.

A **programme** that encapsulates **my candidacy for President of the IWF, my philosophy for a new governance model to benefit the development of international weightlifting**; a commitment to set out the guidelines which I would be honoured to put into effect should you choose to believe in me and to share my principles.

What I bring to the table is a strong commitment to make a clean break, which requires a great deal of courage both on my part and on yours, dear elector. This is what I want to give to weightlifting and my desire is fuelled by the basic concept that has always characterised my actions and my decisions:

There can be no development without involvement and without strategy, values cannot be created without mutual respect and careful planning.

We need a clear and honest exchange of opinions, in the name of collaboration and harmony without which the IWF would be the seat of monopolised, isolated power rather than home to the weightlifting family. My idea of the IWF is a body that reaches out to all its members, giving each and every one **equal opportunities** and not classifying them as friends or foes. It is from their **well-being**, and from their needs that the new IWF can and must make a fresh start, **endorsing** and giving room to **unexpressed** or even forgotten **energy**.

I aspire to an IWF that through the involvement, sharing and lobbying of new resources, **can bring value** to our sport and can **transform costs into investment**, becoming a generator of social and economic benefits.

The opportunity is there; you know it; and we can see it:

- in the **ability to identify the right goals and to devise a strategic economic-financial plan to achieve them;**
- in the **will to open our minds to new opportunities**, in particular to the National Federations who are in greater **need of attention** to develop their potential;
- in the **wish to safeguard and substantially support the Continental Federations**, not only in economic terms but with integrated projects that have been customised for each single Continent, thanks to an exchange scheme which was recently launched by the will of individuals and not from a vision dictated by a reasoned process;
- in the ability to **attract new resources** and to tap into them for targeted projects;
- on a more general scene, for at least the past four years, I have been actively battling with **full dedication and commitment** to making the IWF a dynamic institution, promoting **renewal** and **transparency**, and adopting criteria of **efficiency** in management, and **merit** in selection.

The topics to address are clear and I have assigned them key words to drive the concept home – **development** and **efficiency, reciprocal collaboration** and **involvement, enhancement** and **meritocracy, representativeness** and **territory, transparency** and **communication** – which firmly represent the guidelines, the emblems which should steer the course of the new IWF governance model.

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**A new governance model for the IWF: shared strategic
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1. Development and Efficiency

A vision is not an empty desire, it is a solid project. International weightlifting does need good words but more than that it needs concrete action, substantial and coordinated; and this is how I intend to render the programme I present to you:



On a methodological level, the **new IWF governance model** is part of a **shared four-year strategic plan** and, from a substantial point of view, it is an **equal distribution of resources, the implementation of sports financial instruments and the ability to attract private capital**. How a new stimulus for development can come from this involvement is especially evident from the **appreciation and enhancement of people and resources** that make up the very heart of my commitment.

The means to reach these goals are:

- to implement a shared four-year strategic and economic-financial plan;
- to find the **necessary resources** to create a fund to reward the initiatives of National Federation through projects and business development plans also as combined efforts between similar subjects;
- to identify policies and tools to improve the ability to attract private investment to our sport;
- to coordinate and develop the implementation of projects specific to the growth of the various sectors - highly specialised, youth and promotional;
- to obtain funding for scientific research. Not one USD has been spent favour of this sector;
- to put into action serious and professional **marketing** and to promote **branding, licensing** and **merchandising**. This is an activity that the IWF must elaborate side by side with the Continental, Regional and National Federations, not limiting the search for sponsors to the Olympic year alone;
- the **creation of a real IWF brand**, using to our advantage the margin generated by the brand;
- to **strengthen the promotion of weightlifting through the media and new media (web TV, web portals, social network)** with obvious economic benefits.

II. Reciprocal Collaboration and Involvement

A new model of governance: reciprocal collaboration, sharing, involving, moving away from a controlling approach and delegating to the Board and to the professional figures in the various sectors.



The new model of governance that I intend to adopt can be divided into two main approaches: reciprocal collaboration and involvement. An International

Federation capable of coordinating and supporting the entire sports movement, as opposed to representing an outdated controlling modus operandi that dictates decisions from above often without involving the members of the Board; that, by delegating, is able to retrieve efficiency and to make use of skills that are otherwise unexploited.

In other words, the new governance that I aspire to aims at making the IWF a convergence of skills and ideas, where decisions are shared and the doors are open to everyone with the common goal of making the entire sporting movement and its protagonists a success story.

In this perspective, the IWF must:

- 1) promote dialogue, starting from within the federation itself;
- 2) fully recognise the importance of all the Board members and members of the various commissions and committees;
- 3) allow supervising bodies access to proceedings and documents (you will recall how the auditors were dismissed simply because they were doing their job). This represents the first step towards involvement that conveys the new method of sharing, inaugurating a wave of new energy and enthusiasm for all of us.
- 4) guarantee direct access with the National Federations for open and continuous dialogue because the IWF is not an abstract detached organisation, it is home to all;
- 5) encourage the concept of "social inclusion" in our sport with projects destined for the under privileged with consequent advantages.

III. Enhancement and Meritocracy

Harnessing resources, acknowledging worth, optimising frameworks and creating centres of excellence



If it is true that sport is the bearer of the fundamental values for the development

of a person both as an individual and in a social context, then our world, and the IWF in particular, has the privilege and the enormous responsibility of championing those values. The **sporting world**, in other words, **can and must**, also in terms of **exploiting resources and recognising worth, be an example and a driving force behind this concept**.

The actions of the new IWF model that I have in mind, are directed on one hand at **enhancing all the scenarios that contribute to the sporting movement** and on the other at **rewarding commitment and skills, so that worth and merit always prevail over personal or electoral reasoning**.

In this manner, by acknowledging the right role of all the players on the sports institutions scene, basic principles and actions cannot be overlooked:

- a) **sure, consistent, suitable and transparent criteria**
- b) **reliable support to the Continental, Regional and National Federations**, with new projects and energy being the driving force of our sport;
- c) **harnessing internal human resources** in sports institutions, through **ad hoc training programmes** and professional qualification.

In more detail, the means to these ends would be:

- **the promotion of merit in careers in the sporting world, implementing training by the setting up a Weightlifting School as a true centre of excellence on an international level funded by private capital and in conjunction with the top Universities in the field of sport;**
- **promoting the formation of a group of leaders that understands, originates from and interacts with the world of weightlifting**, not controlling from above but down in the trenches, sensitive to the problem of each and every nation, aware of their needs;
- the elaboration of a **common reform project of internal sports justice**, calling on serious and experienced professionals. The aim being to **attain**, in regard to expertise and authority, **a consistent model in the organisation of sports justice within the IWF;**

- to protect and **acknowledge the worth of high level athletes, active and non**, through a series of shared efforts such as: the creation of **projects to call attention to athletes no longer competing** so as to promote the sport – for example, using them as testimonials in awareness campaigns to spread the culture and message of our sport;
- the **reform of the functions of the Athletes Commission** and involvement in decision-making processes;
- the creation of an **International Coaches Forum**, which in collaboration with representatives of the respective Committees: Technical and Scientific, can analyse the category's critical points and offer suitable solutions;
- a **project aimed at creating an "International Weightlifting Museum"**, which would be self-funding and become the first testimonial of our sporting history.



IV. Representativeness

Returning to base but with a modern twist: enhancing the Continental, National and Regional Federations.



Acknowledging the role and functions of the federations in sports politics will be one of the cornerstones of the new IWF governance model, in the spirit of full collaboration; with the awareness that the success of the entire movement starts from the grass roots.

The tools to reach this success:

- a return to base but with a modern twist, to the essential components that sustain the movement (athletes, coaches and directors) in order to bring all the components of the IWF back to the centre of action;
- renewed attention not only to the changed policy mentioned above, but concrete activity directed at the coordination and promotion of local sports activities and marketing;
- attracting and involving new local resources, deriving also from the new proposed governance model; a model which is able, thanks to its alternative approach, to find resources – including financial resources – which would otherwise be difficult to activate.

V. Transparency and Communication

The IWF like a crystal palace: transparent, exemplary, open and active. Implementing a social accountability report and creating an organisation dedicated to communicating with the Federations.



The IWF has the privilege of performing certain tasks and it **must therefore**

become a crystal palace - transparent, exemplary, open and active.

In my opinion, this profile is of fundamental importance both in terms of principles and in the more detailed practical-operative aspects; in other words, it must be **active both in the adoption of a social accountability report drawn up in accordance with the principles of transparency, and in the provision of tools and spaces which grant access to material and documentation for all members of the Executive Board, members of Congress and all affiliated members.**

In this manner, by inverting the current scenario, I believe it is necessary to make a particular commitment to adopting suitable measures to ensure that the IWF represents, not dominates, weightlifting and its institutions.

To this purpose, I am determined to put into action:

- **A new policy of transparency and full access to the IWF**, in the spirit of **total representativeness and participation of Federation Presidents and representatives of all elected or nominated bodies**. This would appear simple, but it means a true revolution of participation as we know it today and it will be a step by step process:

- **sharing good governance** (e.g. a scheduled cycle of Executive Board meetings, also possibly via conference calls, consultancy in major decision-making and a general will to favour exchange of opinions through periodic informal meetings;

- **Prompt access to information and relevant documentation;**

- **Drawing up of an annual "Social Accountability Report"**. I am profoundly convinced that ethical principles and values are the basis of the activity of all sports organisations, that make maximising social value their mission. Those who provide human and financial resources place their trust in the community and in institutions such as the IWF, and there is an ethical duty to respect this display of trust, especially when enormous amounts of funding from the IOC is involved.

Therefore, drawing up a balance in accordance with modern standards and making it public becomes an instrument of governance, of communication and dialogue that aims to outline a clear, consistent picture of the interdependence between economic and social factors and the consequent choices of said governance.

It represents the **ideal instrument** to demonstrate and **verify coherency, efficiency and transparency;**

- **A new model of communication in the IWF, first and foremost internal, and extending out wards towards sports institutions**. Methods and measures that confer visibility through a dedicated communications office;

- A **revolution of the IWF website**, taking it from a simple news medium to an authentic **weightlifting portal**, at the service of sports institutions, engaging and substantial, providing not only a Service (often self-referential) but also as a promotional tool;

- setting up a **dedicated system to make high-quality audio-visual products** to meet the sports institutions requests and to collaborate with radio and television broadcasters;

- the creation of an online magazine for single Federations (with the backing of private sponsors), **dedicated to events and to articles on training science**, as an additional form of coordination of relations between sports institutions, the media and all the players in the sports movement.



VI. Doping

In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honor of our teams. (Athlete's Olympic Oath)



This is the cancer of our sport and we must eradicate it. From 2003 to 2012 we have had **344** positive cases and I am certain this figure does not correspond to the real statistics because, for reasons beyond my comprehension, the IWF obstinately insists on doing the majority of tests in competition (total number of tests in the 2009-2012 Olympic Cycle, 6,276 of which **1,780** out of competition and **4,496** in competition). If the majority of tests were done out of competition, the figures would surely be staggering. There is another alarming statistic to draw attention to: the population of athletes under the IWF's testing umbrella, who compete in international competitions, does not exceed **3,500**, including Under 17, Juniors and Seniors. This means that the **344** positive cases correspond to approximately **10%** of our sport's active population. Disqualified athletes are some of today's coaches and at the London Olympics they even showed their faces on television. Disqualified athletes who are today's directors. These are certainly not the prerequisites to improve the reputation of our sport in these times. The anti-doping program, as organised by the IWF has merely a statistical function and is not a serious battle against the phenomenon.

This is the cancer of our sport and we must eliminate and destroy it. Only from 2003 to 2016 weightlifting have had **557** positive cases plus **49** as reanalysis in Beijing and London Olympic Games with a total of 606. I am certain this figure does not correspond to the real statistics because, for reasons beyond my comprehension, the IWF obstinately insists on doing the majority of tests in competition (total number of tests in the 2009-2012 Olympic Cycle, **6.276** of which **1.780** out of competition and **4.496** in competition). If the majority of tests were done out of competition, the figures would surely be staggering. There is another alarming statistic to draw attention to: the population of athletes under the IWF's testing umbrella, who compete in international competitions, does not exceed **3.500**, including Under 17, Juniors and Seniors. This means that the 606 positive cases correspond to approximately 20% of our sport's active population. Disqualified athletes are some of today's coaches and at the London Olympics they even showed their faces on television. Disqualified athletes who are today's directors. These are certainly not the prerequisites to improve the reputation of our sport in these times. The anti-doping program, as organised by the IWF President has merely a statistical data and is not a serious battle against the phenomenon of doping.

What can we do?

- 1) Establish an independent commission coordinated by WADA and not by the IWF. At present it is the IWF President alone who decides who and when to test;
- 2) Organise individual Olympic qualification. Only in this way is it easy to follow the top athletes and keep them under constant control;
- 3) The sanctions that the nations pay for positive cases must be reinvested into the same country to increase the number of out of competition tests;
- 4) Suspend doctors and coaches who have had positive cases among athletes in the national teams;
- 5) Professionally train the coaches at an International School of Weightlifting and issue them a licence which will immediately be withdrawn should their athletes test positive;
- 6) Intensify testing in the nations that have long since shown, that they are unable to control the doping phenomenon and in some cases actually favour it.

VII. How I would like weightlifting to be

We cannot expect things to change if we continue to do the same things in the same way. Very often the problem of a person or a nation is that they just cannot be bothered to look for solutions or find a way out. Today we have a solution and we really need to put it into force and that is why I ask you to have the courage to change the course of action.



A sport free of hidden power, of people who help their "friends" and destroy their enemies, free of people who use weightlifting as a means for personal gain and cheating along the way to attain this. Free to express the strength of its history without preconceptions from the media, free to transmit its knowledge to all those who train their strength, free to face the challenges of the future and build the foundation for another hundred years of history.

This is all in your hands – have the courage to change: NOW OR NEVER MORE!





Antonio Urso

PRESIDENT EWF AND ITALIAN WEIGHTLIFTING FEDERATION



ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Accountant and Accountancy Expert Diploma

Degree in Low Sciences

Degree in Sport Sciences

Advanced Degree in Preventive Sciences of Sport

Master in Preventive Sciences of Sport and Recovery

*Professor of Sciences and Techniques of Individual Sport
at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata"*

PROFESSIONAL SPORT QUALIFICATION

1984-2002 - *Qualified as Weightlifting Coach, Instructor, Maestro*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES – ATHLETE

Italian Champion in the years (1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1986, 1988, 1989)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE – COACH

1992 - *Participation in Women European Championships
as national coach (1 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze medals)*

1998 - *Participation in Women European Championships
as national coach (1 silver, 2 bronze medals)*

1999 - *Participation in Women European Championships
as national coach (2 silver, 2 bronze medals)*

2013 - *Director National School of Sport Italian Olympic Committee*

HONOURS

1988 - *Italian Olympic Committee Bronze medal for sport merit*

2006 - *Italian Olympic Committee Gold medal for sport merit*

2007 - *EWF Certificate of Merit*

2015 - *Commander of Italian Republic for special merit*

TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

1985 - *Published Book "Weightlifting for Schoolchildren"*

2000 - *Published Book "The Scientific Foundation
of Muscle Strengthening"*

2003 - *Published Book "Muscle Strengthening Scientific Foundation and practical Suggestions"*

2003 - *Published Book "Weightlifting Exercise"*

2004 - *Published Book "Weightlifting in Caltanissetta"*

2011 - *Published Book "The basics of sport training"*

2011 - *Published Book "Weightlifting, Sport for all Sport"*

2013 - *Published Book "Weightlifting, Sport for all Sport", 2nd Edition*

2015 - *Director of the EWF Scientific Magazine*



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