

General Meeting

Minutes

of the General Meeting of Members of the International Table Tennis Federation, held on Wednesday 23rd February 2000 at the Nikko Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at 9:50 a.m.

Presentations

The Meeting began with a presentation by the City of Lausanne, which had come to support the resolution proposed by the Executive Board to move the Head Office of the ITTF from Hastings to Lausanne. Mr. Bernard Metraux, Chief of Police, presented Lausanne, in the words of Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, as the most significant city in the world in the field of sport. He promised that the City of Lausanne together with the Swiss Government would do all it could to find solutions to the needs of International Federations that have their headquarters in Switzerland.

A brief video presentation of Lausanne and its environs was followed by a comprehensive description, by Mr. Claude Petitpierre, Director of Tourism in Lausanne, of the advantages and benefits that could be reaped by the ITTF if it moved its headquarters to Lausanne. He explained that Lausanne was a cultural, medical and business centre where many European companies had their headquarters including the IOC, the Olympic Museum, a unique establishment of its kind and 13 International Sports Federations which contributed to making Lausanne the Olympic capital and a world sports capital. He said that Lausanne was also working on developing an "International Sports House", where all the International Federations would be located under one roof, a perfect place for networking with other sports federations. He said that Lausanne had already hosted many international sports events and was endowed with all technical facilities to host such events. He in turn promised the ITTF full support from the City of Lausanne, the Canton of Vaud and the Swiss government authorities to facilitate the installation and integration of the ITTF and its staff, if it decided to move its headquarters to Switzerland.

Pro Tour and World Cup Awards

Mr. Adham Sharara explained that the ITTF had begun a tradition last year of presenting awards to the organisers of the Pro Tour. He stated that there would be a special award to Cambodia for hosting the most successful Women's World Cup the ITTF had ever held. He thanked the sponsor and the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) for its valuable co-operation and help to the Cambodian Organising Committee. He invited Mr. Xu Yinsheng to present the award to the delegate from Cambodia.

The Pro Tour events were rewarded in the following manner:

- Best new event, presented by Mr. Han Sang Kook, to Germany for the German Open.
- Best hospitality, presented by Mr. Nils Bergström, to Croatia for the Croatian Open.
- Highest Prize Money, presented by Mr. Yang Shuan, to Qatar for the Qatar Open.
- Highest number of Spectators, presented by Mr. Pierre Albertini, to China for the China Open.
- Best Overall Event, presented by Mr. George Segun, to Germany for the German Open.
- The Premium Event award, presented by Mr. Adham Sharara, to Qatar for the Qatar Open.

President's Advisory Council recognition

The members of the President's Advisory Council, Mr. Xu Yinsheng (Chairman), Mr. Jimmy McClure, Mr. Ranga Ramanujan, Mr. Misha Kapetanic and Mr. Henry Yue were then presented with gifts by Mr. Adham Sharara.

Mr. Adham Sharara publicly apologised to Mr. Ismat El Kurdi of Jordan for the mix up in the schedule of his appointment with him and promised that he would meet him after the General Meeting.

The General Meeting adjourned for a short break and resumed work at 10:45 a.m.

Announcements

A presentation followed by Mr. Michel Dach, Secretary General of the *Jeux de la Francophonie*. Mr. Dach thanked the ITTF for its warm welcome and for this opportunity to present the next Francophone Games that would take place from the 14th – 24th of July 2000 in Ottawa and in Hull, Canada. He explained that the Games took place every four years and comprised 6 sports events and 7 cultural events reminiscent of the Olympic Games in Antiquity. He said that table tennis had its rightful place at the Games as a sport, which motivated the young and carried a message of peace between nations. He invited all present to come to Canada in July 2000 and share this event.

Mr. Adham Sharara thanked Mr. Dach and said that the ITTF did not only rely on its member Associations but also on different groups, which contributed to the growth of our sport. He said he had the honour and the pleasure of attending the Latin American Junior Championships in Guatemala, which had been organised with great success and that he had heard that the Commonwealth Championships in Singapore had also been very successful.

1. Welcome and opening address

The welcome and opening address had already been made at the EGM.

2. Appointment of Chairman of Meeting

Mr. Sharara was appointed Chairman of the General Meeting.

3. Roll call

Roll call had already been taken at the EGM but new arrivals were asked to announce their presence. Twelve (12) scrutineers were appointed (2 from each Continent).

A total number of 93 Associations were present and in addition there were 15 proxies for a total of 108 votes.

The following corrections were made to the Agenda:

- Item 6 - provisional membership for Samoa.
- Item 9 - a decision to be made, according to Constitution concerning the banks of the Federation.
- Item 16.1 - Anti-doping policy update.

4. Minutes of previous BGM

The Minutes of the Biennial General Meeting held in Eindhoven, Netherlands, 3rd August 1999, were approved by the BGM and signed by the President as a true record of the meeting. There was no business arising from the Minutes.

5. Proposals of the Standing Orders Chairman for study

Mr. Adham Sharara reported for information that the Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, Mr. Yuri Posevin, had submitted for study to the Executive Committee a list of reforms and changes the Committee would like to see implemented within the ITTF. Mr. Sharara promised that this report would be given careful consideration and if certain items necessitated rule or Constitutional changes they would be referred to the AGM in Osaka.

6. Membership applications

Niue was accepted as a new member of the ITTF, while Samoa was accepted as a provisional member of the ITTF.

7. Adoption of all reports submitted to Council (21 February 2000)

Mr. Adham Sharara explained that all reports had been presented and accepted by Council and asked the GM as a formality to also adopt these reports.

The General Meeting adopted all reports submitted to Council.

8. P4 Plan presentation (Future orientation)

Mr. Adham Sharara presented the P4 Plan saying that it was important for the ITTF to have a point of reference and a philosophy so that all plans and decisions were consistent with the goals of the ITTF. He said the ITTF was embarking on a period of planning, where development and technical plans had a priority and the P4 plan was a clear point of reference for the priorities and goals of the ITTF. He then explained the four Ps:

Popularity – increase the visibility of table tennis, so that some of our athletes may be recognised in the streets and that they become household names; increase the recognition factor and public awareness, increase print media, and pay very special attention to the presentation of the sport.

Participation – increase participation at all levels, of coaches, of athletes, of players, by working hand in hand with the Continental Federations.

Profits – increase profits and generate income; organise events that are a financially profitable and do not just depend on the financial aid received from external sources such as the IOC.

Planning – all activities must be soundly planned, as it is the key to success. All activities have to be part of a long-term plan.

The P4 plan may generate general goals for the Associations such as focusing on marketing and media coverage, increasing the mass of table tennis players around the world, creating a clear competition programme, paying the highest attention to the image of our sport, giving more equipment aid, making all parts of the world more competitive, improving internal and external communication and updating the structure of the ITTF by creating a professional team of staff members. These specific goals will always be related to the annual goals and they in turn will respect all P4 priorities.

Mr. Alan Ransome congratulated and thanked the President on his presentation. He said that the ITTF in the past was perceived as an instrument that looked after the sport but now it was taking overall responsibility for it. He said that in order to increase the number of players, the ITTF should also develop table tennis for disabled people and strive to make the sport accessible to everybody.

Mr. Ahmed Boughnim of Tunisia thanked the President for his clear and concise exposé on the future development of table tennis. He said that the ITTF should strive to improve the financial situation of the sport, which was still comparatively modest, by attracting more sponsorship. He said that it was also important to distribute aid in an equitable manner to the Continents and other smaller groups, which contributed to the development of the sport.

9. Finances

Mr. Adham Sharara referred to the Financial Report distributed beforehand and made a short visual presentation of the issues to be discussed under this item. He said that in the absence of Mr. Yap Yong Yih, the staff and himself had dealt with the day-to-day financial matters.

He stated that some of the interesting new features were that the ITTF was now funding development plans directly with the Continental Federations and doing so on a cost sharing basis; that the Committees had been requested to create plans and budgets which could be included in the overall development plan; and finally, that the Pro Tour had now become a “profit centre” which generated a profit to the ITTF. The Pro Tour had brought in a profit of £ 35,000 in 1998 and a profit of £ 145,000 in 1999 as a result of increased television sales and sponsorship.

9.1 Financial Statements

For 1999, the audited statements would be circulated to the members and in April 2001 the ITTF would be completely up to date with the audited statements for 2000. On strong recommendation from the new auditors, all budgets or financial statements of the ITTF would be presented in the future in US dollars instead of £.

Mr. Adham Sharara stated that, as requested by Mr. Chérif Hajem in Eindhoven, the ITTF was presenting a 4-year quadrennial budget instead of the traditional yearly one. Mr. Sharara explained the Financial Report in detail pointing out that the main income of the ITTF was not Olympic income any more but the ITTF marketing income. He also explained in detail how the income would be distributed.

A discussion followed and many questions were posed by several delegates in order to clarify particular points in the budget and the financial statements. Mr. Ranga Ramanujan thanked the ITTF for making the statements available in advance. In answer to his request for an allocation for the Commonwealth countries Mr. Sharara said that the ITTF did not fund competitions but the ITTF was ready to study clear development plans that could be submitted to the Technical Director for consideration.

9.2 Budget approval

It was accepted that the ITTF Budget be adopted on a quadrennial basis with periodic adjustments to be made at General Meetings when necessary.

9.3 Financial Projections and Reserve Fund (Legacy Fund)

Mr. Adham Sharara explained that at the moment the ITTF had an accumulated surplus of approximately US\$ 600,000 but as this was not sufficient the ITTF should aim to build a reserve fund of at least US\$ 5 million within the next 8 years. He also said that US\$ 2,400,000 of net Olympic TV income as well as US\$ 300,000 from Olympic Marketing Income would be allocated according to the financial plan presented. The reserve fund should be increased to approximately US\$ 2 million in the first quadrennial and to US\$ 4 million in the next quadrennial with an ultimate goal of US\$ 5 million.

9.4 Appointment of Auditors

Mr. Adham Sharara stated that the ITTF needed an international firm, present in all three countries of ITTF operations, which was capable of doing field audits as well as system audits. It was for this reason that the Executive Board was recommending the firm BDO Dunwoody LLP. BDO Dunwoody LLP had offices in Switzerland, England and Canada.

- **Proposed by Pakistan, the GM appointed BDO Dunwoody LLP as auditors of the ITTF.**
- **Proposed by the USA, the Toronto Dominion Bank in Canada, the UBS of Switzerland and Lloyds Bank in England were appointed the banks of the ITTF.**

It was decided that the Executive Committee be empowered to open the necessary bank accounts for the ITTF as needed from time to time

10. Constitutional change timelines and procedures

Mr. Adham Sharara agreed with Mr. Alaor Azevedo of Brazil that the ITTF needed to focus on structure and to do so it also needed to change the Constitution. In Eindhoven it was said that a new Constitution would be presented in Osaka in 2001 and a draft of this Constitution would be sent out to all associations six months before the Osaka General Meeting. Within the next 3 months all member Associations would be asked to give their own opinions and reflections for the new Constitution. Mr. Sharara encouraged all members to take part actively in the elaboration of the new Constitution by giving in writing their own ideas and opinions for changes and improvements.

11. Professional structure

Mr. Adham Sharara explained that a total number of 7 professionals were currently employed by the ITTF but by the end of 2000 the staff would increase. Each member of staff, excepting the strictly administrative staff, was considered a profit centre for the ITTF; for example a Marketing Director should bring in more profits than what it costs the ITTF to employ him. He then gave an overview of the long-term professional staff structure and a possible scenario of the future structure, if the headquarters moved from Hastings to Lausanne— an Executive Director, a Media and Communication Manager, a Programme Co-ordinator, a Technical Co-ordinator, Administration and Finance Assistant as well as a secretary. The Ottawa Office would contain the President's Office and the Marketing Division. He said that by the AGM in Osaka there should be a clear picture of the future professional structure of the ITTF.

12. **Propositions and resolutions**

(2/3 majority of votes cast needed)

(1) Proposed by Equipment Committee

That changes affecting any kind of equipment take effect from the start of the next season but one.

This would mean that a change to an equipment law or regulation would not take effect until 1 September in the year following the General Meeting or Council meeting at which the change was made.

ACCEPTED

(3/4 majority of votes cast needed)

(2) Proposed by Executive Board and Rules Committee

That a player obstructs the ball if he, or anything he wears or carries, intercepts it when it is moving towards the playing surface and has not passed beyond his end line, not having touched his court since last being struck by his opponent.

This would make clear that a player does not obstruct the ball if he intercepts it when it is moving away from the playing surface.

ACCEPTED

(3) Proposed by Executive committee

That the ball may be 40mm in diameter with a weight of 2.7g or, until 1.1.03, 38mm in diameter with a weight of 2.5g.

This would allow both sizes of ball to be used until the end of 2002, when the 38mm ball would cease to be legal.

After the extensive discussion that followed it was decided to vote on the proposition in three steps:

(a) That the ball be 40mm in diameter with a weight of 2.7g.

ACCEPTED

(b) Regarding the date of implementation of the new ball two options were proposed: October 2000, immediately after the Olympic Games or as of the 1st of September 2001.

That the 40mm ball would come into use as of the 1st of October 2000, immediately after Sydney 2000.

ACCEPTED (57 votes in favour)

(c) That the 38mm would be used in official ITTF competitions until 1 January 2003

Defeated

Mr. Adham Sharara thanked Mr. Xu Yinsheng, Mr. George Segun and Mr. Mikael Anderson for all the work done with the 40mm ball.

(4) Service Law change proposition

The ITTF Executive Board had formed a Special Commission with the mandate to study service law proposals from the Game Development Group, the Athletes Commission, the German TTA and the Czech TTA.

The "Service Rule Commission" Chairman, Mr. Colin Clemett explained that the Commission was not ready to present a concrete proposal yet; but that the commission had agreed on the concept of a new rule and would experiment with the proposed new rule before making a final proposition at the next General Meeting in Osaka.

Resolutions (simple majority required)

(A) Proposed by Executive Board

That a Special Commission studying the service law examine the eight proposals submitted by the Game Development Group plus the proposals submitted by the German TTA, the Czech TTA and the Athletes Commission. The Special Commission would propose one or two options to the General Meeting either in Kuala Lumpur or in Osaka.

Item referred to AGM in Osaka.

(B) Proposed by Executive Board

That the Head Office of the ITTF be located in Lausanne and that the transfer should occur in the period from 1.10.2000 to 31.12.2000.

ACCEPTED.

Mr. Claude Diethelm thanked the GM for its choice and said that he regretted that the ITTF had to leave its traditional home in England, but as change was inevitable, he was proud and honoured to welcome the ITTF to Switzerland.

13. Future World Championships

Mr. Adham Sharara explained that Council had discussed two possible options and would be taking the decision, after consultation with the General Meeting, whether to try one of the options on an experimental basis. He went on to explain in detail the advantages and disadvantages of separating the championships. He said that the date of the Team Events would have to be decided in concert with the Continental Federations.

Mr. Daniel Braslet of the French Table Tennis Association confirmed that France was bidding for the 2003 World Championships but explained that due to the very heavy costs and expected budget deficit of US \$ 550,000, it would **not** be bidding for the combined championships but would be a candidate for the Individual Events Championships in 2003.

Mr. Ton Van Happen said that the Netherlands had been proud to organise the first split championship with the individual events in their country, which proved that even a so-called small Association would be able to organise half the WTTC. Mr. Mikael Anderson added that many benefits had been reaped in Marketing thanks to the split championship and that it was necessary to seriously consider these new possibilities.

The choice of the option to be experimented would be made by Council at its meeting on 24th February 2000.

14. President's Advisory Council

Mr. Adham Sharara reported briefly on the activities of the President's Advisory Council (PAC), which had met in Lausanne in October 1999 together with the Executive Board and the President of the IOC, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Mr. Sharara invited Mr. Hans Giesecke to be part of the PAC. Mr. Giesecke gladly accepted and was presented with a gift by Mr. Xu Yinsheng, Chairman of the PAC.

15. Additional presentations (time permitting)

Ms Judit Faragó of the Hungarian Table Tennis Association showed a brief video presentation and announced the organisation of the Hungarian World Table Tennis Youth Festival to take place in Hungary from the 18th to 21st of August 2000.

16. Any other business

- The GM gave the Chairman of the Sports Science Committee the approval to modify the ITTF anti-doping policy to be in agreement with IOC policy.
- Mr. Rufford Harrison stated that it was necessary to support the manufacturers by using 38mm balls at non-ITTF events, whenever possible, in order to diminish existing stocks.
- Mr. M. Grisarú thanked Mr. Adham Sharara for all his efforts to make it possible for Israel and all countries to participate at the WTTC.

- Mr. Han Sang Kook notified the GM that the Korea Table Tennis Association together with the Province of Cheju Island was hoping to host a future WTTC. He said that official information would be given in Osaka.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Meeting Chairman, Adham Sharara

Associations Present at GM (93)

Argentina,
Barbados,
Brazil,
Canada,
Croatia,
Egypt,
Finland,
Guatemala,
Iceland,
Ireland,
Jersey,
Korea DPR,
Libya,
Malaysia,
Moldova,
Norway,
Philippines,
Qatar,
Scotland,
Slovenia,
Sweden,
Tunisia,
United Arab Emirates,

Australia,
Belarus,
Brunei,
China,
Cyprus,
El Salvador,
France,
Honduras,
India,
Israel,
Jordan,
Korea
Lithuania,
Maldives,
Mongolia,
Pakistan,
Poland,
Romania,
Seychelles,
South Africa,
Switzerland,
Turkey,
USA,

Austria,
Belgium,
Bulgaria,
Chinese Taipei,
Czech Republic,
England,
Germany,
Hong Kong,
Indonesia,
Italy,
Kazakhstan,
R, Latvia,
Luxembourg,
Mauritius,
Nepal,
Palau,
Portugal,
Russia,
Slovak,
Spain,
Tahiti,
Turkmenistan,
Venezuela,

Bangladesh,
Bosnia-Herzegovina,
Cambodia,
Côte D'Ivoire
Denmark,
Estonia,
Greece,
Hungary,
Iran IR,
Japan,
Kenya,
Lebanon,
Macao,
Mexico,
Netherlands, Nigeria,
Palestine,
Puerto Rico,
Saudi Arabia,

Sri Lanka,
Thailand,
Ukraine,
Vietnam, Yugoslavia.

Proxies (15)

Burkina Faso,
Greenland,
Morocco,
Syria,

Burundi,
Guinea,
New Caledonia,
Togo,

Colombia,
Liechtenstein,
New Zealand,
Wales.

Congo D. R.,
Malta,
San Marino,