

Council (First session)

Minutes

of the Council Meeting of the International Table Tennis Federation, held on Monday, 21st February 2000 at the Nikko Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at 9 a.m.

Present

Adham Sharara
Pierre Albertini
George Segun
Nils Bergström
Yang Shuan

President and CEO
Deputy President
Executive Vice-President
Executive Vice-President
Executive Vice-President

Chérif Hajem
Han Sang Kook
Stefano Bosi
Miguel Delgado
Bruce Burton
Neil Harwood

Continental Vice-President (Africa)
Continental Vice-President (Asia)
Continental Vice-President (Europe)
Continental Vice-President (Latin America)
Continental Vice-President (North America)
Continental Vice-President (Oceania)

Continental Representatives

Africa

Berthe A. Bakhary
Joe Carrim
Khaled El-Salhy
Philippe Hao Thyn Voon
Olabanji Oladapo
Jane Pinto

Asia

Khalil Al-Mohannadi
Rabee Al-Turk
Choo Wee Khiang
M. C. Chowhan
Koji Kimura
Park Do Cheon
S. H. Shah
Tony Yue

Europe

Jean Devys
Judit Faragó
Camille Gonderinger
Radivoj Hudetz
Yuri Posevin (*and Standing Orders*)
Alan Ransome
Walter Rönmark
Eberhard Schöler
Rudolf Sporrer

Latin America

Alaor G. P. Azevedo
Melecio Eduardo Rivera

North America

Tim Boggan

Oceania

Graeme Ireland

Committee Chairmen

Claude Bergeret (*Athletes' Commission*)
Arne Madsen (*Media*)
Colin Clemett (*Rules*)
Yao Zhenxu (*Technical*)
Rufford Harrison (*Equipment*)
André Damman (*Ranking*)
Dr. Jean François Kahn (*Sports Science*)

Guests

Claude Diethelm
Hans Giesecke
Patrice Iseli
Chris McGrath
Bernard Metraux
Claude Petitpierre
Mr. Pillonel
Glenn Tepper
President Swiss Table Tennis Federation
Chairman Umpires and Referees Task Force
Director of Sports, Lausanne
WorldSport.com, ITTF Liaison Officer
Chief of Police, Lausanne
Director of Tourism, Lausanne
Representative from Swiss Embassy in KL
Development Officer for Oceania

In attendance

Mihovil Kapetanic
Ranga Ramanujan
Eve Williams
Anders Thunström
Christian Veronese
Jordi Serra
Lilamani de Soysa
Li Tiefeng
President's Advisory Council
President's Advisory Council
Administration Director
Marketing Director
Marketing Manager for Europe
Technical Director
Administrative and Project Co-ordinator
Interpreter

Absent

Kosi Mawulli Agokla (*Africa*), Franklin Mathilda (*Latin America*), Roberto Miglietti (*Latin America*), Patrick Gillman (*Oceania*) and David Jackson (*Oceania*).

1. Welcome

Mr. Adham Sharara welcomed Council members and introduced the many guests present at the meeting, the President's Advisory Council, the delegation from Lausanne and the representative from Worldsport.com, a new internet company which will manage the ITTF's web site. He explained proceedings and said that the Council meeting would begin with the two presentations made by the representatives of Lausanne and Mr. Glenn Tepper, Development Officer for Oceania. Mr. Sharara then requested a minute of silence in honour of the late Mr. Yap Yong Yih, whose vision and energy, he said, had made the bid for Kuala Lumpur a success.

The Council Agenda was adjusted with the addition of the following items:

- 19.1 – Future of the World Championships
- 19.2 – Anti-doping policy update

Mr. Bernard Mettraux of Lausanne thanked the ITTF for its welcome and hospitality and Mr. Claude Petitpierre presented a short video on Lausanne and explained the advantages and benefits that would be offered to the ITTF if it decided to move its headquarters to Lausanne.

Mr. Adham Sharara thanked the representatives from Lausanne for their comprehensive explanations. The presentation was followed by questions on issues such as the costs of maintaining an office in an expensive country such as Switzerland, tax implications, and the future of the Hastings building owned by the ITTF, distances and facilitating visa procedures etc. Mr. Adham Sharara explained the real benefits that could be gained by moving closer to the IOC and enumerated the support and concrete aid that had already been received from the IOC and the City of Lausanne. Mr. Claude Petitpierre reported that the Swiss Federal Government had put together a task force to study and help the city of Lausanne to welcome and facilitate the arrival of new International Federations to the Canton. Mr. Adham Sharara also explained the many options open to the ITTF with regard to the ITTF building in Hastings, which the ITTF could continue to own, sell for a sum of approximately £ 50,000 or continue to maintain and rent till property values go up. He promised that the subject would be given very careful thought in due course. Mr. Alan Ransome did assert, however, that if the ITTF left Britain, its traditional home, the English Table Tennis Association and all its affiliated associations would be very unhappy to see it leave.

Mr. Adham Sharara introduced Mr. Glenn Tepper who was running a development programme in the Oceania region and said, that considering its success, it would be used as a model for the other Continents. Mr. Tepper gave a comprehensive account of his work and the results of the Oceania region development programme for 1999. He reported that he had visited 11 countries where he had been involved in various activities which ranged from level 1 coaching courses or umpires courses to organising tournaments, coaching national teams, organising school clinics and demonstrations, preparing simple development plans, and assisting with funding and the formation of new associations. He said that the Oceania Table Tennis Federation had grown in numbers and new members like Kiribati, Niue and the Solomon Islands had recently joined the ITTF with Samoa about to follow. He also explained the problems and weaknesses of many of the countries in the region, which were poor and lacked even the most basic equipment. He concluded by saying that the ITTF should "give ownership" of the project to the respective countries by making it a joint venture. Every country was unique and programmes had to be adapted according to local needs. Methodologies should not be imposed, the "local way" had to be respected and the important aim was to give the people the confidence to carry on, on their own.

Mr. Neil Harwood thanked the ITTF for its support to Oceania and also Mr. Glenn Tepper for the excellent work he had been doing in the region. Mr. Adham Sharara thanked Mr. Tepper for his presentation as well as for the very useful quarterly reports he sends to the ITTF and invited all present to take the opportunity to discuss with Mr. Tepper and gain as much knowledge and advice from him, which they could in turn apply to their own Continents.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken and absences were noted.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 5th August 1999 and any matters arising

The Minutes were signed by the President as a true record of the meeting held on Thursday, 5th August 1999, Dorint Hotel, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

4. President and Chief Executive Officer Report

The President and Chief Executive Officer report was accepted as presented. Mr. Adham Sharara informed the meeting that if the ITTF moved its headquarters to Lausanne, it would need to hire an Executive Director.

5. Deputy President's Report

The Deputy President's Report was accepted as presented.

6. Executive Vice-Presidents' Reports

6.1 Mr. George Segun referred to page 12 of his report and said that the conference on "How to make table tennis more attractive to the media and spectators" did not take place due to poor attendance. Mr. Adham Sharara thanked the Singapore Table Tennis Association for helping to organise the conference and apologised for any inconveniences caused by its cancellation. The report was accepted as presented.

6.2 Nils Bergström
The report was accepted as presented.

6.3 Yang Shuan
The report was accepted as presented.

7. Reports of Executive Board

7.1 Continental Vice-President – Africa
Mr. Chérif Hajem thanked Mr. André Damman, Mr. Colin Clemett, Mr. Mikael Andersson and Ms Claude Bergeret for the good work they had done in Africa in 1999. The report was accepted as presented.

7.2 Continental Vice-President – Asia
The report was accepted as presented.

7.3 Continental Vice-President – Europe
The report was accepted as presented.

7.4 Continental Vice-President – Latin America
Mr. Miguel Delgado thanked all coaches and experts who gave courses in Latin America and thanked the Executive Committee for its support to Latin America. The report was accepted as presented.

7.5 Continental Vice-President – North America
In answer to Mr. Rufford Harrison's question as to what was being done about Bermuda, Mr. Bruce Burton said that he would be discussing the subject soon with his North American colleagues and that they would make more concerted efforts to bring Bermuda back to the fold. The report was accepted as presented.

7.6 Continental Vice-President – Oceania
The report was accepted as presented.

8. Reports from Committees

8.1 Equipment
Mr. Rufford Harrison referred to a racket control problem that had occurred in Eindhoven, which had revealed a weakness in the existing system and therefore as

similar problems would have to be anticipated in the future, he asked Council for the authorisation to engage the necessary funds to use a back-up system in Sydney. The back-up system, known as gas chromatography (or gc), was an infallible method but costly, around US \$ 8,000 if used in Sydney. Mr. Adham Sharara supported his request saying that the incident in Eindhoven did a lot of damage, which had to be repaired and that the ITTF had to improve its methods, which were neither consistent nor adequately documented. Council recommended the Equipment Committee to take all requisite steps and engage all necessary funds to install a foolproof system where racket testing was concerned and instructed the Equipment Committee to make a recommendation for Osaka to ban toxic liquid glues (containing solvents), while making sure that the ITTF had a totally reliable system for testing for banned liquid glues. The report was accepted as presented.

8.2 Media

Mr. Arne Madsen reported that at the time he wrote his report a Media and Communications Manager had been hired but unfortunately for personal reasons the selected person did not take up the post and that any further developments would be communicated in due course. The report was accepted as presented.

8.3 Ranking

The report was accepted as presented.

8.4 Rules

Mr. Colin Clemett notified that since the report had been written, an agreement had been made with the Netherlands Table Tennis Association to host an international referee examination in the Netherlands, on the 1st weekend of June 2000. The report was accepted as presented.

8.5 Sports Science

The report was accepted as presented.

8.6 Technical

Mr. Yao notified that the World Championships team competition system for Osaka would have to be approved by Council but he would be able to make recommendations only after the present WTTC. Council agreed to Mr. Adham Sharara's proposal to allow the Executive Board to review and approve the new competition system at its next meeting in Seville.

It was reported that more than 15 teams had not turned up in Malaysia and without a word of excuse. Mr. Adham Sharara said that this was unacceptable and recommended to Council, that all teams that have not shown up in Malaysia without prior notice should not be allowed to participate in Osaka unless restitution is made to Malaysia and that the full hospitality cost is paid to Osaka with the entry. He also recommended that all teams that do not send in their arrival times before the draw be withdrawn from the draw. **Council agreed to both recommendations and Osaka would be informed accordingly.** The report was accepted as presented.

8.7 Athletes' Commission

The report was accepted as presented.

9. World Championships 2001

9.1 Update report

Mr. Adham Sharara reported that he had visited Osaka in October 1999 with Nils Bergström for a GAISF meeting and again in January 2000 with Pierre Albertini and had been extremely impressed by the facilities in Osaka. He said that the WTTC in Osaka would be a state-of-the-art championship. It would however cost the city of Osaka a tremendous amount of money and Mr. Sharara had promised the Japan Table Tennis Association (JTTA) that the ITTF would strive to generate as much income as possible to alleviate the costs.

Mr. Koji Kimura said that the JTTA was preparing as hard as possible for the event and that he was looking forward to welcoming all Council members to Osaka. Mr. Nils Bergström said he would be visiting Osaka again by the middle of June 2000.

9.2 Sponsorship and television

Mr. Anders Thunström reported briefly that the ITTF was discussing with NHK Japan to be the host broadcaster. He said that agreements had been signed with CCTV China and ESPN Starsports Asia, which would generate income for the JTTA.

10. Olympic Games

10.1 Update report

Mr. Neil Harwood stated that he was very pleased with the Pro Tour Final event held in Sydney in January 2000. Preparations were well in place except for some minor recommendations, which were being dealt with. Sydney, he said, was ready for Olympic table tennis.

10.2 Qualification update

Mr. Jordi Serra reported on accommodation and offered the extra rooms available to Council members. He also explained his report on Olympic qualifications and said that one of the directly qualified Korean players would not be available for Sydney and according to IOC rules, the next on the ranking list, would directly qualify.

11. World Cup Events

Mr. Yang Shuan gave a brief report of the Men's World Cup that had taken place in Xiaolan, in the Guandong Province in China in October 1999. It had been a very successful event and had attracted large crowds even during the second stage after the elimination of many Chinese players. He also reported on the Women's World Cup, which took place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in January 2000 and which had been attended by the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia. It was the first time after 30 years of war that an international sports event had taken place in Cambodia. He said the hospitality was very good and that the sponsors had done their best to deal efficiently with all problems. The Chinese Association had sent, on behalf of the ITTF, Mr. Yao Zhenxu and Mr. Yu Bin to join Mr. Zlatko Cordas to help the Organisers who did not have much experience in World Cup events.

Mr. Adham Sharara thanked the CTTA for its efforts in assisting the ITTF with both World Cup events.

12. ITTF Pro Tour

Mr. Anders Thunström distributed the Pro Tour programme for the year 2000, which comprised 10 events and a Grand Final. He said that more and more television partners were joining and that television coverage had increased greatly. The production quality of television images had also improved and should keep getting better. He said that the Marketing Division was preparing a document, which would indicate how the ITTF wanted television productions to be done. He stated that the ITTF was now making a profit from the Pro Tour, which indicated that the overall results were positive. Mr. Alan Ransome acknowledged that the images had greatly improved but said that more work had to be done to ensure the quality of the pictures that are sent around the world.

Mr. Yang Shuan notified that the China Open would start on 17 May 2000 instead of on the 18th and will end on the Saturday (21st).

Mr. Adham Sharara explained that the draws for the Pro Tour 99 and the Final of 98 had been made without the separation of players from the same association except in the Round Robin stage. He said that a Pro Tour Management Group had been formed and it would study this issue for 2001 and beyond, but the same system would be used in 2000 as long as the information is provided in the entry form for each event. Mr. Rudolf Sporrer added that he had organised one Pro Tour event and attended two more and the random system had been very well accepted by the players and the Media.

13. Executive Committee Vacancy

Mr. Adham Sharara gave a brief update of the situation and explained that according to the Constitution's regulation 1.6.3, a vacancy in any office other than that of President, which arises

between BGMs, shall be filled by the Council. Therefore, Council had the option to fill the Executive Committee vacancy produced by the passing away of Mr. Yap Yong Yih.

Mr. Han Sang Kook, proposed by Mr. S. H. Shah, was acclaimed the new Executive Vice-President for Finance, his appointment coming into effect at the GM on 23rd February 2000.

14. President's Advisory Council (PAC)

Mr. Adham Sharara gave a brief report of the activities of the PAC and its meeting in Lausanne with the Executive Board and the President of the IOC in October 1999. He explained the different responsibilities of the PAC and invited them to attend any ITTF meetings of their choice in Kuala Lumpur. He also said that he had the intention of nominating a new member to the PAC at the GM. He then invited the PAC members present to say a few words.

Mr. Ranga Ramanujan said that the powers and responsibilities of the PAC were still to be defined and that it was too early for them to take upon themselves any responsible advice at this stage. He said he was however concerned about the Opening Ceremony which had taken place in KL, which was a musical extravaganza that did not include the players who were the first concerned by the WTTC. He said the Opening and Closing ceremonies and all aspects of protocol should be regulated by the ITTF.

Mr. Mihovil Kapetanovic thanked the President for inviting him to the Council Meeting. He said that as a very long-standing member of the ITTF he had a historical perspective of the present situation and thanked the ITTF, the Ottawa Marketing Division and the professional staff for the many improvements made over the recent years. He said that the ITTF could count on his entire support and co-operation. He also said that the Opening ceremony, presentation of flags and the presentation of awards had to be regulated better and proposed that a small group of people be appointed to think of ways of improving the image of the ITTF. Mr. Adham Sharara thanked the two gentlemen for their very pertinent remarks and asked them to give their observations in writing so that they may be followed at future championships.

15. Report of the Task Force on Umpires and Referees

Mr. Hans Giesecke, Chairman of the Umpires and Referees Task Force, presented the intermediary progress report, which had been distributed beforehand and thanked the members of the Task Force for their dedicated work. He began by making an addition to the document – page 1, under **Future responsibilities of the Rules Committee**, to include: *to evaluate and explain the effects and consequences of proposed and agreed rule changes*. He said he felt that umpiring and refereeing was becoming increasingly important and it had become apparent that good performance of the umpires and uniformity and conformity of rule application was primordial. It was the quality of umpires and not the quantity that had to be improved. Mr. Giesecke gave a very comprehensive explanation of the changes and improvements that should be made and the concrete steps such as seminars, workshops etc. that should be taken to produce a generation of top class umpires and referees.

The report was accepted as presented and Mr. Sharara encouraged all those who had preoccupations with related problems to discuss them with Mr. Giesecke.

16. Progress report from "Service Rule" commission

Mr. Colin Clemett explained that the "Service Rule" commission would be meeting to discuss the situation but did not think that they would be able to propose a recommendation to the AGM this year. It was unanimously agreed that the ball had to be visible to all and it was necessary to end the discrimination caused to the receiving player.

17. Report from "Obstruction Rule" commission

Mr. Bruce Burton referred to proposition 2 on document 9 and made the following correction to the explanatory text of the proposition which should read: *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*. He explained that by trying to clarify the previous rule a significant flaw was found in the new text which had been passed in Eindhoven and players were losing points due to a misunderstanding in the wording. A Commission was formed to remedy the situation and after much deliberation was making proposal 2 of document 9 to the GM.

18. Membership Applications: Niue and Samoa

Council approved membership for Niue and provisional membership for the Samoan Table Tennis Association.

19. Any other business

19.1 Future of the World Championships

Mr. Adham Sharara explained at length to Council the results of the discussions of the Executive Board which had decided to propose the following two options to Council for experimentation:

World Championships trial	
Option 1	Option 2
* 2001 Osaka combined	* 2001 Osaka combined
* 2003 Individual events	* 2002 Team events
* 2004 Team events	* 2003 Individual events
* Final decision to be made for future 2005+	* Final decision to be made for future 2004+

The date of the Team Events WTTC to be decided in concert with the Continental Federations

He also explained at length the advantages of holding a split championship such as:

- yearly focus by media, TV and general public
- increased media and TV coverage
- increased TV rights and sponsorship income
- shorter and more manageable events
- shorter period for volunteers
- raise profile and image of table tennis
- easier to organise through "economies of scale"
- more associations as potential host organisers
- open to all member associations
- accommodates yearly Annual General Meetings
- financially profitable events
- more interaction between Table Tennis family
- preferred by players for maximum performance etc.

Mr. Sharara asked Council to approve the trial implementation of one of the options. The discussion that followed indicated that there were definite advantages but also certain disadvantages such as higher costs for smaller associations, clash with Continental calendars, and a concern that the WTTC singles event would become another super Pro Tour event attended only by the best players and the richer countries. Therefore, it was decided that the AGM should also be clearly informed of the disadvantages of holding a split championship so that whatever the decision, it is taken after proper consideration of all the facts.

Mr. Sharara took a straw poll of Council and ascertained that Council would support the experiment. It was therefore decided that a complete presentation be made to the General Meeting on the 23rd of February and that Council would take the final decision at its next meeting (2nd Session – 24 February 2000).

19.2 Anti-doping policy

Mr. Adham Sharara notified Council that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had modified its anti-doping policy, as of the 1st of January 2000 and it was decided that the ITTF would also modify its policy to be in line with the IOC. Dr. Jean-François Kahn was requested to prepare a text in agreement with IOC rules.

19.3 Presentations

Mr. Adham Sharara introduced Mr. Christian Veronese, the ITTF Marketing Manager for Europe, who made a presentation of the new directions the ITTF was taking with WorldSport Ltd, with whom it was preparing to sign a 5-year contract. He explained that WorldSport Ltd was a world-wide web portal of sports which provided sports information on the internet on behalf of International Federations either through WorldSport.Org which was a secure intranet environment for Sport and its Partners or through WorldSport.com which was open to the public with specific benefits to dedicated participants, followers and fans of table tennis around the world. The main web site, WorldSport.org, was a closed and secure network open to accredited users providing its partners with services such as:

- a secure electronic communication system that allows the user to track delivery messages and documents
- a news centre with ITTF press releases
- a growing document library, including newsletters, official publications, rules and regulations
- a comprehensive events calendar
- an official global directory
- a data base search engine divided into 3 categories: news, directory and events search.

WorldSport.com was a unique multi-sport web site including the new ITTF web site, which provided a variety of services as part of the Membership programme to the public and fans.

Mr. Chris McGrath, Federation Liaison Officer from WorldSport, said that their aim, as content producer, was to promote table tennis through the Internet. The KL WTTC was already being covered as a feature sight and some of the images were already on the Internet.

Mr. Adham Sharara specified that the income generated would be used for development purposes.

Mr. Christian Veronese then presented one of a series of 30-second video clips, which would be produced by the ITTF for advertising purposes. Ms. Claude Bergeret expressed her discontent that there were no women players featured on the clip. Mr. Sharara assured her that this would not be the case for the next clips.

20. Next meeting

The next Council meeting will take place on the 24th of February 2000 at 9 a.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5.10 p.m.