



# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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**ISU 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Olympic Museum Lausanne** **October 13, 2017**

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## **Speech ISU President Mr. Jan Dijkema**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Skating Friends,

On behalf of the ISU Council, it is really a great pleasure for me as ISU President to extend a *warm welcome to all of you* at the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ISU. I am very grateful for your attendance: the ISU Honorary President, ISU Honorary Members, ISU Member Federations, ISU Office Holders and staff, ISU partners, and representatives of the International Olympic Committee, International Federations, sponsors and City of Lausanne. A special word of appreciation goes to the *greatest skating champions* over the last decades who are here this evening. They have played a very significant role in our beloved sport. It is really great that all of you are joining us here tonight.

The ISU is the oldest winter sports federation. *Ice skating has come a long way in the past 125 years.* You have seen the pictures on the screens, thanks to IMG, and you will see more pictures tonight. From competitions on frozen lakes to major events in stadiums with millions of viewers worldwide. From skaters cocooned in thick jackets and wooly hats to the ultra-fit, aerodynamic, balletic superstar athletes of today. You can see illustrative masterpieces from the past and present here at the Olympic Museum.

*The history of the ISU and its Members* is not just about developments in skating. It is also about people and friendship. In this regard, the story of our founders is very inspiring. By the eighteenth and nineteenth-century ice skating became popular as a recreation and spectator sport. Skating clubs, National associations and international competitions in Speed Skating and Figure Skating emerged. The need to establish international standards to govern these sports became more and more apparent.

On a hot summer day in July 1892, fifteen entrepreneurial men representing six countries came together in the Dutch seaside town of Scheveningen. They were madly in love with ice skating and shared a mission together. These pioneers produced the fundamental rules for international competitions and fixed dates for the first Championships. They created the ISU, the second International Sports Federation, and as I said the very first international winter sports federation.



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And look at where we are now 125 years later. Take a moment to look around and see how we have grown. From a handful of Members back then to 94 Members today. From all continents covering billions of people. And look with how many women we are today!

The ISU is in a really good shape. We have much to be proud of thanks to the hard work of the ISU Members, ISU Office Holders, ISU staff, skaters, coaches, officials and our partners.

***To succeed in the future***, we must move in tandem with the developments in our societies and have the ***innovative*** spirit of our founders.

The ISU is focused on attracting and educating new talented skaters, coaches, and officials. Therefore, we established a result-oriented ***development*** program in the past season. I would like to encourage Members to learn from each other and come up with new development projects. By the end of this year also the brand-new ISU website will be very helpful in this respect.

Another important priority is ***marketing and promotion***. Fascinating the global sports audience with the amazing performances of the athletes. It is vital to increase the experience and engagement for fans in the stadium and through media. We are working hard on our products and the promotion. In this regard, strategic partnerships with media and sponsors are also a must. The brand-new sponsorship with Audi is a good example.

Ladies and gentlemen, I always stress the importance of ***teamwork***. That's why the golden skate I just received is for all of you. Together we can further develop and promote our beautiful and exciting sport. And we must do so with ***great integrity and passion***.

I cannot predict what our successors will say in 2142. I only know for sure that people will continue to enjoy ice skating. Gliding over the ice gives a magical feeling. It is a fantastic spectacle to watch. And the sound of skates cutting ice is music to the ears. People skated already in the pre-history. It is in our DNA.

Dear Skating Friends, I would like to conclude. In the light of the Olympic spirit here at the Olympic Museum:

***Let us enjoy this memorable evening and celebrate our friendship!***

***Let us inspire adults and children worldwide with ice skating!***

***Let us shape the future together with a huge passion for our sport - in the footsteps of our founders!***

Thank you very much.