

CONTINENTAL COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Room "Meeting Plus 2" - Rotana Hotel, Amman, Jordan
Saturday 3rd December 2022 – 15h00 to 17h00 EEST

MINUTES

CC members in attendance:

SÖRLING Petra	President
LIU Guoliang (via Zoom ®)	Deputy President
AL-MOHANNADI Khalil	Executive Vice-President and ATTU President
AZEVEDO Alaor	Executive Vice-President
MAEHARA Masahiro	Executive Vice-President
MESHREF Alaa	Executive Vice-President
NATRAN Roland	Executive Vice-President – Finance
OSHODI Wahid	Executive Vice-President
SYMONS Graham	Executive Vice-President
LIU Shiwen	Athletes Commission (AC) Co-Chair
ACHANTA Sharath Kamal	Athletes Commission (AC) Co-Chair
EL-SALHY Khaled	ATTU President
VILA Juan	ITTF Americas President
MOURA Pedro	ETTU Acting President
MOORE Anthony	ITTF-Oceania President

Staff in attendance:

DAINTON Steve	ITTF Group CEO
CALIN Raul	ITTF Secretary General

Apologies

RYU Seung-Min	IOC Member
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1. Welcome from the ITTF President

Ms SÖRLING welcomed the Continental Council (**CC**) members highlighting that since the previous day the ITTF has two AC chairs, Ms LIU Shiwen and Mr Kamal ACHANTA, and this also means that now the Continental Council has two female representatives instead of one. Ms SÖRLING referred to her visits to activities in all five continents in 2022, including the European Championships and ETTU Congress in Munich, Germany, the African Championships and AGM in Algiers, Algeria, the ITTF-Oceania Championships in Melbourne, Australia, the Pan Am Championships and ITTF Americas Championships and AGM in Santiago, Chile, and the Asian Cup and ATTU Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, which allowed her to discuss, to interact, and to understand better the reality of our sport in the different corners of the world.

2. Welcome from the EC member in charge of the Continental Council

This point was deferred and made jointly with point 6.

3. Minutes of the previous Continental Council meeting

3.1. Approval of the Minutes from the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2022 were adopted.

20221203-CC-01

The Continental Council approved the Minutes of the CC Meeting held on 9th October 2022.

3.2. Business arising from the Minutes

It was noted that Business arising from previous meetings are covered in the agenda. At the request of the ETTU President, it was added to section 12, AOB, the matters of the propositions and resolutions from the EC to the BoD and the Busan 2024 WTTC Finals Qualification Pathway.

4. Continental President Report – Africa

The CC noted the written report circulated by Mr Khaled EL-SALHY, ATTF Continental President, on the activities held in Africa since the last meeting. Mr EL-SALHY took the opportunity to welcome the new CC members and stated that he was looking forward to discussing with the colleagues during the Summit.

5. Continental President Report – Americas

Mr VILA reported on the Pan American Championships and Annual General Meeting of the ITTF Americas held in Chile, thanking Ms SÖRLING for her attendance at both events. The CC noted that in November, a course for Technical Officials was held with the participation of 35 candidates and a success rate of over 50%. To conclude, Mr VILA thanked the ITTF for supporting these activities.

6. Continental President Report – Asia

Mr AL-MOHANNADI welcomed the CC colleagues, thanked Ms SÖRLING and Mr DAINTON for their attendance at the Asian Cup and Congress in Bangkok, and encouraged his continental president's colleagues to ensure that, with the planned revitalisation of the World Cups, they focus on increasing the level of the Continental Cups as their importance will be even higher. For the rest of the activities in the period, Mr AL-MOHANNADI referred his CC colleagues to his written report circulated before the meeting.

7. Continental President Report – Europe

Mr MOURA reported on the activities held since the last meeting in Chengdu, with the return of the domestic and continental competitions and the start of the qualification process for the European Championships 2023, which will be held in Sweden. The EB noted that the ETTU had three EB meetings and that an ETTU Extraordinary Congress is planned in Amman to discuss and hopefully confirm the 2023 budgets and the Strategic Plan for the next six years. Mr MOURA thanked the ITTF for providing the opportunity to host the Congress during the Summit and finished his report mentioning a Coaching Conference held in Portugal on the lead to the WYTTC in Tunis, and that ETTU will have a CAS hearing in Lausanne in February related to the participation of the Russian Clubs in the ETTU Champions League.

8. Continental President Report – Oceania

The CC noted the personal introduction made by Mr MOORE being the first time he was joining a physical meeting with the CC colleagues. Mr MOORE reported on the activities of engagement with the Member Associations, being a continent with a big geographical spread, and the EB noted that still two Member Associations' territories are locked down because of COVID-19. With the exceptional travel cost from different countries, the main challenge is being able to engage them in international activities. Mr MOORE indicated that the latest Governance Workshop

counted the participation of 13 Associations, which is seen as very positive in terms of engagement.

9. Durban 2023 WTTTC Finals Qualification Pathway

Mr DAINTON started his report by referring to the preparations for the WTTTC Finals to be held in Durban. Mr DAINTON added that the ITTF Group has invested in supporting SATTB to host a WTT Contender Event in January 2023, with the aim to test the different operational key elements. Mr DAINTON continued referring specifically to the Qualification Pathway, and the CC noted that Asia has decided to host a specific qualification event in January 2023.

Mr EL-SALHY asked to confirm whether the WR selection will follow the continental selection. Mr DAINTON confirmed that was the case.

On more specific questions from Mr MOURA and Mr ACHANTA about the way in which Continental Qualifications will happen, it was agreed to check internally and provide the information via email as the staff in charge of Competition matters could not finally travel to Amman due to a last-minute COVID-19 infection.

10. Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

10.1. Format of Play

The CC noted that discussions had been held on whether the Team Event at the Olympic Games should have a different format or not compared to the World Championships. Mr DAINTON explained that -historically- when the Doubles events were replaced by Teams events at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, the Doubles Match was introduced as part of the Team Event to ensure that the Doubles were still present in the Olympics. Mr DAINTON added that it is felt it is important to continue having them until they can be secured by other means, for example, by having additional events at the Olympic Games.

Ms SÖRLING added that one option to secure more events at the Olympic Games could be to explore innovative and attractive events that could be fitting on the IOC objectives. Ms SÖRLING added that, at the same time, the IOC wants to have events that have proved to be successful. In relation to the Singles Event, Mr DAINTON mentioned that with the current format of play, the best sixteen athletes are not competing in the first two rounds, which does not allow spectators and media to watch them. Mr DAINTON added that listening to some broadcasters and fans, there is a feeling of a missed opportunity. It was agreed to entrust the Sports Director, Mikael ANDERSSON, to put forward a proposal together with the Technical Commissioner.

10.2. Technical Officials Selection Policy

The CC noted and agreed with the proposed Technical Officials Selection Policy, as elaborated by the URC and the Technical Commissioner.

20221203-CC-02

The Continental Council approved the Technical Officials Selection Policy for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, as presented by the URC and the Technical Commissioner.

The CC noted the proposal for the first Technical Delegate for the Olympic Games, Mr Carlos LEON, from Portugal, and for the Technical Delegate for the Paralympic Games, Ms Constantina CROTTA, from Greece.

The CC unanimously approved the proposed candidates.

20221203-CC-03

The Continental Council nominated Mr Carlos LEON (POR) as Technical Delegate for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

20221203-CC-04

The Continental Council nominated Ms Constantina CROTTA (GRE) as Technical Delegate for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

10.3. Gender Balance at the Paralympic Games

The CC noted the proposal for achieving gender balance at the Paralympic Games Paris 2024. For that, the CC should send a formal request to the IPC for their consideration.

The CC discussed this possibility, evaluating the current playing field in men's and women's in the different classes in Para Table Tennis. The CC noted the opinion of the two AC members who were elected from the Para Athletes in 2022 and also the opinion of the two AC members that were members in the previous period (2018-2022).

After the discussion, it was agreed to put forward the proposal for gender balance to the IPC.

20221203-CC-05

The Continental Council agreed unanimously to propose to the IPC to have a gender balance (140 men and 140 women) competing at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

11. Master Continental Agreements (MCAs)

The CC noted the historical background given by Mr DAINTON on the MCAs between the ITTF and the Continental Federations. Mr DAINTON explained that the first agreements started through the development programme in the early 2000s. Later, in 2011, further agreements were made to support not only development but also events in the continents. When, in 2018, governance elements were also introduced, it was considered that it was better to amalgamate the different agreements with the continents into one, which was called the "Master Continental Agreement".

With the COVID-19 pandemic having affected both the finances and the communications between the ITTF and the Continental Federations, it was considered it is important to put the matter for discussion and to think of the best way forward for the future. Mr DAINTON suggested that it is important to question whether the continents should remain autonomous or should become an integral part of the ITTF structure.

Ms SÖRLING added that the general feeling is that nobody is satisfied with the current MCAs; therefore, this is an indicator that they should be reviewed, inviting the CC members to comment on the matter.

Mr MOORE suggested that the financial dependence of a continent like Oceania on the ITTF is almost absolute (98%) and reflected on the transition that FIBA had a few years ago, where the management of the continents is now handled as part of the structure of the global entity (FIBA), and at the continental level it only remains an Advisory Board, which advised FIBA in matters pertaining to the continent. As an example, Mr MOORE indicated that the 2022 Oceania Championships U15, organised in Guam, are managed by the FIBA, and the alignment of resources, communications, events, and the whole logistics, is much more streamlined.

Mr EL-SALHY indicated that being currently at the end of 2022, the budgets for 2023 are being finalised; therefore, with the experience of 2022, it will be vital to ensure the budgets for 2023 are confirmed as soon as possible. Mr EL-SALHY explained that this would help to avoid the problems faced in 2022, where for example, the African Cup in Lagos or the African Championships in Algeria started without having received the contributions agreed in the MCAs, which makes it very difficult to deliver on the exigent ITTF standards when the agreed resources are not received timely, particularly when in cases as the ATTF, they don't have reserve funds.

Mr VILA expressed that during the last two years, there have been many difficulties around the MCAs, which made ITTF Americas wonder if it is worth it for the Continents to exist or if it would be better for the ITTF to manage everything. Mr VILA referred to the FEWG, which existed before the pandemic, and that led to the restructuring of the WTTC, with the introduction of the Finals, to ensure the best teams there, but also with the hope that this would mean more attention to the regional states of the WTTC, hoping that this transformation would mean more resources for the qualification stages when the Finals will not have 80 or 90 teams, but 32.

Mr VILA considers it is important to define the economic support to the continents, what should be the result of a process and not just the outcome of a talk. Mr VILA added that due to the existing concerns, the continents are trying to find their own economic resources.

Mr VILA echoed Mr EL-SALHY about the stress when the economic resources are not arriving on time, hoping this can be solved, and will seek ITTF's assistance to "*learn how to fish*", particularly in the area of marketing.

Mr VILA considered that the ITTF event's standards have improved in terms of presentation and reach significantly, however, reflecting that for the continents to be able to pair these levels, resources are needed.

To conclude, Mr VILA thanked for the opportunity to have this type of meeting, to discuss, and eventually agree and move forward together, emphasising that ITTF Americas is (part of) ITTF.

Ms SÖRLING reflected on the promises made when the reform of the WTTC was presented and on the expected revitalisation of the World Cups, suggesting evaluating the current MCAs and deciding how to move forward.

Mr MOURA indicated that the ETTU was the first continent to sign the MCA in March 2021 in Doha, which is still in place, and expressed that the ETTU will always be open to discussing with

the ITTF; however, being already in December 2022, it is very important to clarify the future as the new year is about to start.

Mr DAINTON suggested that for 2023 no major changes should be expected, adding that eventually, more revenues could arise from the latest negotiations being held about the future of the World Cups.

Mr AL-MOHANNADI reflected that when assuming the Presidency of ATTU, one of the first decisions was to host seminars for Competition Managers and to ensure new associations started to host events, as most of the competitions were held all the time in the same countries. Mr AL-MOHANNADI added that it is important to ensure the investments in development produce results, hoping to have more countries having sporting facilities in the future to practice table tennis.

Ms SÖRLING suggested establishing a working group to review the current MCAs.

20221203-CC-06

The Continental Council agreed to create a Working Group to review the current structure of the MCAs.

Dr AZEVEDO suggested that the administrative structure is key, putting as an example WTT, of which he is very proud, with a state-of-the-art administration. Dr AZEVEDO considered that Continental Federations should do a similar process, establishing a proper structure.

12. Any Other Business

12.1. Propositions and Resolutions to the BoD

Mr MOURA suggested that with the Event's Manuals not having been circulated earlier, it would be important to consider if it is appropriate to go forward with the propositions affecting Chapter 4 of the Handbook.

Mr DAINTON acknowledged the fact that the Event's Manuals had not been circulated due to the overwhelming amount of work to organise the WTTC Finals in Chengdu and the Summit in Amman. Mr DAINTON suggested that the EB could consider withdrawing the propositions that are causing concern. Mr DAINTON clarified that the future Manuals would anyway include the information and directives planned to be removed from the Handbook, but for the time being, perhaps the best is to withdraw them for 2022.

12.2. Busan 2024 WTTC Finals Qualification Pathway

It was agreed to circulate the relevant information via email, similar to what will be done for Durban 2023.

20221203-CC-07

The Continental Council agreed to suggest the EB remove the propositions for which the information to be removed is not yet available via Manuals.

12.3. Summit and AGM future

The CC noted the plan, to be discussed at the AGM on 6th December, to host another Summit in the last week of August 2023, for what, in principle, SATTB would agree. The Summit being a new event, it is still to be seen what success that will have, as it would eventually help the ITTF to identify new areas of revenue, which could then be invested in the Members.

20221203-CC-07

The Continental Council agreed to suggest to the AGM to host another Summit in 2023 separately from the WTTC Finals, in a place to be confirmed, where the AGM and BOD Meetings will be held.

13. Next Meeting

Not having any further items on the agenda, Ms SÖRLING invited the CC members to the next meeting to be held in Durban, South Africa, during the WTTC Finals in May 2023, at a date to be confirmed at a later stage.

The meeting was adjourned at 17h15 EEST.

Petra SÖRLING
ITTF President

Date

Raul CALIN
ITTF Secretary General

Date