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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIS MEDIA INFO

GAP 2011 sets new records

07.02.2011// - The 2011 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships will commence in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (GER) today, 7th February. FIS President Gian Franco Kasper will officially open the event at the Opening Ceremony which begins at 18:00 CET at the Olympic Ski Stadium.

"We are very pleased to see the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships return to Garmisch-Partenkirchen after a break of 33 years. The continuously growing number of participating athletes and nations clearly underscores the high interest in the sport of Alpine Skiing," says FIS President Gian Franco Kasper. He added: "The weather forecast promises cold nights and pleasantly sunny days for the next week. I am expecting true 'Festspiele im Schnee', Bavarian style, for athletes and spectators alike."

All in all, 525 athletes - 208 ladies and 317 men - representing 69 nations have been entered to participate in the second FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Germany. Several hundred million television viewers will be viewing the Championships, whilst a record number of almost 1'800 media representatives have been accredited to report on the event.

33 FIS World Championships medals will be awarded as the competition schedule includes five ladies' and five men's events as well as the co-ed nations' team event. The nations' team event will be staged for the third time since its introduction in Bormio (ITA) in 2005 and successful second edition in Are (SWE) in 2007 after inclement weather forced cancellation in Val d'Isère (FRA) in 2009. For the first time, however, the event will be carried out in the parallel giant slalom format.

The qualification races for the men's slalom and giant slalom events are in the program for the third time after the 2007 Alpine World Ski Championships in Are (SWE), due to the extremely high number of entries in these events. Following the decision of the FIS Congress 2010 in Cape Town, there will be 100 starters in the actual competition and the top 60 from the first run will compete in the second run.

The competitions will begin with the ladies super-G on Tuesday, 8th February, followed by the super-G for the men on Wednesday, 9th February, 2009. Both of the reigning super-G champions, Lindsey Vonn (GER) and Didier Cuche (SUI) will be at the start to defend their titles.

"We are all excited before the start of the most important winter sports event in Central Europe this season. The Host broadcaster, GAP TV2011 which is acting on behalf of ARD and ZDF, is ready to deliver a first-class TV signal to broadcasters around the world. We are convinced that the Garmisch-Partenkirchen championships will be a great and memorable spectacle for the sport of Alpine Skiing", commented Ingolfur Hannesson, Head of Winter Sports for European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the television and marketing rights holder for the event.

The production of the international television signal at GAP 2011 is the responsibility of the German broadcasters ARD and ZDF that hold the role of Host Broadcaster (HBC). The goal of GAP TV2011, a joint management group under the leadership of ZDF, is to ensure the best possible coverage in the most advanced broadcasting technology with an impressive total number of 63 cameras at the three main venues (Kandahar Arena, Gudiberg Arena and the Medal Plaza). The entire production of the international signal is a HD production in 16:9 aspect ratio.

EBU's marketing partner Tridem Sports announced that the championships are sold out from the perspective of sponsoring. The international group of sponsors is led by presenting sponsor Audi, marking its fourth appearance in a row in this role, along with the official timing sponsor Hublot and the main sponsors Vattenfall, Halti, Milka and Deichmann.

The FIS Alpine World Ski Championships 2011 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen also denote some special historical milestones. Exactly eighty years ago in February 1931, the first ever World Championships in Alpine Skiing were organized by Sir Arnold Lunn in Muerren, Switzerland. Back then, the ladies and men only competed in downhill and slalom. The GAP 2011 championships also celebrate the 75 year anniversary of the first Olympic Winter Games that included Alpine Skiing competitions held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1936.

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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. FIS 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 112 member nations (one currently suspended), it 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.