

Chamonix and Lausanne, April 6<sup>th</sup> 2017

Creation of **UTMB® International** and launch of the  
**GaoLiGong by UTMB®** in March 2018

Autour du Mont-Blanc and OC Sport, two sports marketing companies specialising in outdoor events, today announced the joint creation of **UTMB® International**, a new company aiming to speed up and control the development of the UTMB® brand beyond Europe, and work with events organisers from all over the world.

Supported by almost 2,000 qualifying races around the world and beloved by hundreds of thousands of athletes, who dream of one day being on the start line in Chamonix, UTMB® has become a global, premium and leading brand.

Driven by strong and unaltered values since its inception, UTMB® is in a constant quest for innovation to continue to develop trail running – a sport that has grown considerably in recent years (increase in participation, global expansion, new social categories, new technologies).

In 15 years, UTMB® has become a “must-do” international event known as the “World’s Summit of Trail Running”. Its unique expertise inspires many organisers especially in countries or continents new to the sport.

According to Catherine Poletti, Managing Director of Autour du Mont-Blanc (owner and organiser of UTMB® Mont-Blanc): *“UTMB® has managed to orchestrate these numerous developments thanks to its unfailing loyalty to its core values: a love for the mountains, respect for nature as well as an openness to the world and the will to reach out to others.”*

UTMB® International’s ambition is to contribute in the next 10 years to the birth of major and popular trail running events organised with very high quality standards, in all continents (outside Europe). Improving runners’ safety will remain a top priority as well as the quality of the “journey” offered to runners and their supporters. These events - whether they already exist or will emerge in the coming years - won’t be part of a new circuit but will aim to integrate into the highest level of the Ultra-Trail® World Tour.

UTMB® International will work with professional and independent events organisers to be certain that the local territories’ knowledge and authenticity will remain unspoilt. UTMB® International will advise and grant up to five ‘by UTMB®’ labels to events meeting requirements on every continent outside Europe (North America, South America, Africa, Middle East, Asia, Oceania).

Each event will have to be organised in a mountainous environment and be based around an iconic and easily accessible location with high quality facilities. To meet the requirements, events must also offer different race formats (including a 100-mile distance) to attract thousands of participants every year from around the world. After a few successful editions, the best event on each continent will receive the highest reward and become a UTMB® event.

Rémi Duchemin, Executive Director of UTMB® International as well as Founder and Executive Director of OC Sport, announced the signature of a first long-term agreement with Chinese company Xingzhi Exploring Group. He said: *“This win-win partnership will be a reference for the future: Xingzhi Exploring Group brings its knowledge and networks*

*to help grow and structure trail running in Asia, while UTMB® International will support their marketing, commercial and operational actions. We will have an ambitious but controlled growth with the signature of a similar deal every year until 2021.”*

A well-known and recognised sports marketing player in China, especially in the organisation of trail running events like the Ultra Gobi, marathons and half-marathons, Xingzhi Exploring Group is currently creating several events as part of the partnership with UTMB® International.

Following the success of a Test Event organised in Tengchong (China) last November, UTMB® International and Xingzhi Exploring Group are delighted to officially announce the creation of the **GaoLiGong by UTMB®**.

The inaugural edition will be held between March 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 2018 in the tropical mountain range of Yunnan Province around Tengchong. Three distances will be on the programme: MGU (160km, 8,400M+), RCE (125km, 6,600M+) and THT (55km, 2,300M+). More information will be available at [www.GaoligongByUTMB.com](http://www.GaoligongByUTMB.com) before registrations open on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

### **Press contacts**

Elodie Mens, UTMB® International  
[elodie.mens@ocsport.com](mailto:elodie.mens@ocsport.com)  
+41 78 636 40 86

Anne Gery, Infocîmes agency for UTMB® Mont-Blanc  
[annegery@infocimes.com](mailto:annegery@infocimes.com)  
+33 6 12 03 68 95

### **Notes to editors**

#### About Autour du Mont-Blanc

Founded in 2004, Autour du Mont-Blanc is based in Chamonix (France). The company is managed by Catherine and Michel Poletti, founders and organisers of UTMB® Mont-Blanc. Beyond the creation of UTMB® in 2003 and its organisation, Catherine and Michel largely contributed to the launch of the Ultra-Trail® World Tour and the International Trail Running Association (ITRA).

#### About OC Sport

OC Sport is a global sports marketing and events company specialising in professional sailing and outdoor events including running, trail running, amateur cycling and triathlon. Operating globally from bases in Switzerland, France, UK, United States and China, OC Sport is an award-winning event management company and rights holder. It manages competitive teams and athletes and provides consultancy to global brands, host venues and other event organisers. In 2017, OC Sport's international team is organising 28 events in 16 countries and 5 continents.