

September 2008

Open letter to IRB Council members and members of unions represented at the Council

We hope you have received our report **Putting Rugby First**, which provides an independent perspective on rugby's current world status, identifies some underlying problems and proposes six goals to help ensure rugby reaches its full, global potential. If not, it can be downloaded from www.puttingrugbyfirst.com.

Putting Rugby First has been sent to over a thousand rugby administrators, players, referees, government ministers, commercial partners, journalists and influential supporters and, downloaded from our website, has been read by many thousands of rugby supporters around the world. It has been covered extensively in traditional and digital press in over 65 countries, discussed at length on blogs and face-to-face around the world, and is even being held up by other sports as an example for planning their own futures. Fans across the globe have endorsed and amplified the messages contained in the document. The IRB has not challenged any of the points we have raised.

As intended, the report has started a debate within rugby about how to secure the future of this great game.

But now the most important people are you, the IRB Council Members and leaders of the world's rugby unions, with the power to determine rugby's ambitions and deliver its potential. Through structural reform and commercial development, it can and must reach new audiences or risk falling irretrievably behind.

There is overwhelming support for the view that the IRB Council meeting this autumn must address such important issues. Above all, the IRB Council needs a representative structure that will provide for its future and not reflect its past.

Do you endorse the six goals proposed in the report?

1. A more democratic and representative structure for the IRB, as the global governing body of the game
2. Corporate governance and management best practice applied to the IRB
3. A five-year plan for rugby's global development, encompassing elite rugby, grass-roots and commercial initiatives
4. Specific programmes, with measurable objectives, to deliver growth in prioritised territories
5. The 2015 Rugby World Cup hosted in a prioritised territory, as a springboard for the game's global growth
6. The inclusion of Rugby Sevens in the 2016 Olympic Games

If so, what will you do to ensure they are fulfilled?

We urge you to speak out on these issues and propose the changes necessary to move the game. Your voice at Council or through your representative at Council can set the course for reforms that will advance rugby's position in the global sporting landscape.

Sincerely,

Putting Rugby First

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