



WORLD AQUATICS ANNOUNCES CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY BAHRAIN

World Aquatics and the Bahrain Olympic Committee today announced plans to create a centre of excellence and regional office for aquatic sports in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in partnership with GFH Financial Group and the Bahrain Swimming Federation. This partnership will see World Aquatics establish its centre at The University of Technology Bahrain (UTB). World Aquatics' elite athletes will have access to the centre, enabling them to enhance their training capabilities. Development athletes will also have access to the new facility, where they will receive on-site coaching and educational support through World Aquatics' Development programmes.

"World Aquatics could not have asked for better partners than in Bahrain, as demonstrated by our bold plans for a centre of excellence here that will serve as an example to the world," said World Aquatics President Husain Al-Musallam. "Our high-performance athletes are at their best when they can benefit from the right mix of facilities, coaching and sports science. World Aquatics is determined to ensure that this mix is available to athletes from all our national federations. And we are delighted to include an educational component with the help of the University of Technology Bahrain."

"Aquatic sports are universally important. Both the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the World Aquatics Championships Budapest 2022 saw over 180 nations represented. We are grateful to Bahrain and to the hosts of our other development centres for their help in ensuring aquatics athletes everywhere have the chance to fulfil their true potential."

World Aquatics currently has operating development centres in Thanyapura (Thailand), Dakar (Senegal), Cape Town (South Africa) and Davie (Florida, USA).

The plans announced today for Bahrain also include new pools capable of hosting events in five of the six World Aquatics sports: swimming, water polo, artistic swimming, diving, and high diving. The sixth sport, open water swimming, is already well-served from Bahrain's beaches. His Highness Shaikh Khalid Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Supreme Council for Youth and



Sports (SCYS) First Deputy Chairman, General Sports Authority (GSA) Chairman and Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) President, is a renowned open water swimmer, having completed the 31.5 km swim linking the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with Bahrain, across the Gulf of Bahrain.

“Bahrain is a nation of islands, united by the water that surrounds us,” HH Shaikh Khalid Bin Hamad Al Khalifa said. “With an ever increasing diversity of partnerships, Bahrain continues to be one of the leading sports hubs in the World. We have a very clear understanding of the value of aquatic sports. And we are excited to contribute to the future of World Aquatics, not just for Bahrain but for our region and the world. We look forward to hosting leading aquatics athletes from different nations, and to help them achieve their sporting dreams, both as development athletes and as participants in World Aquatics competitions.”

“Today we have witnessed a historic agreement where the private sector will fully align with the government’s vision of promoting sports tourism in the Kingdom of Bahrain.” Stated Faris Mustafa Al Kooheji, Secretary General of The Bahrain Olympic Committee. “This will be done by constructing a one-of-a-kind, exceptional centre for aquatic athletes.”

“GFH could not be more excited to partner on this initiative, which has such importance for the Kingdom of Bahrain and for World Aquatics,” said GFH’s CEO and UTB Chairman, Mr. Hisham Alrayes. “The project aligns with GFH and UTB’s long-time commitment and ongoing support for the further development and promotion of Bahrain as a leading regional centre for education and sports tourism. We look forward to working with World Aquatics and the Bahrain Olympic Committee to create a unique platform to attract aquatics athletes from the region and around the world to gather, train and develop their skills in Bahrain and to support the realisation of their potential in sport alongside that of the Kingdom.”

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