

Women's boxing on the table

by SHERRYLYN A. TOPPIN

HISTORY WAS CREATED in Barbados yesterday when the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) Women's Commission conference was convened at the Wildey Gymnasium, the first time it is being held here in the Caribbean.

The conference, which is being chaired by Barbadian Joyce Bowen, is seeking to address issues associated with women's boxing, chief of which is its continued exclusion as an Olympic sport.

In 2004 and now in 2008, boxing is the only sport without women in the Olympic Games, despite the fact that it is organised in more than 120 countries.

Rapid development

"Female boxing, the Olympic style, is rapidly developing worldwide and in an effort to ensure this continues, we must continue to plan and work assiduously for its progress. However, we look forward to the day that it becomes an Olympic

sport," Bowen said in her opening remarks.

Vice-chair Nieva Embuldeniya of Sri Lanka said the meeting was very important.

"This meeting is a very crucial meeting for women's boxing because we have a lot of things to decide. We have to push the acceptance of women's boxing in the Olympics and we will have to do our plan for the full year," she said.

Different cultures

"As you know, we all come from different cultures, we all speak different languages but here today, we all speak one language and that is women's boxing."

In her remarks, Minister of Sports Esther Byer-Suckoo said these were exciting times for sports and for women in sports in general, being embraced in administration.

"Sports can only improve with the addition of women, incorporating the energy, excitement, enthusiasm and the intelligence that women bring to the fore," she said.

The minister also officially announced that the Government of Barbados would support the bid to stage the 2010 Women's World Championships.

She praised Bowen, who is also president of the Amateur Boxing Association, for helping position Barbados as a leader in sports

through boxing.

There were also brief remarks by Erskine Simmons, secretary-general of the Barbados Olympic Association, acting deputy director of sports Mona Alleyne and Winston Carter of the Barbados Tourism Authority.

The conference is scheduled to end today.



BARBADIAN JOYCE BOWEN, chairman of the AIBA Women's Commission, welcoming delegates. Looking on are secretary Dr Christy Halpert, vice-chair Nieva Embuldeniya, Minister of Sports Esther Byer-Suckoo and vice-chair Bettan Andersson. (Picture by Sherrylyn A. Toppin.)

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