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Wushu Tournament Beijing 2008 to take place during the Olympics

BEIJING, 5 August - Comments from WANG Xiaolin (CHN), Secretary General of the International Wushu Federation (IWUF)

On the timing of the Wushu Tournament Beijing 2008:

"The tournament will take place from 21 August to 24 August, at the Olympic Sports Centre Gymnasium. The tournament has been approved by the IOC and will be hosted by BOCOG, IWUF and the Chinese Wushu Association."

On whether or not Wushu athletes will be staying at the Olympic Village:

"The Wushu athletes will not arrive in Beijing until August 18 and we are still making arrangements for their accommodation. I still haven't got anything specific. I think it will be decided soon."

On the cultural importance of Wushu:

"Everyone knows that Wushu has thousands of years of history and the core of it is harmony. Through this tournament I believe that foreign friends will have a deeper understanding of China. So during the Olympic Games we have also organised some top Wushu athletes to perform in the Olympic Village and some venues."

On the qualifying criteria for Wushu athletes:

"Since it is not a formal Olympic sport, the participating athletes were chosen from their placings at the 9th World Wushu Championships in Beijing last year. The top six for Taolu and the top eight for Sanshou were selected. There are also 20 wildcards. We are giving wildcards to allow more athletes to get involved and to promote the development of Wushu."

On whether Wushu medals will count in the Olympic tally:

"Since Wushu is not an official Olympic sport, medals won't be counted on the medal tally."

On Wushu becoming an official Olympic sport:

"I think that it is one of our goals to strive towards Wushu as an official Olympic sport and I am very confident about it but we have a long way to go. There are two reasons why it will be difficult. Firstly, the IOC currently has a policy to reduce the number of sports from 28 to 26 and secondly, even though Wushu is spread over 120 countries there are a lot of other sports applying to be an official sport."

On support the Wushu Tournament Beijing 2008:

"I would like to show my thanks to the IOC, because it not only shows the positive attitude and support of the IOC to Wushu but also shows IOC's respect to Chinese culture."

On how many people practice Wushu globally:

"I don't know the exact figure of how many people practice Wushu but any where I go internationally I meet friends practicing Wushu. Some people say there are about 200 million people, I don't know if this is accurate it is probably conservative."

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