



## Press release

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Paris, February 1<sup>st</sup> 2010

### **Abdou Diouf and Pascal Couchepin unite the francophone family in Vancouver in the presence of Jacques Rogge and John Furlong**

Abdou Diouf, Secretary General of La Francophonie, and Pascal Couchepin, former President of the Swiss Confederation and Great Witness of La Francophonie at the Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, will preside over a major francophone event on February 13<sup>th</sup> 2010 at the Fairmont Hotel in Whistler in the presence of Jacques Rogge, President of the IOC and John Furlong, CEO of VANOC. Guests will include francophone heads of state and government as well as the Olympic family.

Abdou Diouf and Pascal Couchepin wanted to assemble francophone heads of state and government, sports ministers, IOC members, presidents of international federations and national Olympic committees and representatives of the cities organising the next Games in London, Sochi and Rio de Janeiro, as well as francophone sportsmen, sportswomen and artists, for a celebration the day after the opening ceremony. This Francophone Event will promote the French language, an Olympic language and an official language in Canada, as well as the values shared by the francophone family and the sports movement.

The Great Witness of La Francophonie, Pascal Couchepin, will be in Vancouver from February 10<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> to observe the respecting of bilingualism and to promote the youth and diversity of the international francophone community. He will return to Vancouver in March to continue his work during the Paralympic Games. A convention between IOF and VANOC signed by Pascal Couchepin and John Furlong provides for several joint actions under the slogan « Vancouver 2010: passing the francophone torch » to ensure that the 2010 Games are a perfect bilingual event. For the first time, IOF is taking part in the Cultural Olympiad, ensuring the participation of international artists from several francophone countries who will perform on the Place de la Francophonie in Vancouver. Fifteen young winners of the Beirut Francophone Games will be IOF's guests at the Olympic Games.

The Secretary General of La Francophonie will be in Vancouver and Whistler from February 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. He will attend the opening ceremony on February 12<sup>th</sup> and will preside over the official program of the Francophone Event the next day.

**IOF has 56 member states and governments and 14 observers**

**For more information about the International Organisation of La Francophonie and to download the « French, Olympic Language » press kit, please go to: [www.francophonie.org](http://www.francophonie.org)**

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