

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Video Conference
23rd June 2020

Minutes

1. Welcome and Opening

1.1 President's opening remarks

The President, Mr Thomas Weikert, welcomed everyone and proceeded with the roll call.

1.2 Roll Call

Thomas Weikert	ITTF President
Khalil Al-Mohannadi	ITTF Deputy President
Petra Sörling	Executive Vice-President - Finance
Bruce Burton	Executive Vice-President
Masahiro Maehara	Executive Vice-President
Shi Zhihao	Executive Vice-President
Alaa Meshref	Executive Vice-President
James Morris	Executive Vice-President
Nestor Tenca	Executive Vice-President
Zoran Primorac	Athletes Commission Chair
Ryu Seungmin	IOC member
In attendance	
Steve Dainton	CEO
Raul Calin	Secretary General
Iulia Necula	CEO's Office Projects Director
Claudia Vatheuer	Assistant to the President
Michael Brown	CFO
Vicky Eleftheriade	Competition Director – only for the relevant points
Polona Cehovin	HPD Director – only for the relevant points
Dylan Mah	Legal Counsel – only for the relevant points
Absence	
Shi Zhihao	Executive Vice-President

2. Minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting were approved and will be signed electronically by the President.

2.2 Business arising from the Minutes

The Secretary General, Mr Raul Calin, reported on the status of the business arising from the previous meetings indicating especially those actions which were not completed.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was confirmed with the following additions:

- 11.1 Home of Table Tennis
- 11.2 Olympic Day

4. COVID-2019 situational report

The CFO, Mr Michael Brown, updated the EC on the COVID-19 task force work, indicating that the situation was not improving at global scale, as the previous week continued to record the highest number of daily cases registered since the pandemic started.

In regard to the sporting & entertainment events industry, Mr Brown reported that more and more sports are gradually resuming the activity, what represents a good opportunity for the ITTF to evaluate those examples and determine the best way forward.

Discussions were held among the EC members in relation to the unfortunate case of Adria Tour Tennis Event and the importance of respecting all the health protocols and safety environment guidelines when the table tennis activity resumes.

The EVP, Mr Maehara Masahiro, informed that a new COVID-19 quick testing method was available in Japan since 21st June and further information will be shared following the meeting.

5. CEO Update

5.1 WTTC 2020 and 2021 update

Mr Dainton gave a brief update in regard to the overall situation of the 2020 and 2021 WTTC.

2021 WTTC

The EC was informed that the 2021 WTTC LOC officially confirmed that it will not be possible to host the 2021 World Championships on the original dates (17-26 June 2021). While facing the postponement and the potential relocation of the 2021 WTTC, the USATT remains committed and expressed their wish to explore the possibility to host the event in USA later in the year.

A decision regarding the new dates and location of the 2021 WTTC to be taken at a later stage.

2020 WTTC

The Executive Committee agreed with the LOC in Busan that the Hana Bank 2020 WTTC will be postponed to the early months of 2021 due to the fact it would be unlikely that the majority of teams would not be able to travel to Korea Republic for the previously agreed provisional dates in September 2020.

The ITTF will go ahead with holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 28 September 2020, in an online format.

The IOC Member, Mr Ryu Seungmin, on his capacity as KTTA President, thanked the EC for the continuous support and in agreement with the further postponement of the Hana Bank 2020 World Team Table Tennis Championships, indicated that the only available options in BEXCO calendar in the first part of 2021 were:

- 28 Feb to 7 March 2021
- 25 April – 2nd May 2021

In light of a potential prolonged COVID-19 situation which could lead to a further postponement of the WTTTC, Mr Ryu asked the EC to take into consideration a safer approach and explore the possibility of hosting the event at a later date in 2021, after the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The EC members debated on the advantages and disadvantages of each of the proposed dates and the respective impact on the 2021 event calendar, in particular the implications related to the Continental and World Olympic qualifications, as well as the proximity to the Olympic Games and the potential clash with the Ramadan dates.

On behalf of the AC, Mr Zoran Primorac insisted on trying to ensure the organisation of the World Individual Championships in 2021, either connected with the Team event or separately and Mr Ryu was ready to study the feasibility.

Mr Burton warned about the complexity of hosting a joint WTTTC and the risk of adding an extra burden on the LOC during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Burton asked about the prospect of sponsorship opportunities related to the event and Mr Dainton indicated that from the sponsorship side there was no appetite to host a join WTTTC in 2021, as already mentioned by some long-term sponsors of the ITTF.

Mr Dainton recommended working on a financial analysis based on the different scenarios and the implications resulted from the postponement of both the 2020 and 2021 WTTTC, before making a decision in this regard.

After considering all the different aspects, the majority of the EC were in favour to host the 2020 WTTTC at the earlier date. However, given the uncertainty of the situation, the exact date of the event will be decided at the next EC meeting, to be held on 10 July 2020.

20200623-EC-01

The Executive Committee decided to further postpone the Hana Bank 2020 WTTTC to a later date. The exact dates to be decided during the next EC meeting, on 10 July 2020.

ACTION 20200623#01	In charge: ITTF Management	Deadline: 2020-07-10
To work on a financial analysis based on the different scenarios and the implications resulted from the postponement of the 2020 and 2021 WTTTC.		

5.2 WTT update

5.2.1 WTT Board

Mr Dainton reminded that in conformity with the MLA, the ITTF EC was entitled to appoint a representative in the WTT Board.

On the grounds of his involvement in the selection panel and his commitment to the project as part of his portfolio, to the proposal of Mr Weikert, the EC decided to appoint Mr Khalil Al-Mohannadi as the ITTF EC representative in the WTT Board. Mr Al-Mohannadi accepted the position indicating that he was ready to start working with the WTT Board.

Mr Primorac asked if the WTT Board position was a voluntary or a remunerated position, and Mr Dainton confirmed that it was a voluntary position.

In reference to the WTT Council, Mr Dainton informed that Mr Liu Guoliang accepted the position of Chair. Mr Dainton also mentioned that the WTT Council Terms of Reference will be shared with the ITTF EC during the next meeting.

20200623-EC-02

The Executive Committee decided to appoint Mr Khalil Al-Mohannadi as the ITTF EC representative in the WTT Board and it was noted that Mr Liu Guoliang accepted the position as Chair of the WTT Council.

6. Athletes update

Mr Primorac indicated that the Athletes Commission expressed their full support towards the TT United fund, hoping that the project will be successful in providing the financial support for National Associations, Players and other stakeholders affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Mr Primorac gave a brief update on the work done by the Athletes Commission and the discussions held with regards the Olympic Qualifications and the eventual introduction of a new WR from January 2021.

Mr Primorac and Mr Ryu believed that the inclusion of an athlete's representative in the WTT Board would be crucial for the development of WTT.

In this sense, Mr Dainton explained that one of the key reasons of establishing the WTT Council, was precisely to ensure the participation of the different stakeholders from the table tennis family (Players, Event Organizers, Legends, ITTF Executive Committee, etc.).

7. Operations program

7.1 Finances

7.1.1 Financial Statement 2019

The EC received the 2019 Audited Financial Statements and agreed for them to be submitted to the Member Associations for consideration and approval at the AGM.

Mrs Petra Sörling, EVP of Finances, indicated that although 2019 was supposed to be a weak year in terms of finances as a consequence of the high investment in HR, the overall result was better than expected.

Mr Brown confirmed a slightly negative balance amount due to the allocation to restricted funds for the ITTF Foundation, but in comparison with the forecast of October-November 2019, it was a satisfactory result.

Mr Brown notified that the 2019 Audited Financial Statements will be also presented during the Financial Forum which will be held leading up to the 2020 AGM.

With ITTF finding itself in a much better position and a more stable situation, Mr Brown considered that it was time to start thinking on a long-term strategy and use the opportunity to invest in future activities and potential assets, such as IT, to ensure a more positive state moving forward.

Mr Dainton indicated that it was the first time to have the finances ready in time in an Olympic Year after long time, which showed the professionalisation that ITTF has made as an organisation.

In agreement with Mr Dainton statement, Mrs Sörling added that the Auditors applauded the ITTF for the major improvements in terms of processes and financial control mechanisms.

7.1.2 Report of Finance and Audit Committee

The EC noted the Report of Finances and Audit Committee and decided to approve their recommendations.

Mr Brown explained that, as a formality, the EC is being asked to approve the ITTF APL Financial Statements being this a requirement according to Singapore law. The documents will be distributed in the following days to be signed by each EC member.

The EC decided to approve the ITTF APL Consolidated Audited Financial Statements.

20200623-EC-03

The Executive Committee decided to approve the recommendations of the Finances and Audit Committee.

20200623-EC-04

The Executive Committee decided to approve the ITTF APL Consolidated Audited Financial Statements.

ACTION 20200623#02	In charge: CFO	Deadline: 2020-07-10
To distribute the ITTF APL Financial Statements to be signed by each EC member.		

7.2 Governance Review session update

Mr Calin mentioned that as agreed during the Governance Session held on Saturday 13th June, only the propositions in relation to the separation of the judicial power will be presented by the EC at this stage, letting other governance reforms, as preferred by the EC, for a later stage, after the next ITTF elections.

7.3 ASOIF assessment of IF's 2020 update

In reference to the ASOIF Report - Third Review of IF Governance, released on 16th June 2020, the EC acknowledged the progress made by the ITTF, having improved from the score of 102 points in 2018, to 149 points in 2020 (in a scale of 200), and moved from group B, position 21st, to group A1, position 11th among the Summer Olympic Sports International Federations.

Mr Weikert congratulated the ITTF Staff, in particularly the Secretary General, for the work done in the area of governance and encouraged them to continue working and improve further the different areas of the organisation.

Following the ASOIF example, Mr Calin suggested that, as part of the overall governance enhancement process, the next steps should be focused on trying to help increasing the standards of good governance of the 226 ITTF Members Associations.

7.4 EC Propositions and Resolutions for 2020 AGM/BOD

Mr Calin presented to the EC the propositions and resolutions for consideration to be presented by the EC to the 2020 ITTF AGM and BoD.

The EC confirmed their endorsement to be submitted formally for the 2020 AGM/BoD.

7.5 CAS appeal of Mr Sharara

Mr Weikert gave a brief update on the CAS appeal of Mr Sharara indicating that unfortunately the two parties were not able to reach an agreement.

Following the discussions held between the lawyers, both parties agreed to request the postponement of the CAS hearing from 16-18 July to a later date in November 2020. The postponement is pending on the confirmation of CAS.

7.6 Potential breach of the suspension of Mr Sharara

Following the strong recommendation of the ITTF Lawyer, Mr Antonio Rigozzi, the EC decided to consider further disciplinary actions against Mr Sharara for his potential breach of the suspension by continue acting as President of Table Tennis Canada (TTCAN).

The EC noted the Report submitted by the Legal Counsel, Mr Dylan Mah, containing the evaluation of the legal arguments and the recommended steps to be taken by the ITTF to enforce the ITTF Decision against its member associations (particularly TTCAN) and Mr. Sharara.

In conformity with the recommended steps, Mr Mah will prepare a draft letter addressed to Table Tennis Canada (TTCAN) and Mr Sharara and will share it with the EC for confirmation.

ACTION 20200623#03	In charge: Legal Counsel	Deadline: 2020-07-10
To draft a letter addressed to Table Tennis Canada (TTCAN) and Mr Sharara and share it with the EC for confirmation.		

8. Competition Program

8.1 Calendar August-December 2020

The EC noted the report of the Competition Director, Mrs Vicky Eleftheriade, about the situation of the calendar for 2020 and the possible scenarios.

The EC decided to give the preliminary approval to the ITTF Competition Staff to explore the possibility of staging alternative events, which could be implemented for the remainder of 2020, in case the COVID-19 pandemic does not allow the staging of full open international events as originally planned.

Given the ongoing development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EC decided to wait for the situation to improve further before making a final decision.

Before resuming activity and proceed with hosting international events, the EC members believed that it was very important to have all the relevant information and well-established health protocols and safety guidelines in place, to ensure a controlled environment and guarantee the safety of all the participants at an event.

Further decisions to be made after being taken into consideration:

- eventual restrictions in the number of participants
- eventual restrictions of specific groups of players
- to study the potential impact on the WR
- a financial analysis based on the different scenarios and the market evaluation

Under the current circumstances, health risks, international travel constrains, and feedback received from LOCs, Mrs Eleftheriade recommended the suspension of the Junior & Cadet Circuit Events and Para TT Events in their current structure and formats for the remainder of the year. The arguments were based on the ground of safety and health of the Junior and Para TT players.

The EC decided to suspend all Junior & Cadet Circuit Events and Para TT Events until 31st of December 2020.

20200623-EC-05

The Executive Committee decided to suspend all Junior & Cadet Circuit Events until 31st of December 2020.

20200623-EC-06

The Executive Committee decided to suspend all Para Table Tennis events until 31st of December 2020.

8.2 Dakar 2022 Youth Olympic Games update

The EC noted the report presented by Mrs Eleftheriade on the work done by the Competition department together with the HPD team on the proposal for the qualification system for Dakar 2022 YOG, which uses the ITTF World Ranking as the primary element for qualification, while ensuring the right balance of the four pillars: elite performance, universality, host country representation and gender equality.

Mrs Eleftheriade gave a brief update on the positive outcome of the meeting held together with the Junior and Technical Commissioner and the EC members responsible of the relevant areas of Competition and Juniors, and the support of the group on the proposed YOG qualification system.

Mr Tenca and Dr Meshref were of the opinion that the YOG qualification system should maintain the same continental quota parameters as used for the Buenos Aires 2018 YOG, and to better support the principles of universality, which are very important for the Olympic movement.

The Executive Committee decided to approve the proposed qualification system for Dakar 2022 YOG to be submitted to the IOC.

20200623-EC-07

The Executive Committee decided to approve the proposed qualification system for Dakar 2022 YOG to be submitted to the IOC.

8.3 World Ranking 2021

This point was deferred to the next EC meeting.

9. High Performance and Development

9.1 Anti-Doping Education plan update

The HPD Director, Mrs Polona Cehovin, gave a brief update on the process and the work done together with ITA in relation to the Anti-Doping Education plan, indicating that it was now pending the WADA approval.

9.2 HPD session update

Mrs Cehovin gave a brief update on the concept of the future development program presented during the HPD Session held on Saturday, 20 June 2020. Given the close connection and compatibilities with the work done by the Member Relations department, and in order to give more time to review to the EC members, Mrs Cehovin suggested to delay the approval of the new plan to the next EC held on 10th July.

10. Any other business

10.1 HoTT

The Executive Committee was informed that the Selection Panel for the Home of Table Tennis project will meet on Friday, 3rd of July 2020 to determine a revised timeframe for the tender process.

10.2 Olympic Day

Being the EC meeting held on Tuesday 23rd June, the Olympic Day, the ITTF Executive Committee declared its commitment with the Olympism and affirmation of the Olympic values.

11. Next EC Meeting

The next EC meeting to be held on 10th July 2020.

12. Adjournment

Without further points on the agenda, the Executive Committee Meeting was adjourned at 15h00 CEST.

Thomas Weikert
ITTF President

Date

Raul Calin
ITTF Secretary General

Date