

Remarks by Brady Lum, President & COO Special Olympics and Special Olympics Athletes
2010 Global Congress Opening Session
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Good morning, everyone!

I speak for all of us when I thank His Majesty King Mohamed VI and Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Amina for their extraordinary generosity. We are honored to be here ... as we hope to honor Morocco with our presence.

This Congress marks my second anniversary with Special Olympics. I came to the Movement as an ‘outsider’ ... no family connection, no personal link. Totally new to the organization.

From Day One, I experienced an overwhelming feeling of welcome and openness. I was invited to share in the Special Olympics' spirit of inclusion and acceptance. I was even fortunate enough to meet Eunice Kennedy Shriver when Tim Shriver graciously introduced me as a new leader of Special Olympics. Mrs. Shriver asked me what I had found most challenging about Special Olympics. I paused and said the toughest part is not knowing all the personal stories. I told her that I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall when she was traveling around the world ... soaking in her history and that of Special Olympics.

Almost before I could finish, she grabbed my arm and very resolutely interjected, “Brady, always remember that Special Olympics is owned by the future, not the past.” I still get chills on my arms just thinking about her advice. She is exactly right and that is why all of us are here this week.

Listening to Tim Shriver’s opening remarks, reminded me why I promised myself one thing when I joined Special Olympics – never follow Tim Shriver on stage! No one can capture the emotional connection to our Movement better than Tim Shriver. He also acknowledged that to move forward successfully, we need to rely on more than just our personal passion and commitment.

We must build a machine that delivers the kind of organizational muscle to grow and thrive and be recognized as one of the most professionally run organizations in the world. Tim lit up the room with our real Mission... now we need to support it with a real Business.

Today began with our athletes and the Special Olympics flame ... the perfect symbol for our Movement ... and for our Strategic Plan. Like that flame, our Plan must light the way to the future ... generate heat and passion ... and transform raw energy into disciplined action. We want – no, we need – that kind of heated dialogue and hot debate throughout the Congress... and the courage to find better ways to achieve our mission.

Like any fire ... sparks will fly... That’s because every voice counts! We started thinking about the Plan, we asked ourselves a number of questions:

- How do we harness our entrepreneurial spirit and tap into our diverse strengths ... to build a globally aligned Movement?
- How do we combine individual initiatives ... with interdependent actions
- How do we go from a “founders” mindset ... to an enduring organization ... for everyone?
- The key question: What kind of an enterprise do we want ... and need?

We launched this strategic planning process with three guiding principles:

1. We need a Special Olympics Movement Plan, not just a Special Olympics International Plan;
2. We need the contributions of a massive creative team, not just writers and editors;
3. We need to make certain ... Every voice counts!

When BIG challenges face this Movement - a World Games or a response to Haiti - our movement pulls together. That's exactly how it's been with the strategic plan.

Here's a snapshot of the incredible commitment demonstrated this past year plus...by thousands of you...

- 1,700 stakeholders from 120 Programs completed our Mission Effectiveness Survey
- 100% participation from Program leaders in 3 regions

We know none of you had extra time or resources for developing this Strategic Plan. You made the time and found the resources to make the planning process work. The Special Olympics way! So many of you said, "I'm willing to play. Defense, offense, mid-field ... you tell me what position ... I'm ready." Across the board and around the world ... you were ready!

I remember calling Deborah Bright from Canada, Marc Edenzen from New Jersey, Yolanda Eleta from Panama, Peter Bukhala from Kenya, and David Rutherford from New Zealand, to ask them to serve as Working Group Chairs for three of the strategic pillars. Quickly, they said yes. But just as quickly they realized what they actually needed to do.

We were not looking for them to edit work done by SOI Staff. We literally wanted them to help CREATE and DRAFT the strategic plan. I think they saw the "creator, not editor" mandate as hollow words ... until the real work hit them!

In March, I travelled to India, and had an opportunity to share some of our work in progress with Air Marshall Keelor and the Special Olympics Bharat-India team. I highlighted how several of our strategies and tactics were pulled directly from their work and best practices. They were pleasantly shocked to hear headquarters was even aware of some of their good work, willing to listen and eager to act.

Along the way, there were dozens of encouraging emails from so many of you. We also heard from many of you who are normally highly cynical about these planning efforts. And you know who you are. Here's what happened in Canada recently. The Canada team invited me and Andrei Chursov a half-day to share our strategic plan draft. We thought they would be yawning after an hour.

You know what? We literally did not sit down for 3 hours ... there were just so many questions and offers of support. We left knowing we were on the right track!

Month to month, we climbed the learning curve, fell down once or twice ... and got back up. Our effort around Fans and Funds is a good example. Fundraising is a very, very sensitive topic within Special Olympics. Some people want to raise money for their local Program, some want to raise money for the Region, some want to raise money for World Games ... others want to raise money for Special Olympics International. We have a complicated system. We asked people to get together and figure out a better one. One which is globally aligned.

They struggled. But they hung in there and their ideas are now in the plan. Are you beginning to understand WHY it is so important that we are here now! Why our work is so urgent? For jumping on the challenge, for committing to carry the flame of change ... Thank You!

Using all of the survey data, input sessions and feedback, we identified six imperatives. The big things we must fix ... or change. To be the best we can be, these are not 'nice to haves' ... but 'must do's'!

Growth AND Quality - Here's what you told us: We've grown tremendously over the past decade but now we need to let the quality and the infrastructure catch up. We've spread ourselves too thin, we're strapped. We must continue our focus on quality growth.

It's not growth or quality ... it's about both!

Sustainability - Here's what you told us: To match our growth in programming we must focus on generating revenue at all levels of our Movement and increase funding by almost 70%! We must fund our work with a revenue model that is sustainable for both accredited Programs and our Movement overall. Never forget our founder's advice: **"Special Olympics is owned by the future ... not the past."**

Global Awareness - Here's what you told us: We've been wildly successful serving the many of the aspirations of our athletes. But we haven't done as outstanding a job gaining worldwide awareness, especially outside of the United States. Our Movement remains little known in many parts of the world and misunderstood in many others. **We have a global brand ... with unlimited potential.**

Leadership - Here's what you told us: We have millions of volunteers, but we are dangerously dependent on a small number of dedicated and charismatic leaders around the world – athlete leaders, family leaders, volunteer leaders, and Program leaders. And these leaders are being taxed beyond any reasonable measure. **Where will we find ... our champions of the future?**

Flexibility - Here's what you told us: We have not yet fully succeeded in adapting our Special Olympics model to the realities of the developing world. We must ensure all programs are given the opportunity to succeed, and create policies and procedures to support this opportunity. **We must excel ... in the real world of diversity.**

Organizational Unity - Here's what you told us: We must become one team with a common vision and a common set of goals. **Many voices ... one vision!**

Those six mission-critical imperatives informed our entire planning process.

Like every great team, we need a great playbook. A game plan: showing us, reminding us, teaching us exactly how we're going to win. How we're going to move from "them" ... to "us." How we're going to deliver with passion ... and professionalism. How we're going to take the Special Olympics ideal ... and make it real! We call this game plan, our Strategic Framework. It's like the early architectural renderings of a house.

Come inside ... and take another look. At the top, you'll find our highest aspiration – the **Athlete Experience**. We celebrate, now and always, our Athletes. You are at the center of our work and the pulse of our Movement ... **our authentic heart and muscle.**

At the base, our enduring **Special Olympics Foundation**. We embrace our strong Mission ALWAYS...while acknowledging the need to better articulate our long-term goals. We know we can be clearer outlining our Value Proposition externally ... and better understand it internally.

Without a noble Mission there can be no real Movement.

Within the core of this framework are three mission-driving "pillars" – the machine – which, when harnessed together, will provide a holistic, consistent and quality experience for Special Olympics athletes.

Advance Sports and Competitions: We want REAL ATHLETES. Build Communities: Let no athlete be an island...we want REAL COMMUNITIES. Connect Fans & Funds: a REAL fan ... and bring your wallet!

And to make this framework even *stronger* and to raise the Athlete Experience even *higher*, there are two Enabling Pillars which help strengthen our machine for success.

Define Movement Leadership: We want REAL LEADERS for our future and REAL EXCELLENCE to push our boundaries.

Establish Sustainable Capabilities: To win in today's world ... we need a REAL BUSINESS.

Let's start with the core of our Movement ... to **Advance Sports & Competitions**. Our vision is that –“*Special Olympics is recognized as a global leader in sports, providing excellence in...*”

Hold on, I need some help in explaining this.

Hey Ariel, will you help me by sharing your vision for Advancing Sports and Competitions?

ARIEL ARY, SPECIAL OLYMPICS COSTA RICA: (IN SPANISH)...

Hola soy Ariel Ary de Costa Rica y practico tenis. Para mí cuando hablamos de deporte avanzado y competición tenemos que estar preparados en varias ramas como: Tener una buena Condición física; Practicar frecuentemente nuestro deporte; Debemos de tener una buena nutrición (antes, durante y después de la competición) para así tener un mejor rendimiento y una buena salud; Debemos de contar con entrenadores de alta calidad para así tener una mejor técnica de juego.; Más Fogueos para así lograr ser más competitivos.

Tenemos que: Saber ganar y saber perder; Saber jugar en equipo; Saber dominar los nervios en la cancha; Dar lo mejor que podemos sin importar el resultado.

“Basado en un comentario del entrenador de football americano, Vince Lombardi quiero decirles que El precio del éxito es: TRABAJO, DEDICACION Y ENTREGA. Si queremos ser excelentes deportistas y personas triunfadoras debemos: trabajar duro, dedicarnos a nuestra tarea e invertir TODO lo mejor que tenemos dentro de cada uno de nosotros!!!”

BRADY LUM CONTINUES:

Thank you, Ariel, for your eloquence and your focus. And your total honesty. Okay, let's move on to the second Pillar ... we must ... **Build Communities** of acceptance and joy around the world. Hey Jerson, come up and tell us your vision for how to Build Communities.

JERSON FERNANDES, SPECIAL OLYMPICS BHARAT – INDIA

Hello Everybody! My name is Jerson Fernandes. I am an athlete from Special Olympics Bharat (India) and a participant of the Athlete Leadership Program. When I read this vision, I think of what Special Olympics would be like to have REAL communities around me, supporting me.

I would be extremely happy to have REAL, BIG & STRONG communities build through families, relatives, friends, young people, and young athletes. We together with these REAL communities could build our Healthy Athletes Program. We together with the REAL Community could make the ALPs Strong.

For this, we need to commit our time and contribute funds. This Plan is REAL. Follow it and by 2015 we will expand Special Olympics. We will make it Bigger. It will be REAL. Are you prepared to build strong REAL communities around every Special Olympics Program & Athlete? I want this to be REAL. Do you my friends want it to be REAL?

BRADY LUM CONTINUES:

Jerson – You really helped make the vision of community building live and breathe! But you deserve more than our thanks ... you need to know how we're going to fulfill your dream. Let's get real. If there's one thing we all know it's this. We will never Advance Sports and Competitions and Build Communities without this critical next Pillar. We must find new, innovative ways to ... **Connect Fans & Funds**. I've asked Mary Ellen is going to tell us why this is so important.

MARY ELLEN POWERS, SPECIAL OLYMPICS RHODE ISLAND:

I am one of the 2,700 athletes who participate in Special Olympics Rhode Island, in the USA. I am a very dedicated athlete, have a variety of other roles within Special Olympics, and I especially enjoy helping with fundraising. I think it is very important that people within our community know about Special Olympics, and hope they will become a fan!

To be a fan of Special Olympics, it means coming to our events and cheering us on. We want you to befriend us, stay dedicated year-round, and offer financial support. We definitely need the support! In order to promote and provide a positive experience for athletes in our sports, we need venue sites, sports equipment, uniforms, medical support if needed, travel costs, and so on. We need more money to make it a fun experience!

Sports have been cut because there isn't enough money. It makes me sad, because when sports are cut, it affects the skills we've tried so hard to gain, and excel in our sports. By taking our sports, it is also affecting our self-confidence. Special Olympics is all about the competition, friendships, family and community support, and especially our self-confidence.

We need to think about the future of Special Olympics for younger athletes, what we can do better for them. When we are asking for financial support to potential and current sponsors, the best person to do the asking is the athletes! We need to share our stories of success, what Special Olympics has done for us, and connect with our audience. Our experience alone, should inspire people to open their wallets!

We athletes are ready to help, but the question is, are YOU ready to be a true fan of Special Olympics and help us out financially? If I can jump into the Atlantic Ocean with a water temperature of 30 degrees on a cold day in March, you too can raise funds for Special Olympics!

BRADY LUM CONTINUES

Athletes like Mary Ellen can contribute so much to our fundraising efforts if we listen. We've covered the basics of our core Pillars – Advance Sports & Competitions; Build Communities; and Connect Fans & Funds. But we're running a long-distance, long-term marathon ... and we're not at the finish line yet.

Our next two Pillars –Define Movement Leadership and Establish Sustainable Capabilities – will enable us to realize all the benefits of the Strategic Plan. Our sports and competitions are best in class. We must ensure our organization is best in class, too. That means raising the bar of excellence, setting higher expectations and standards, and going beyond our egalitarian culture with increased focus on our competitive side. Ken, would you share with us what we need in our leadership?

KEN MELVIN, SPECIAL OLYMPICS INDIANA

I'm an athlete from Indiana Special Olympics. I'm part of ALPs in Indiana. I feel that we have great individual leadership at all levels of Special Olympics. I feel that to be successful in the future we must become a leadership team.

All leaders need to be trained in leadership skills and athlete leadership. It's important that leaders show respect and have great communication. We need program evaluation and hold ourselves responsible for getting better.

Special Olympics needs a strong leadership TEAM, which includes the president, the board, the staff, and athlete leaders. All of these people need to be trained about the mission, trained in leadership skills, and trained about what athlete leadership is and how important it is.

The leadership needs to work together and include everyone. Athlete leaders can set an example by being trained, working with everyone in the program, and looking to what we think the future should be.

It's important that leaders show respect to each person they work with. Communication and understanding are important.

BRADY LUM CONTINUES

Ken, in my book, you are a real leader ... someone we can all learn from. We need to strive for heightened levels of sharing and learning from each other ... as we push each other to the top. Our last Pillar, is all about the practical everyday things we need to embrace together. Jia, I know you have some thoughts on how to establish Sustainable Communities.

JIA SI RUI, SPECIAL OLYMPICS CHINA

I am an athlete in China and participate in basketball, gymnastics, swimming, track and field. Other than an athlete, she is also the Deputy Chairperson of China Association of People with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families (under China Disabled Person's Federation); Member of Youth Union of CDPF; member of Sports Association for Disabled Person; Deputy Chairperson of Special Olympics Beijing.

I currently work in 'Xi LianYuan Meng'(which means 'to wish the dream comes true' in Chinese) Sales Department which is under Xicheng District Disabled Person's Federation in Beijing. My department is for selling the artworks made by the disabled persons. In addition, I also have a part-time job in Bayer China in Beijing. I enjoy my current life because I gained a lot since she joined Special Olympics - confidence, joy, friends, and accomplishment. Now I take part in the Special Olympics training and competition and I graduated from school. I am very satisfied with my jobs. The sales department feels like a homelike, peaceful and stable place for me, at which people get along equally. My other employer Bayer, has sponsored two Special Schools since 2003 and every year Bayer employees participate in

unified activities in the sponsored schools. The company is also active and making great efforts in CSR (corporate social responsibility) areas. I also receive care and friendship from my peers and supervisors though sometimes their kindness does not feel good because she is different from others and I need to talk about this more.

I mostly agree with four values. They are: Inclusion and Respect; valuing contributions and innovation; Unity and Integrity; Sportsmanship with joy. I think these values reflect my personal experience.

BRADY LUM CONTINUES:

Thank you, Jia – You really understand that it is not what we do but how we do it! Let's thank all of our athletes for their very heart-felt personal visions. You've raised the bar for this Congress – we've got a lot to accomplish here in Marrakech, together.

Real Athletes. Real Communities. Real Fans. Real Leaders. Real Business. Ariel, Jerson, Mary Ellen, Ken and Jia need us to do our job. Take our strategic plan ... and make it real!

This first session is just like the first game in this week's World Cup. Opening ceremonies are over, the Hosts have been recognized and honored, dignitaries have spoken, the game plan studied, coaches are primed, the players are pumped ... and the fans are ready!

Our team is on the pitch ... ready for the kick-off. We have control of the ball. What are we going to do? How are we going to win? This week, in your smaller Track sessions – You're going to tackle each Pillar ... without fouling. You're going to pass to your team-mates. Every voice counts. You're going to create new opportunities ... and defend against rubber stamping. And, you're going to score!

We're here today because of the far-reaching vision of one woman, our founder. Like her, we too are visionaries. It's part of our DNA.

As visionaries, I want you to look into the future and try to imagine Special Olympics in 2015. How will we be known? How far will we have come? What will our global brand mean to the world? Here's how Tim put it: whose sacred story will we be listening to?

In getting ready for this Congress, I asked a cross-section of visionary leaders those *same* questions. What you're seeing on the screen is what they imagine the media saying about Special Olympics in 2015 –

“Special Olympics, world's premier sports organization, active in 190 countries” – International Herald Tribune

“United Nations proclaims Special Olympics a Global Force for Change” - BBC

“Fifteen thousand global athletes train for Special Olympics World Winter Games in Chile” - CNN

“Special Olympics enters the ranks of the ten best-known global brands” - Fortune

“Special Olympics wins Nobel Peace Prize” - Time

“10 million fans. 100 million fans. One billion fans.”

This view of the future may be a pipe dream. But by setting our sights higher and higher, by striving for excellence in everything we do ... who knows how far we can go? Who knows how many Athletes, Volunteers and Donors we'll be able to serve and partner with five years from now?

Dreaming about, planning for and taking charge of our Special Olympics future is an awesome responsibility. But if not us ... who will do it? Our future is too important to entrust to fate or luck. It takes a *shared* commitment to meet the *shared* challenges we face. This is the truth taught to us in an old South African principle, ubuntu, or “I am a human because I belong. I participate. I share.” In essence, “I am because you are.”

Bottom line. In the future, and I'm talking the immediate future, we must be greater than the sum of our parts. What we all learned in school, “one plus one equals two” is just not enough ... we need to have a MULTIPLIER effect. What do I mean? Let me show you how to ignite a movement, start to finish, in under three minutes

This is how it happens in the real world, brace yourself.

(SAID DURING “FIRST FOUNDERS” VIDEO)

A leader needs the guts to stand alone and look ridiculous. But what he's doing is so simple, it's almost instructional. This is key. You must be easy to follow! Now comes the first follower or “founder” with a crucial role: he publicly shows everyone how to follow.

Notice the leader embraces him as an equal, so it's not about the sole leader anymore - it's about them, plural. Notice he's calling to his friends to join in. It takes guts to be a first follower! You stand out and brave ridicule. Being a first follower is an under-appreciated form of leadership. **The first follower transforms a lone nut into a leader.**

If the leader is the flint, the first follower is the spark that makes the fire.

The second follower is a turning point: proof the first has done well. Now it's not a lone nut, and it's not two nuts. Three is a crowd and a crowd is news.

A movement must be public. Make sure outsiders see more than just the leader. Everyone needs to see the followers, because new followers emulate followers - not the leader.

Now here come 2 more, then 3 more. Now we've got momentum. This is the tipping point! Now we've got a movement!

As more people jump in, it's no longer risky. If they were on the fence before, there's no reason not to join now. They won't be ridiculed, they won't stand out, and they will be part of the in-crowd ... if they hurry. Over the next minute you'll see the rest who want to be part of the crowd, because eventually they'd be ridiculed for not joining.

And ladies and gentlemen that is how a movement is made!

So let's recap what we learned:

If you are a version of the shirtless dancing guy, all alone, remember the importance of nurturing your first few followers as equals, making everything clearly about the movement, not you.

Be public. Be easy to follow!

But the biggest lesson here - did you catch it?

Leadership is over-glorified.

Yes it started with the shirtless guy, and he'll get all the credit, but you saw what really happened:

It was the first follower who transformed a lone nut into a leader.

But there is no movement without the first follower.

Don't worry! I'm not about to take off my shirt and start dancing. But I think that video can inspire us to learn even more about motivation and inclusiveness and leadership. When to be leaders and when to be first followers.

Thank You!