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THURSDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIS MEDIA INFO VANCOUVER 2010

100th anniversary of international Skiing

Whistler, February 18th, 2010//– Thursday, the 18th of February 2010 will recognize the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the International Ski Commission and the centenary of the very first International Ski Congress that was held in Christiania (later renamed Oslo), NOR on 18th February 1910. The International Ski Commission, also known by its French acronym CIS, was founded at its inaugural meeting by ten nations and was the organization that gave way to the Federation International de Ski or the International Ski Federation (FIS) during the International Winter Sports Week – known in Olympic history as the 1st Olympic Winter Games – in Chamonix (FRA) in February 1924.

Currently focused on staging the XXI Olympic Winter Games Vancouver 2010, FIS has grown by 100 nations over these 100 years and now comprises 110 members. The organization will celebrate this important milestone at its upcoming 47th International Ski Congress to be held in Antalya (TUR) from 30th May – 3rd June 2010. A commemorative book with a review of the first centenary of international skiing will be published at the time of the FIS Congress 2010.

“The first International Ski Congress in 1910 represented an important first step for managing and promoting the sport of skiing globally. The last centenary has seen its great growth and rapid development which still continues unabated,” said FIS President Gian Franco Kasper. “We are pleased to begin our 2nd centenary here at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games where 40 of the 86 Olympic titles are awarded in Skiing.”

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International organization of Skiing: Early years

Skiing had grown throughout the last decades of the 19th century and National Ski Associations were created in Russia (1896), Bohemia (now the Czech Republic; 1903), Switzerland (1904), the United States, Austria and Germany (all in 1905), and Norway, Sweden and Finland (all in 1908). The national organization also increased the need to monitor the global development of skiing.

When the Norwegian Ski Association was being set up in 1908, the possibility of founding an International Federation was raised. The following year, on 2nd February 1909, during international skiing competitions at Morez (FRA), the trainer for the Norwegian skiers, Durban

Hansen, spoke up during the distribution of prizes and issued an invitation on behalf of his National Association to those present to attend a Ski Congress at Christiania with the aim of setting up this International Federation. Officials and competitors from France, Italy and Switzerland enthusiastically applauded this invitation. Two months later a written confirmation was sent to the responsible authorities in eleven countries where the sport of skiing was practiced. This text stipulated:

“Over the last ten years, we have noted a keen interest in developing the sport of skiing in many countries. We therefore believe that the time has come to found an International Ski Federation with a view to establishing approved rules for Jumping and to find the best way to resolve the problems of the amateur. We are convinced that the delegates from the different countries would like to see the competitions at Holmenkollen. Thus we propose to organize the Ski Congress within the context of the competitions. . .”

Delegates from ten nations agreed to attend. On 18th February 1910, Karl Roll, President of the Norwegian Ski Association, welcomed 22 delegates at Christiania, He was unanimously elected chairman of the meeting and German was chosen as the official language. The participating nations were Austria, Bohemia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The discussions ended with the setting up of the International Ski Commission (CIS). A major task was entrusted to this Commission – the establishment and application of a set of rules for each type of ski competition. Karl Roll, declined the offer to be the first Chairman of the Commission, for private reasons.

Different sections of rules were decided upon as the basis for the committee’s work, e. g.

- Rules for the regulation of international ski racing
- Rules for competitors
- Prizes: Value, Distribution
- The standard for Jumping and “Hillrunning”
- Amateur rules for ski racing
- International cooperation

Before the end of 1910, the rules had already been established: An International Ski Congress took place annually from 1911 to 1914. In 1915 the First World War led to the cancellation of the Congress in Salzburg (AUT). The 6th International Ski Congress then took place in Stockholm in 1922, the 7th in Prague in 1923 and the 8th, which established FIS, in Chamonix in 1924. (For further historical information about FIS please go to <http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/insidefis/history/fishistory.html> or <http://history.fis-ski.com/>)

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About FIS

Founded in 1924 during the first Olympic Games in Chamonix, France, the International Ski Federation (FIS) aims to promote the sport of skiing and snowboarding and directs the development of all ski and snowboarding activities world-wide. It administers the Olympic disciplines of Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined, Freestyle Skiing and Snowboarding, including setting the international competition rules. With the help of its 110 member nations (one currently suspended), FIS stages more than 6’000 ski and snowboard competitions annually. FIS also makes recommendations for recreational skiing and snowboarding in the interest of all and promotes play in the snow as a healthy leisure activity for children and the youth. For more information, please visit www.fis-ski.com .

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