



PRESS RELEASE

No: 636/2023

Date: 14th September 2023

Ministry of Equality Launches Special Olympics Berlin 2023 Documentary Showcasing the Achievements of Gibraltar Athletes and HM Government of Gibraltar's Partnership with Special Olympics

Last night the Ministry of Equality hosted the launch of a short film documenting the journey and participation of the Gibraltar Special Olympics contingent at the Berlin 2023 Summer Games. The documentary also touches on HM Government of Gibraltar's commitment to partner with Special Olympics who are the world's largest sports organisation for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

The Berlin Games saw over 6,500 athletes participating, representing 185 countries. As usual, Gibraltar athletes did exceptionally well, winning 16 medals, 5 Gold, 7 Silver and 4 Bronze; all athletes punching well above their weight when competing against much larger nations. It was a showcase of how the efforts, perseverance and hard work put in by our athletes and coaches was duly rewarded.

The Berlin Games also saw the first Global Forum for Inclusion organised by Special Olympics. Minister Sacramento, the Head of the Ministry of Equality and the Head of the GSLA, participated in this two day conference focused on creating strategies to promote inclusion and changing mind-sets about the role that people with learning disabilities should play in society. The Forum enabled a direct exchange between participants and government representatives from around the world, including leading economists, international academics and researchers, as well as representatives of civil society and international NGOs.

In addition to the Forum, there was also a high level Global Development Round Table meeting, where some countries committed to the Berlin Declaration. This is a commitment by governments to the Special Olympics Global Leadership Coalition for Inclusion to achieve sustainable development in a cross community pledge to creating, coordinating and integrating cross sectoral public policies.

Gibraltar was, in fact, the first country to commit to this Global Partnership when Minister Sacramento was invited to address the forum.

Special Olympics aims to promote a world that is free of barriers and where all individuals are able to flourish and develop through sport. Its vision should serve as a marker for all governments to foster the creation of opportunities and promote the abilities of people with learning disabilities.



Through Gibraltar's partnership with Special Olympics, the Ministry of Equality is already working with the Director of Public Health and are analysing the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Program. The aim being for a similar tailor-made health check screening program to be established through the GHA, for the benefit of everyone with a learning disability in Gibraltar.

The Government of Gibraltar firmly believes in the inclusion of people with disabilities and the promotion of different abilities, these values are aligned with those of the Special Olympics movement, who aim to create a unified generation through sport and inclusion.

The Caretaker Minister for Equality, Samantha Sacramento, said: "As Minister for Equality, I feel very privileged to have had this connection with Special Olympics for the better part of almost twelve years. It is because Team Gibraltar perform so brilliantly that I want their success to be formally recorded, so we can all share their experience. I am hopeful that this documentary will encourage others to join the Special Olympics movement in whatever capacity they can.

"I would like to thank Annie Risso, CEO of Special Olympics Gibraltar, for starting this movement locally and her dedication and leadership throughout. Also my thanks to all the coaches, sponsors and volunteers who believed in the difference Special Olympics can do to all the participants. The lived experience Special Olympics creates is not just an achievement in sports, it is also progress in bettering oneself and an advancement in inclusion."

Caretaker Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo, KC, said: "The values held by Special Olympics mirror those of HM Government of Gibraltar. It should therefore not be surprising to anyone that we have sought a partnership with them and have been the first country to affirm its commitment to the Berlin Declaration. This commitment is one that reflects our willingness to ensure inclusivity becomes a natural part of life in Gibraltar."

ENDS