

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Grand Ballroom II – Kempinski Hotel, Chengdu, P. R. China  
 Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 – 09h30 to 18h00 CST (China Standard Time)

### MINUTES

EB members in attendance:

SÖRLING Petra	President
LIU Guoliang	Deputy President
AL-MOHANNADI Khalil	Senior Executive Vice-President
MESHREF Alaa	Executive Vice-President – Finance
AZEVEDO Alaor	Executive Vice-President
MAEHARA Masahiro	Executive Vice-President
NATLAN Roland	Executive Vice-President
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

Staff in attendance:

DAINTON Steve	ITTF Group CEO
CALIN Raul	ITTF Secretary General
BESSAH Mounir	ITTF Deputy Secretary General
BROWN Michael	ITTF Chief Financial Officer
TAM Chris	ITTF Director of Operations

#### 1. Welcome from the ITTF President

##### 1.1. ITTF President's Welcome

Ms SÖRLING welcomed the EB colleagues, reflecting on the success of the Mixed Team World Cup completed the previous day, and taking the opportunity to -once again- thank Mr LIU Guoliang and the CTTA, as well as World Sports, ITTF and WTT staff.

##### 1.2. Roll Call

The Roll Call was conducted with all EB members present.

#### 2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted with the inclusion of 13.6. situation of Associations entering in tournaments and not paying the participation/hospitality fees to the LOC.

#### 3. Minutes of the previous Executive Board meeting

##### 3.1. Approval of the Minutes from the last meetings (Videoconference via Zoom on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024, and Meeting in Paris on 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> August 2024).

The Minutes of the two Meetings were approved.

#### 20241209-EB-01

The Executive Board approved the Minutes of the EB Meeting held on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, via Zoom videoconference.

## 20241209-EB-02

The Executive Board approved the Minutes of the EB Meeting held on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Paris, France.

Ms SÖRLING indicated that the Minutes of the Continental Council (CC) Meeting held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024 will be added to those Minutes of today's meeting, as the part related to Competitions was dealt with in the CC meeting.

### 3.2. Business arising from the Minutes

The EB noted Mr CALIN's and Mr DANTON's updates on the business arising from previous EB meetings.

## 4. CEO Report / Strategic Plan

### 4.1. Current business status update

The CEO started reflecting on the year about to be completed, which witnessed the largest-ever number of International ITTF/WTT events to date, highlighting, from the second part of the year, the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the China Smash in Beijing, the WTT Champions in Montpellier, as some examples of first-class events held in 2024. Mr DANTON also referred to the World Youth Championships held in Helsingborg, reflecting on the U19 Women's Singles title of Annett KAUFMANN, the first female world title from outside Asia since the 1950s, the first World Esports Championships, also held in Helsingborg, Sweden, an important event to position table tennis ahead of the Esports Olympic Games, and the Mixed Team World Cup just completed, an event for which the ITTF has hopes to be an Olympic discipline one day, that has improved its format from 2023, and for which the ITTF will need to review the regulations to ensure the top athletes attend.

Mr DANTON also referred to the Summits held in Helsingborg, to the progress in the Table Tennis Review (TTR) system, the ITTF rebranding presented at the CC and the revamping of the Para Table Tennis image and circuit, the Strategic Quadrennial Agreements almost completed for the cycle 2025-2028, plus the start of the bid process for the 2027, 2028, and 2029 World Championships.

Mr DANTON presented an outlook for 2025, referring to the Smashes to be held in Singapore, USA, and Sweden in 2025, the WTT Champions coming to Yokohama, Japan, and the discussions being held with Hong Kong to host there the WTT Finals in 2025. Mr DANTON indicated this will result in the most complete calendar ever in 2025, besides the Olympic Games.

Mr DANTON touched on the positive commercial deals being discussed, as well as on the restructuring of the IMG contract, highlighting the positive momentum in terms of TV and Media rights.

In terms of the next steps, Mr DANTON touched on the VIK investment adjustment, the financial planning for the upcoming years, and the planned WTT meetings to be held in Beijing following this EB meeting to plan ahead for 2025.

Ms SÖRLING congratulated Mr DANTON for the thorough and detailed report and opened the floor for questions or remarks.

Dr AZEVEDO congratulated Mr DANTON on his report and Mr LIU on the excellence of the XTWC event that just concluded, also reflecting on the success of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

Dr MESHREF congratulated Mr DANTON and encouraged the ITTF and WTT to continue the pathway of success over the last few months.

Mr NATRAN highlighted the importance of having a Smash in Europe in 2025.

Mr CALIN and Dr MESHREF referred to the importance of reviewing the WR regulations for the XTWC to ensure the best players are present in the future. It was discussed that probably the pathway would be to ensure the Team Events will be awarded enough WR points so to ensure the players see the event attractive to compete in.

Mr DAINTON added on the importance to create awareness among the MAs to ensure they see the value of this World Title event.

Mr OSHODI added that, in the future, and to consolidate its prestige, the Continental Federations should consider organising also Continental Mixed Team Cups.

Mr ACHANTA indicated that planning carefully the event in the calendar will be also a factor which will impact in players' decision to attend or not.

#### 4.2. Strategic Plan

The EB noted Mr DAINTON's introduction of Mr TAM, the new Director of Operations since October, who will manage the implementation of the Strategic Plan (SP).

Mr TAM reported on the work done prior to the EB meeting to assess the current status of the SP's three pillars (Governance & Sustainability, Business Growth, and Society and Health).

The EB noted the key achievements in the different areas of focus and Mr TAM's suggestion to evolve to SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).

Ms SÖRLING and Dr AZEVEDO thanked Mr TAM for his presentation.

### 5. Operations

#### 5.1. Finances

Mr BROWN provided a brief update on the 2023 Finances and the next steps for the consolidation of the different entities' audits for the AGM report.

Mr TAM presented an update on the 2024 ITTF finances forecast, which presents revenue on par and expenses being reduced from the original AGM-approved plan. This will result in an overall positive result for 2024.

Dr MESHREF praised the job done in 2024 to reduce the general and administrative expenses, as per the forecast presented.

In relation to 2025-2028, Mr TAM reported on the increased expenses planned particularly for 2025, being a year in which -according to the ITTF Constitution- the ITTF should pay a travel contribution to the Member Associations for their travel to the AGM, and the increased support to Member Associations' Development, Events, and Governance, through to the Master Continental Agreements being signed for the quadrennial.

The EB also noted the request to open a bank account with AirWallex, as a complement to UBS (which acquired Credit Suisse), due to its advantages in terms of lesser bank charges and maintenance fees.

Ms SÖRLING encouraged the Finance team to ensure that such requests as opening bank accounts are notified to the EB ahead of the meetings to ensure a proper study.

### 20241209-EB-03

The Executive Board approved the opening of a Bank Account with AirWallex.

#### 5.1.1. Remuneration Committee

The EB noted that a draft of the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference is being elaborated, with the aim to establish a Remuneration Committee as soon as practicable.

#### 5.2. Requisition to the Chamber of Commerce in Vaud – Switzerland, for the legalisation of the signature of Dr Alaa MESHREF.

The EB noted that despite Dr Alaa MESHREF being an elected Member of the EB since 2017 and having notarised his signature in Lausanne, Switzerland, in December 2023, with the relevant documents having been presented to the Chamber of Commerce of the Canton de Vaud in Moudon ("Registre du Commerce"), the Chamber of Commerce requires an additional endorsement from the Executive Board to include Dr MESHREF as a signatory (with collective signature by/at two).

### 20241209-EB-04

The Executive Board confirmed that Dr MESHREF Alaaeldin Wafik Mohamed Aly, in his capacity as ITTF Executive Board Member (Executive Vice-President Finance), is to be registered with signature collective by/at two in the "Registre du Commerce du Canton de Vaud".

#### 5.3. Information & Technology (report)

There were no updates in this area.

#### 5.4. Education (report)

There were no updates in this area.

#### 5.5. HR (report)

The EB noted the written report.

Dr MESHREF asked if someone would be filling the gap in the legal area after Mr Dylan MAH's departure. Mr DANTON confirmed that a legal intern is starting to support the Switzerland office, as Mr CALIN complemented that this is made via an agreement made with the Universidad Europea de Madrid and World Triathlon.

Regarding other hires, Mr DANTON explained that as the calendar has been filled, more positions have been opened in WTT to ensure smooth operations.

#### 5.6. Sustainability (report)

The EB noted the written report.

#### 5.7. Communications (report)

The EB noted the written report.

#### 5.8. Protocol (report)

The EB noted the written report.

#### 5.9. Equipment (report)

The EB minuted the decision taken online about the Table and Net Colours for the XTWC 2024 in Chengdu and the WTTC Finals 2025 in Doha.

### 20241209-EB-05

The Executive Board approved the exceptional use of coloured sidelines and net tape (Pantone 871C) for the tables at the Chengdu 2024 Mixed Team World Cup.

## 20241209-EB-06

The Executive Board approved the exceptional use of coloured sidelines and net tape (Pantone 871C) for the tables at the Doha 2025 World Table Tennis Championships Finals.

### 6. Athletes

#### 6.1. Athletes Commission Report

The EB noted the report of the Athletes Commission (**AC**) presented by Mr Sharath Kamal ACHANTA. Mr ACHANTA highlighted the events in the second part of the year, particularly the Olympic Games in Paris, the WTT Finals in Fukuoka, and the XTWC just completed in Chengdu.

Mr ACHANTA referred to his September visit to the WTT offices in Singapore, where the key changes in the regulations for 2025 and the calendar were discussed, mentioning particularly the relaxed penalty regulations, which were positively received, making the WTT environment more player-friendly, and highlighting the positive athletes' experience overall. Mr ACHANTA was positive about the Athletes Portal, which is expected to be ready soon, and will hopefully be a bridge for better communication.

On the points to improve, Mr ACHANTA highlighted the delayed publication of the calendar, the limited flexibility for mandatory tournaments, issues related to WR points and distribution on the different tiers, hoping for the differences of points to be narrowed down between the different tiers, and the travel and logistic difficulties for the athletes due to the more demanding calendar.

To conclude, Mr ACHANTA indicated that the report presented is very similar to the one presented in Paris, as not much progress has happened since then, hoping for some positive steps in the near future.

Ms LIU Shiwen, co-chair of the AC, reported on the TTR implementation at the XTWC, indicating the positive aspects of the experience and the points to improve.

Dr MESHREF highlighted Mr ACHANTA's last comment that the requests addressed to WTT are almost the same as those made in Paris, hoping for some action. Dr MESHREF also referred to the feedback received from some of the Associations about the mandatory events and the geographical distribution of events.

Mr DANTON reported on the discussions being held with Mr OSHODI and the World Ranking Working Group (WRWG), hoping to find solutions that can satisfy the demands of the athletes for more flexibility without affecting the business model, which is needed to ensure the revenues in the form of prize money for the athletes.

#### 6.2. Entourage (report)

Mr MAEHARA reported on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 meeting of the Entourage Working Group, highlighting the positive outcome of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, and hoping for more clarity in the use of the P accreditations during the Olympic Games. Mr MAEHARA also recommended the seeding for the Olympic Games to be determined 45 days before the Olympic Games. In other matters, Mr MAEHARA also reported on the discussions of the EWG about the calendar, and the quality of the balls in certain events, particularly, at the recent Asian Championships. Mr AL-MOHANNADI confirmed the situation mentioned at the Asian Championships, and ensured measures will be taken to avoid a similar situation in the future.

#### 6.3. High Performance (report)

The EB noted Mr ANDERSSON's written report.

- 6.4. Sport Innovation (report)  
The EB noted Mr ANDERSSON's written report.

## 7. Events

### 7.1. World Ranking

#### 7.1.1. ITTF World Para Ranking

Mr Wahid OSHODI, EVP in charge of WR, started presenting the proposed changes to the ITTF World Para Table Tennis Rankings, following the comprehensive reform in the ITTF Para Table Tennis events structure presented at the Continental Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December. The structure reforms proposed will enter into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and hence the new ITTF World Para Table Tennis Rankings would enter into effect on the same date.

Also, Mr OSHODI addressed the recommendation to add Para Athletes representation to the World Ranking Working Group (WRWG).

Dr AZEVEDO complimented Mr OSHODI and the WRWG for managing the complex reforms required in such a short period and asked whether the EB would consider increasing the points of the Continental Championships to 500.

Mr OSHODI suggested testing the proposed system for one year, as per the recommendation of the WRWG.

Without further comments, the EB agreed to accept the proposed changes.

#### **20241209-EB-07**

The Executive Board approved the proposed ITTF World Para Ranking, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

#### **20241209-EB-08**

The Executive Board agreed to appoint a Para Athlete to join the WRWG, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

Mr OSHODI continued with the other seven proposals presented by the WRWG; four for the ITTF Table Tennis World Ranking, and three for the ITTF Table Tennis Youth Ranking.

### 7.1.2. ITTF Table Tennis World Ranking

#### 7.1.2.1. WTT Youth Grand Smash

The EB noted the proposition to include the newly created WTT Youth Grand Smash in the World Ranking. The EB noted there will be hopefully four events of this type in 2025.

#### **20241209-EB-09**

The Executive Board agreed to the proposed points structure of the WTT Youth Grand Smash, to be included in the ITTF Table Tennis World Ranking, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

#### 7.1.2.2. Olympic Team competitions as sanctioned events in the Singles Ranking

Given the ongoing discussions about the necessity to review the World Ranking points awarded at the Mixed Team World Cup, it was decided to withdraw this proposition for the time being, with the aim to have a holistic review of the Olympic Games, World Championships and Mixed Team. World Cup.

#### 7.1.2.3. Minor updates due to changes in WTT's structure of events in 2025.

The EB noted the changes in the structure of the WTT events, with the WTT Finals replacing the Men's and Women's Doubles with Mixed Doubles being the most relevant. A change in the WR is proposed to align with the new WTT's structure of events.

#### **20241209-EB-10**

The Executive Board agreed to the proposed minor updates in the WR to reflect the new structure of WTT events, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

##### 7.1.2.4. Rankings to be used for qualification and seeding at sanctioned events.

The EB noted that the ETTU plans to use their own rankings for the seeding of their events, however, this conflicts with the fact that some of the ETTU's events are qualifying for World Title events. Mr OSHODI suggested having discussions with the ETTU, hoping to resolve the matter. For the time being, this is mainly to update the EB on the situation.

##### 7.1.3. ITTF Table Tennis Youth Ranking

###### 7.1.3.1. WTT Youth Grand Smash

Similar to the proposition passed earlier for the ITTF WR to consider the new WTT Youth Grand Smash events, this proposition is put forward to consider the new WTT Youth Grand Smash events for the ITTF TT Youth Ranking.

#### **20241209-EB-11**

The Executive Board agreed to the proposed points structure of the WTT Youth Grand Smash, to be included in the ITTF Table Tennis Youth Ranking, effective 1st January 2025.

##### 7.1.3.2. Other minor updates

Mr OSHODI explained that the aim here is to apply rule 3.2. of the ITTF TT WR regulations also to the ITTF TT Youth Rankings.

#### **20241209-EB-12**

The Executive Board agreed to the proposed minor updates to be included in the ITTF Table Tennis Youth Ranking, effective 1st January 2025.

##### 7.1.3.3. Ranking formula and points awarded at Continental events

Mr OSHODI indicated that this proposition was withdrawn until further consideration.

Dr MESHREF thanked Mr OSHODI and the WRWG for the amount of work being done within the WRWG and suggested that, in general, having more time to study the proposed changes would be appreciated, as some of them are complex and would require time to be evaluated. Dr MESHREF added that this would allow the EB members to be in a better position to provide quality feedback.

Ms SÖRLING concurred with Dr MESHREF, suggesting that in the future, every report, particularly those requiring decisions, should be submitted to the relevant body at least one week before the meeting.

##### 7.2. TTR

The EB noted Mr Mounir BESSAH's report on the TTR implementation during the XTWC in Chengdu. Overall, the experience was positive, and Mr BESSAH indicated areas for improvement, particularly the speed of decision-making and the visibility for TV viewers.

A total of eight points were checked through the TTR system.

The EB noted the goal to have the system implemented at the WTTC Finals in Doha, for what two or three more test events will be needed.

Following the presentations on WR and TTR, Mr CALIN requested the floor to address Mr BESSAH on his last EB Meeting on ITTF's capacity (as Mr BESSAH will be moving to WTT effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025) and wanted to put on record his thanks for what Mr BESSAH had accomplished

in 2024 at the helm of the ITTF Events Department, highlighting Mr BESSAH's care for the ITTF, his capacity to deliver, his ability to listen the advice of the ITTF expert staff with table tennis knowledge and his ability to be listened by the CEO.

Ms SÖRLING requested the EB applause for Mr BESSAH and good luck in his new WTT function.

## 8. World Table Tennis

Mr DANTON passed the word to Mr BROWN to provide an update on the WTT Finances.

Mr BROWN reported on 2023 Audits, where, as mentioned in the November EB meeting, the impairment option has been discarded. Regarding 2024, Mr BROWN reported a slight improvement compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> November forecast, hoping for an even more positive outcome at the end of the year. Mr BROWN also touched on the repayment plan from WTT to the ITTF, presenting the proposed timeline.

On a question from Dr MESHREF related to expenditure items, clarifications were provided regarding WTT expenses in administration vs event-related expenses, which include an additional WTT Champions event organised in 2024, which wasn't planned at the start of the year.

Mr DANTON continued presenting on the calendar of events for 2025, which includes, for the first time, four Grand Smashes and reported about the commercial deals already made with equipment partners and event sponsors. Mr DANTON added that the focus will now be on finding Global Premier Partners, ideally from different markets than the current one.

In relation to Media Rights, Mr DANTON reported on the countries in which deals are being discussed, highlighting the positive situation.

## 9. Development

The EB noted the written report submitted and the presentation made on Saturday at the Continental Council Meeting.

## 10. ITTF Foundation

The EB noted the written report submitted, and Ms SÖRLING highlighted the World Health Festival held in France in October, mentioning the very good quality of the research papers presented there. Ms SÖRLING also thanked past and current AC Chairs Zoran PRIMORAC and Kamal ACHANTA for their commitment to the ITTF Foundation's activities as Ambassadors.

## 11. Governance

### 11.1. Members

#### 11.1.1. Ghana

Mr OSHODI reported on the situation in Ghana, where one of the two parties contesting the presidency has taken the matter to the Civil Court. However, it seems that a settlement is on the horizon, with the hope of conducting elections soon.

#### 11.1.2. Indonesia

Mr CALIN reported on the situation in Indonesia. An application for ITTF Membership, with a support letter from the National Olympic Committee, was received within the stipulated six (6) months required by the ITTF Constitution.

At the same time, the ITTF received on 8<sup>th</sup> December via videoconference the request from the ATTU, namely its CEO, Mr Nabil ALFAKIH, to wait for the result of the mediation ATTU

is making through Mr Muchlis MARLIONO, ATTU Development Officer. Out of courtesy to the ATTU efforts, Mr CALIN suggested putting the planned suspension on hold, to allow the ATTU to continue with their mediation efforts up until the end of December 2024.

Dr MESHREF considered the decision to be taking too long, and the players are suffering. Considering the NOC has given its support letter to the new Association, Dr MESHREF suggested moving forward quickly towards a favourable resolution in the best interest of the players.

Dr AZEVEDO suggested studying ways to have more straightforward pathways to intervene/suspend Associations with bad governance in the future.

#### 11.1.3. Mexico

Mr OSHODI provided an update on the situation and suggested that the NOC be mandated to conduct elections, adding that the elections held by one of the parties in May were not monitored by the ITTF, nor observed, which was one of the conditions established in the February EB meeting in Busan.

Dr AZEVEDO requested that the elections held in May 2024 be recognised, to which Mr OSHODI argued the Ministry of Sports does not recognise such elections, referring to the important principle of ensuring that both institutions, the Ministry of Sports or equivalent (CONADE in the case of Mexico) and the NOC, recognise the process.

Different opinions were expressed on what should be the right process, and Mr OSHODI insisted on the importance of having a transparent process. Ms SÖRLING also reminded the audience of the importance of listening to all parties in the conflict, as the IOC, through its Associated Director, Mr Jérôme POIVEY, has repeatedly emphasised.

Dr AZEVEDO insisted on having a vote to confirm whether the EB accepts the elections held by one of the parties in May, as per the letter received from the Mexican NOC. Ms SÖRLING, in her capacity as Chair of the meeting, accepted having such a vote, with the EB deciding by majority not to recognise the elections held by one side.

#### **20241209-EB-13**

The Executive Board rejected the proposal from Dr AZEVEDO to recognise the elections held by one of the parties in conflict in Mexico in May 2024.

#### 11.1.4. Nepal

Mr CALIN reported on the July elections held in Nepal; however, these elections were later not recognised officially in the country, so the status quo remains the same, with Mr VAIDYA Chaturananda Raj as President and Mr GAUTAN Shanker as Secretary-General. Due to the discrepancies between the president and the secretary-general, the ITTF will continue to use the official email address [antta2016@gmail.com](mailto:antta2016@gmail.com) until further notice.

Mr AL-MOHANNADI agreed that the situation is unclear between the President and SG.

#### 11.1.5. Panama

Mr CALIN reported on the situation in Panama, with two persons claiming the Federation's leadership. The ITTF will wait to hear their positions on this case from both the Ministry of Sports and the NOC.

#### 11.1.6. Russia/Belarus

Ms SÖRLING reported on the meeting held with the BLR NOC Secretary General during the ANOC General Assembly, and the meetings that both Ms SÖRLING and Mr AL-MOHANNADI had with the new President of the TTFR in Kazakhstan earlier in October.

Ms SÖRLING emphasised the importance of getting the athletes back to competition as soon as possible.

Mr CALIN added that the IOC EB has not taken an official decision regarding the BLR/RUS situation; however, the intention is to allow the young athletes to participate slowly and progressively.

Dr MESHREF requested that the ITTF take action rather than wait, as the ITTF should be making its own decisions.

#### 11.2. Continental Council

Ms SÖRLING spoke about the positive aspect of having the Continental Presidents present in Chengdu, and about the good meeting the CC had on Saturday.

Mr AL-MOHANNADI expressed his hope for increasing the level of presentation in the continental championships, particularly after seeing the event in Addis Ababa, which didn't have the show court concept implemented.

Mr CALIN reported on the status of the Strategic Quadrennial Agreements, of which three have already been signed (Africa, Americas, and Oceania) and the two remaining (Asia and Europe) are in progress.

Ms SÖRLING congratulated the ITTF and its Secretary General, as this was the first time the quadrennial agreements were signed so early.

#### 11.3. Committee Updates

##### 11.3.1. Nominations Committee

The EB noted the presentation of the Executive Vice-President in charge of Governance, Mr Wahid OSHODI, in relation to the Nominations Committee 2024-2026.

Mr OSHODI explained that from the twelve original nominations received, only eleven were valid. Furthermore, from the original list of candidates for chairman, only one remains, therefore, taking into consideration the constitutional requirement in terms of female representation, and aiming to have a geographical spread, the EB noted the proposition to have Mr Abdulla AL-MULLA (QAT) as the Chair, Ms Sandra DEATON (ENG) as Deputy Chair, Ms YOKOTA Sachiko (JPN), Mr Henry REIMBERG (CHI), Mr HE Xiao (CHN), Prof. Tago Germain KAROU, Mr Andreas GEORGIOU (CYP) and Mr Tikon ISHAKU (NGR) as members.

Furthermore, and to ensure continental representation, the EB was proposed to co-opt Ms Sarah SANDLEY (AUS).

The EB agreed to the two proposals.

##### **20241209-EB-14**

The Executive Board appointed Mr Abdulla AL-MULA (QAT) as Chair, Ms Sandra DEATON (ENG) as Deputy Chair, and Ms YOKOYA Sachiko (JPN) and Messrs. Henry REIMBERG (CHI), HE Xiao (CHN), Prof. Germain KAROU (CIV), Andreas GEORGIOU (CYP), and Ishaku TIKON (NGR) as Members of the Nominations Committee for the period 2024-2026.

##### **20241209-EB-15**

The Executive Board co-opted Ms Sarah SANDLEY (AUS) to the Nominations Committee for the period 2024-2026 to ensure continental representation.

#### 11.4. Working Groups Update

There were no updates in this area.

#### 11.5. Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The EB noted the written report.

#### 11.6. Integrity/Safe Sport update

##### 11.6.1. Integrity Regulations review

With Mr SYMONS having to excuse himself from the EB meeting for this last part, Ms SÖRLING reported that Mr SYMONS indicated the IB should come back with a more detailed reasoning and background for this proposal.

Mr CALIN elaborated more on the proposal brought up by the Integrity Board (IB), indicating that their aim is to sign an agreement with the University of Neuchâtel to review the ITTF Integrity Regulations. Mr CALIN also reported that -if no decision is taken soon- the expected work to put forward a proposition to the 2025 AGM would not be viable, and the IB wants to ensure such a proposal is seen favourably by the EB before heading to the AGM. The broad objective of this proposal is to ensure the Integrity Regulations provide better capacity to both the Integrity Unit, and the Integrity Board, to operate and preserve the Integrity of the ITTF operations.

Mr CALIN also reported on the IB's concern about the anti-doping budgets being presented as part of the Integrity Unit / Integrity Board budgets, when they have no control on them, with the recommendation to differentiate in the ITTF audited accounts anti-doping from other Integrity expenses.

After deliberation, it was agreed that Mr SYMONS, as the EB in charge of Integrity, would come back to the IB and request the IB for further clarity on the proposal.

#### 11.7. Eligibility

##### 11.7.1. CAS case update related to Table Tennis Australia

The EB noted the update provided by Mr CALIN on the open case of eligibility, which hearing was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2024. Subsequently to the CAS hearing, Table Tennis Australia sent a request to the ITTF to consider a settlement, in terms that - according to the firm representing the ITTF, does not differ from the offer received on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024 by the ITTF CEO, and therefore, the position of the ITTF should stay, for consistency with the previous decision.

Dr MESHREF asked about the likelihood of winning the case and about the costs.

Mr OSHODI indicated that the EB's position is not to set a precedent by deciding against the ITTF regulations.

The EB agreed to the proposal.

#### **20241209-EB-16**

The Executive Board considered that Table Tennis Australia's new offer for settlement does not differ from the one received before the CAS hearing and agreed to keep the same position.

##### 11.7.2. Eligibility request from Malta Table Tennis Association

Mr CALIN provided an update on the Malta Table Tennis Association's request for an eligibility waiting period exception for Mr Felix WETZEL.

The EB noted that the request was passed to the Eligibility Working Group established at the EB meeting held in Malmö in July 2022, which issued the recommendation to the EB not to make any exception, as the ITTF regulations are clear in this respect, and do not provide room for exceptions.

The EB decided to follow the recommendation of the Eligibility Working Group.

#### **20241209-EB-17**

The Executive Board agreed to the recommendation of the Eligibility Working Group not to make an exception for the request of the Malta Table Tennis Association on the eligibility waiting period for Mr Felix WETZEL.

#### **11.7.3. Refugees**

There were no further updates in this area.

#### **11.8. Others**

##### **11.8.1. Anti-Doping Services Agreement 2025-2028**

Mr CALIN provided background on the cooperation initiated with the International Testing Agency (ITA) in 2018.

With the last agreement coming to an end by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, it was agreed in the first half of the year to study whether it was adequate or not to renew the agreement. The ITTF Integrity Unit did seek for other possibilities, with the aim to reduce the cost in the area of anti-doping.

Following the IU research, discussions were held on whether renewing the agreement with the ITA for a shorter period, what was not the preference of the ITTF Secretariat, which considers the anti-doping program working in quadrennial cycles, aligned with the Olympics, to ensure there is no disruption ahead of the Olympic Games.

Following the negotiations with the ITA and the revision of the proposed contract, the current version, as presented to the EB, was considered adequate by both the IU and the ITTF Secretariat.

The EB agreed to accept the proposal for renewal of the ITA, for a period of four years (2025-2028).

Ms SÖRLING added that before the signature with ITA back in 2018, the ITTF had one staff member working part-time in anti-doping, which limited the ITTF capacity in this area. The ITTF anti-doping program, as particularly seen through the last compliance exercise conducted by WADA, has shown the good health of the ITTF anti-doping programme, hence the recommendation to renew the agreement with the ITA.

#### **20241209-EB-18**

The Executive Board agreed to renew the anti-doping services agreement with the International Testing Agency (ITA) for the period 2025-2028.

#### **11.8.2. Directives for Match Officials**

The EB noted the proposal from the Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) to update the Directives for Match Officials, effective 1 January 2025. Mr CALIN confirmed the proposal has been validated with the ITTF Technical Commissioner, and the ITTF/WTT staff in charge of Match Officials.

The EB agreed to the proposal.

#### **20241209-EB-19**

The Executive Board approved the Directives for Match Officials, as presented by the URC, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

## 12. IOC Members Report

The EB noted the report from the ITTF IOC Member, Ms SÖRLING, who provided an update on the latest IOC news. Mr SÖRLING confirmed that the IOC elections will be held in March 2025 in Greece; however, the new President will have their mandate effective starting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Prior to the 144<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Greece, there will be a special session in Lausanne on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for the presentation of the candidates.

Ms SÖRLING also reported on the latest news about the Esports Olympic Games to be held in Saudi Arabia.

## 13. Other Business

### 13.1. IMGA update

The EB noted the update from Ms SÖRLING on the IMGA General Assembly held in November.

### 13.2. WADA update

The EB noted Ms SÖRLING's update on the most recent meeting of the WADA Foundation Board, which was held on December 5<sup>th</sup> in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. During that meeting, the strategic plan for WADA's next four years was approved. Ms SÖRLING also reported on the concerns existing in the WADA Foundation Board about the geopolitical situation and the contributions from the public authorities.

### 13.3. ASOIF update

Ms SÖRLING reported on the change of leadership in ASOIF, which will be effective on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, when the elected President, Mr Ingmar DE VOS, will start his mandate as president, following the retirement of Mr Francesco RICCI BITTI. Ms SÖRLING did put on record the appreciation for the work Mr RICCI BITTI has done for ASOIF in general, and for Table Tennis in particular, during his tenure.

### 13.4. SportAccord update

The EB noted that, to date, there is neither a location nor dates confirmed for SportAccord 2025.

### 13.5. One Hundred Years

There were no updates on this matter.

### 13.6. Associations not paying their entry fees in tournaments.

Dr AZEVEDO reported that the Colombia Table Tennis Association has not paid their entries for the recent Para Table Tennis Tournament held in Brazil. Dr AZEVEDO abounded on the matter indicating there is a debt of over 18,000 USD, and that the Colombian TTA President would have indicated to Dr AZEVEDO to send a letter of complaint which he could use to refer to the Colombian authorities.

Dr AZEVEDO asked whether the ITTF could take an action in this matter.

Mr CALIN referred to the praxis in WTT of blocking entries for Associations which have debts with previous organisers. Mr DANTON added that this practice has already existed since the times of the ITTF World Tour.

### 13.7. Mr AL-MOHANNADI indicated having received a copy of the decision on the case of Mr AL-MULLA in the ITTF Tribunal and asked for clarification on who is held accountable for the expenditure on the case.

Mr OSHODI confirmed that the ITTF Tribunal will usually state in their decision who is accountable for the costs.

Mr DANTON asked if the decision on this case would be made public, to which Mr CALIN responded that the ITTF Tribunal itself would establish whether the decision is to be published in its entirety.

Mr OSHODI confirmed that, due to the nature of this case, the decision will normally be published in full.

Dr MESHREF referred to the meeting held<sup>1</sup> with Mr AL-MULLA, Mr OSHODI, and Mr CALIN, which went very well. Dr MESHREF was hoping for the situation to have been solved without the necessity of reaching the Tribunal, lamenting the pathway it finally took.

#### **14. Next Meeting**

Ms SÖRLING indicated that the next meeting will be held virtually and passed the word to Mr CALIN to confirm the tentative date.

Mr CALIN suggested that the next meeting will be held in the middle of February, with the precise date to be confirmed soon.

Ms SÖRLING passed the floor to the ITTF Deputy President, Mr LIU Guoliang, to close the meeting.

Mr LIU thanked the EB members and also the Continental Council Members for their attendance at the XTWC and meetings in Chengdu, reflecting that this is the last event of the 2024 calendar.

Mr LIU also thanked the ITTF leadership for granting China and Chengdu the opportunity to host these meetings. Mr LIU considered it was very positive for the higher-level leadership to witness first-hand the return of the World Cups.

Mr LIU added that the figures of the Mixed Team World Cup have been impressive in terms of public attendance and TV viewership, as reported also in the additional cultural activities organised around the venue for both participants and fans, which confirms the importance that the Chengdu and Sichuan Governments have put in this event.

Mr LIU also highlighted that the highest leadership of the City, District, and Government have been in attendance.

Mr LIU suggested that, in view of the absence of some of the top athletes, it would be important for the ITTF to look at the situation and try to find solutions to ensure the best athletes are present in the future. Mr LIU reported being pleased with the different suggestions heard in his discussions with Mr ACHANTA and other EB members during the days in Chengdu, and whether through higher ranking points, higher prize money, or through connection with the creation of Continental World Cups, as suggested by Mr OSHODI, it would be good to explore avenues to secure the best athletes are present in the future, with the collaborative efforts of all EB Members.

Mr LIU continued reflecting on the necessity to develop closer ties with the players and respect their voices and concerns, adding that when their demands are not possible to be implemented, it is important to address them and explain the reasons. Mr LIU added that he hopes for the players to have the will to compete, rather than being forced to do so due to the regulations, although also understanding that a certain degree of compulsory events is necessary for the system.

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<sup>1</sup> On the request of the ITTF President and CEO, the ITTF Secretary General, Mr CALIN was to have a meeting with the Nominations Committee Chair, Mr AL-MULLA, which was also attended by ITTF Executive Vice-President of Governance, Mr Wahid OSHODI, and ITTF EVP Finance, Dr Alaa MESHREF on 20th August 2024.

Mr LIU reflected that while immediately after the pandemic, it was felt there were not enough events, now some players are expressing their concern about having too many events; therefore, it may be appropriate to conduct research to determine what the ideal number of events should be.

To conclude, Mr LIU considered it important to give the chance for ITTF, WTT, Continental, and domestic events to have their place in the calendar and even consider adding prize money for the coaches at the Mixed Team World Cup in the future.

Mr LIU thanked everyone once again for their attendance and contributions.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr LIU for the encouraging words, taking the opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

## 15. Adjournment

Not having any further business, the meeting was adjourned at 18h00.

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Petra SÖRLING  
ITTF President

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Date

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Raul CALIN  
ITTF Secretary General

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Date

## CONTINENTAL COUNCIL MEETING

Grand Ballroom II – Kempinski Hotel, Chengdu, P. R. China  
 Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024 – 09h30 to 16h30 CST (China Standard Time)

### MINUTES

CC members in attendance:

SÖRLING Petra	President
LIU Guoliang	Deputy President
MESHREF Alaa	Executive Vice-President – Finance
AZEVEDO Alaor	Executive Vice-President
MAEHARA Masahiro	Executive Vice-President
NATRAN Roland	Executive Vice-President
OSHODI Wahid	Executive Vice-President & ATTF President
SYMONS Graham	Executive Vice-President
LIU Shiwen	Athletes Commission (AC) Co-Chair
ACHANTA Sharath Kamal	Athletes Commission (AC) Co-Chair
MOURA Pedro	ETTU President
VILA Juan	ITTF Americas President
MOORE Anthony	ITTF-Oceania President

Staff in attendance:

DAINTON Steve	ITTF Group CEO
CALIN Raul	ITTF Secretary General
BESSAH Mounir	ITTF Deputy Secretary General
BROWN Michael	ITTF Chief Financial Officer
TAM Chris	ITTF Director of Operations
ANDERSSON Mikael	ITTF Sports Development Director
LAVIER Tristan	ITTF Director of Communications
MALIK Nadia	ITTF Graphic Designer

Apology:

AL-MOHANNADI Khalil	Senior Executive Vice-President & ATTU President
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## 1. Welcome from the ITTF President

### 1.1. ITTF President's Welcome

Ms SÖRLING welcomed the CC colleagues to Chengdu, congratulating the recently elected and re-elected continental Presidents, and reflecting on the fact of hosting this meeting during an event that reflects the ITTF's commitment to gender equality: the Mixed Team World Cup. Ms SÖRLING referred to the innovative team format that was praised at the WADA Foundation Board Meeting held in Riyadh on 5<sup>th</sup> December, but also the general momentum of Table Tennis, with the success at the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the inaugural World Sports Table Tennis Championships held in Helsingborg.

Ms SÖRLING added that with all these events happening in the busiest year in table tennis' history, she wanted to put on record her congratulations to the CEO and the staff for this achievement, which is the result of the hard work being made behind the scenes. To conclude, Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr LIU Guoliang and the CTTA, as the host of the event and meetings, and passed the floor to Mr LIU.

Mr LIU Guoliang, ITTF Deputy President and CTTA President, welcomed everyone to Chengdu, echoing Ms SÖRLING's congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected Continental Presidents. Mr LIU added that the fact that this meeting happens in Chengdu, during the Mixed Team World Cup, shows the importance the ITTF is giving to this event, congratulating the ITTF for the successful year about to end, which is the fruit of the collaboration of all the stakeholders, and hoping everyone enjoy the event, the city, and its culture.

#### 1.2. Roll Call

The Roll Call was conducted with all CC members present with the exception of Mr AL-MOHANNADI, who will arrive later in the day.

### 2. **Welcome from the EB Member in charge of the Continental Council**

It was postponed due to the absence of Mr AL-MOHANNADI.

### 3. **Minutes of the previous Continental Council meeting**

#### 3.1. Approval of the Minutes from the last meeting (Busan, Korean Republic, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024).

The Minutes were approved.

#### **20241207-CC-01**

The Continental Council approved the Minutes of the CC Meeting held on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Busan, Korean Republic.

Ms SÖRLING indicated that the Minutes of the Continental Council (CC) Meeting held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024 will be added to those Minutes of today's meeting, as the part related to Competitions was dealt with in the CC meeting.

#### 3.2. Business arising from the Minutes

The CC noted that the business arising from the previous CC meeting is covered in the agenda.

### 4. **ATTF President Report and Focus Areas 2025-2028**

Mr Wahid Enitan OSHODI, ATTF President, thanked Mr Khaled EL-SALHY, past ATTF President, for his work over the years, and referred to the written report circulated to the CC colleagues, highlighting some of the milestones in 2024, such as the African Cup and Continental Olympic Qualification event, which was held in Kigali, Rwanda, in May.

Regarding focus areas for 2025-2028, Mr OSHODI highlighted the aspiration to improve ATTF's governance, the quality of ATTF's events, and help the African athletes grow.

### 5. **ATTU President Report and Focus Areas 2025-2028**

The CC noted there was no report from ATTU.

### 6. **ETTU President Report and Focus Areas 2025-2028**

The CC noted the report from Mr Pedro MOURA, ETTU President, since the last meeting in Busan.

Mr MOURA referred to the development activities completed to date, highlighting its alignment and coordination with the ITTF, the promotion of specific female activities, the support to the Ukraine's athletes, the activities in the area of the improvement in Governance, the events organised in 2024, citing (among others) the Olympic Qualification, European Youth Championships, the European Championships held in Linz, where the ETTU had its elections,

and referred to the progress in marketing and revenue generation, with a new website recently launched.

The CC noted the ETTU Strategic Plan, which includes a roadmap for 2023-2028, with five strategic areas (Governance, Competition, Development, Marketing & Revenue, and Community). Mr MOURA highlighted the desire of ETTU to cooperate with the other continents and the ITTF, with the aligned values in both strategic plans.

To conclude, Mr MOURA highlighted the aim of developing a new OTT channel and a new competition management system, which will cover the different formats of play of the ETTU competitions.

## **7. ITTF Americas President Report and Focus Areas 2025-2028**

Mr Juan VILA, ITTF Americas President, thanked Mr LIU Guoliang for the excellent hospitality and the quality of the event being held, the Mixed Team World Cup, which, in the words of Mr VILA, is surpassing expectations.

The CC noted the ITTF Americas report on 2024 activities, including the Pan American Cup held in the USA, the Pan American Championships held in El Salvador, the Pan American Youth Championships held in Peru, and the Hopes, U11, and U13 Pan American Championships, which were held in the Dominican Republic.

The CC noted the progress of the Pan American athletes at the Olympic Games in Paris.

In the area of marketing, Mr VILA referred to the over eight thousand persons that have already downloaded the ITTF Americas APP, with over 800 paid subscribers.

As a key objective for 2025, Mr VILA mentioned the hope to inaugurate the development centre for the Americas in the Dominican Republic, which will count on the support of the local authorities, Pan Am Sport, and the ITTF Development programme. Mr VILA expressed the goal for this centre to serve athletes, coaches, and also officials in the future in their capacity building.

## **8. ITTF-Oceania President Report and Focus Areas 2025-2028**

Mr Anthony MOORE, ITTF-Oceania President, started thanking Mr LIU Guoliang for the fabulous event being presented in Chengdu, as well as the ITTF CEO, Steve DANTON, and ITTF staff, for the wonderful year, with the highlight of the Olympic Games in Paris, which were spectacular, providing an excellent momentum for our sport.

Mr MOORE referred to the departure of the previous ITTF-Oceania CEO, Mr Barry GRIFFITHS, in February and the incorporation of Mr Scott HOUSTON in June, following a recruitment process which involved the ITTF HR department, and for which Mr MOORE expressed his appreciation for the support given by Ms Charlotte LOURDES, ITTF HR Director, with the 80+ applications reviewed, which led to six interviews and the final candidate chosen, highlighting also Mr HOUSTON's experience.

The CC noted the events held during the year. Mr MOORE cited the Oceania Olympic Qualification event, the AGM, attended virtually by 13 Members, and with all resolutions passing, the Olympic Games, and the most recent ITTF-Oceania Continental Championships, which were held just three months after the new CEO's incorporation.

Mr MOORE also touched on the new Strategic Plan, released on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, referred to the ITTF-Oceania 2025 calendar being already confirmed, the review of the ITTF-Oceania events regulations and policies, the enhancement of financial operations, and the goal to work on engaging Member Associations in the next twelve months to ensure they become more active.

To conclude, Mr MOORE thanked Mr GILLMANN for his efforts to complete the Olympic Qualification event in New Caledonia during a period of instability in the territory. He also referred to the reform of the ITTF-Oceania Constitution, which work has started, with the expectation of having it adopted in 2025, and the ambition to have the current Oceania hope athletes to eventually shine at the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games, as a result of the work done.

## **9. ITTF Calendar**

Mr Mounir BESSAH, ITTF Deputy Secretary General, started his presentation by providing a review of 2024, which included the Busan 2024 WTTTC Finals held in February, the return of the World Cups in Macao, in April, the record-breaking World Masters Championships held in Rome, Italy, with over 6,000 players and approximately 10,000 persons present in the event, and where more than 25,000 matches were played.

Mr BESSAH continued highlighting the Olympic and Paralympic Games held in Paris, the World Esports Championships held in Helsingborg, Sweden, and the ongoing Mixed Team World Cup in Chengdu, China.

The CC noted the presentation of the 2025 calendar, which currently includes 169 events (ITTF/WTT/Continental/Regional events). It highlighted that the calendar is complete and deconflicted, having worked with the Continental Federations (CFS) to ensure that key events do not overlap.

Initiatives such as aligned dates for the Continental Cups in February, Continental Championships in October, or Continental Youth Championships in July were noted, as well as reserved dates for the regional events for the Continents that have such structures and the ETTU Final Four.

(A ten-minute coffee break was held)

Before moving to the next point in the agenda, Mr Steve DANTON, ITTF CEO, highlighted that also WTT has had its greatest activity-year to date and that the business conversations being held are the most robust ever, taking the opportunity to thank the management team for the efforts and dedication which has contributed to this success.

## **10. WTTTC Finals Busan 2024 – Report**

The CC noted the update report on the Busan 2024 WTTTC Finals provided by Mr BESSAH, who indicated that 47 different Associations competed, with 40 teams in both the Men's and Women's events, and with record numbers in terms of broadcast territories, social media engagement, and other key figures. The CC noted that the KTTA is going through changes in its leadership, and the financial report has not yet been received.

## **11. WTTTC Finals Doha 2025 – Update**

The CC also noted Mr BESSAH's report on the upcoming WTTTC Finals Doha 2025. Two inspections have been completed to date, with a further inspection planned for January 2025. Mr BESSAH added that two venues will be used for the first four days, with all the competition happening on one of them, the Lusail Arena, for the final five days.

The CC noted that visas will be provided via email, making the arrival in Qatar smoother.

Mr BESSAH also referred to spectators capacity, and the strategy to ensure international fans may have a complete service of tickets, hotels, and internal transport.

The CC also noted that the Sports Science Congress (SSC) will be held after a six-year hiatus just before the start of the WTTC. The SSC will be held in Aspetar, a leading Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May. Mr CALIN thanked Ms Taísa BELLI, acting chair of the Sports Science and Medical Committee, for the work being done on the preparation for the Congress.

Mr BESSAH added that the signing ceremony for the SSC was held during the last inspection in October.

Dr MESHREF, who oversees (together with Ms SÖRLING) the Doha 2025 WTTC preparations as EVP Finance<sup>1</sup>, confirmed the good impressions during the inspection in terms of venues and hotel qualities, and the adequacy of Aspetar as the venue for the SSC.

Mr MOORE indicated that to maximise the participation of the Oceania members, ITTF-Oceania plans to host its Annual General Meeting during the WTTC in Doha.

## 12. WTTC Finals London 2026 – Qualification Pathway

Mr BESSAH reported on the meetings being held with the London 2026 LOC, and the necessary planning ahead due to the booking timelines for the venues and hotels to be used.

The CC noted that the iconic Wembley area will be the main competition hall, with 6,500 spectator seats, while the Copper Box, already used for the 2018 Men's and Women's Team World Cup, will be the second competition hall, to be used for the preliminary stages, and counting with 4,000 spectator seats.

Following the introduction of the main event to be held in London in 2026, Mr BESSAH presented the proposed London 2026 WTTC Finals Qualification Pathway, acknowledging the support and expertise given by the ITTF Technical Commissioner, Mr Graeme IRELAND, and highlighting that compared to Busan 2024, where there were 40 Men's and Women's teams participating, in London there will be 64 teams per gender.

Mr BESSAH highlighted that the proposed model will not include an Intercontinental Stage. It will allocate sixteen quotas to Asia and Europe, eight quotas to Africa and America, and four quotas to Oceania, in addition to a Host Quota. The remaining places will be allocated via World Ranking.

Mr BESSAH indicated that this proposal was the result of several meetings and modelling options, trying to ensure that regional events are kept relevant in the qualification pathway, particularly in the continents in which the regional concept is implemented (Africa, Asia, and Americas).<sup>2</sup>

Following some exchanges about the proposed qualification pathway, its background, and how to fill the unused quotas when Member Associations do not confirm their participation, the CC unanimously agreed to submit the proposal received to the ITTF Council.

### 20241207-CC-02

The Continental Council confirmed that the proposed Qualification Pathway will be presented to the ITTF Council for approval via online voting.

<sup>1</sup> Due to the Senior EVP in charge of World Championships, Mr AL-MOHANNADI, being the president of QTTA.

<sup>2</sup> As to participate in the London 2026 WTTC Finals, participation in the Continental/Regional stages will be required.

### 13. **WTTC Finals London 2026 – Format of Play**

Mr BESSAH presented the proposed playing format for the London 2026 WTTC Finals, following the discussions held within the Competition Department with the Technical Commissioner and the London 2026 LOC, including a physical meeting in Paris during the Olympic Games.

Mr BESSAH explained that the proposed system allows all 64 participating teams to become World Champions while ensuring that the lower-ranked teams have at least three matches.

The CC noted that Stage 1 will be played in the Copper Box, while Stages 2 and 3 will be played in Wembley Arena. For Stage 3, the teams qualifying from Stage 1 will move from hotels near the Copper Box to hotels near Wembley Arena.

The CC noted that the option presented also ensures that the top-seeded teams have relevant matches in Stage 2, during the first days of their competition. It was also stated that Copper Box and Wembley will be used on consecutive days, avoiding using two venues simultaneously.

The CC discussed at length the proposed option, and after deliberation, agreed to request the working group elaborate further on how the latest qualifiers will progress to Stage 3 to ensure the best-performing teams progress and ideally with more clarity for the participant Member Associations, fans, and media.

### 14. **WTTC Finals 2027, 2028, 2029 – Bid Process Update**

The CC noted that the competition department has thoroughly reviewed the bid documents for both the World Team and World Individual Championships. The bid process started on September 16th, and the expression of interest phase was open until November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Mr BESSAH confirmed that by the deadline for the expression of interest, 15 bids from 10 different Associations were received: 5 for the WTTC 2027 (individuals), 4 for the WTTC 2028 (teams), and 5 for the WTTC 2029 (individuals).

The CC noted that phase 2 will be open until 28<sup>th</sup> February, for virtual inspections and dialogue, and phase 3, finalisation of the bids, will be open from 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

Following that, the bids will be finalised in April, and the host city election will be held during the ITTF AGM on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

(A one-hour lunch break was held)

### 15. **World Cups / Continental Cups**

The CC noted the successful return of the World Cups, with a magnificent venue, the Galaxy Arena in Macao, one million dollars in prize money, and an excellent collaboration with WTMG in the preparation and delivery. Mr BESSAH confirmed that the same venue, prize money, and dates are confirmed for 2025.

Given the professional organisation of the event and the perspectives for its future growth, the CC noted the importance of connecting the Continental Cups with the World Cups as the natural pathway for qualification. For 2025, an initial concept, "Road to Macao," has been proposed to the Continental Federations, with them agreeing to hold the Cups on almost the same days in February 2025, with the aim of building a stronger relationship and connection for future years.

Speaking about the Mixed Team World Cup, the CC could witness during the days in Chengdu also the excellent level of organisation, media, and fans impact, and exploring the incorporation of Continental Cups could be considered, in a similar pathway of qualification for the Mixed Team

World Cup. Mr BESSAH also referred to the importance of ensuring that the top athletes attend the event in the coming years.

Ms SÖRLING reflected on the fact that the World Cups were not only back, but they did so on a very high level, never before experienced for this event, thanking everyone who made it possible, particularly CTTA and the WTMG partners.

## **16. World E-Sports Championships – Report**

As an introduction, Ms SÖRLING commented on how the ITTF was part of the inaugural Olympic Esports Week organised by the IOC in Singapore in June 2023. That was an important step, which was later followed by the ITTF Executive Board's decision in December 2023 to host in 2024 the first-ever World Esports Championships. These two ITTF brave actions placed the ITTF in a better position to be considered for the inaugural Olympic Esports Games to be held in Saudi Arabia.

Mr BESSAH was joined by Mr Tristan LAVIER, ITTF Director of Communications, to update the CC on the event held in Helsingborg, and how the ITTF reached there. Mr BESSAH explained his initial discussions with Mr Mikael ANDERSSON, ITTF Sports Development Director, on the initial expressions of interest from Thailand and Singapore, and the final agreement with Sweden to combine the event with the World Youth Championships after the interest shown by the Swedish Table Tennis Association and for sustainability and practical reasons.

The CC noted the support provided by the French Table Tennis Federation based on the experience of their first National Esports Championships.

The CC was updated on the qualification pathway, which was held in October-November. There were 212 entries from all five continents, and eight competitors, qualifiers and wild cards (to ensure universality) travelled to Helsingborg.

A video on the World Esports TT Championships was displayed, and Mr LAVIER continued mentioning that the event was featured on the ITTF YouTube Channel and the Olympic Channel, with over 50k views to date.

The CC also noted the presentation about the ITTF Esports Summit, held in parallel with the event. This event helped the ITTF community increase their general knowledge about Esports. The Summit included a special message delivered by the IOC President, Dr Thomas BACH, and ten experts and guest presenters from different sectors and the Esports industry took part in the discussions.

Dr Alaor AZEVEDO, the EVP in charge of this area, reflected on the existing community playing Esports Table Tennis compared to the participation in this very first ITTF World Esports Championships and the challenges ahead. The CC also briefly discussed the different categories existing within Esports and the way forward for table tennis.

Mr MOORE praised the presentation, logos, and all the image aspects of the inaugural event in Helsingborg and congratulated the ITTF on its success.

## **17. Para Table Tennis Reforms - Update**

The CC noted Mr BESSAH's presentation on the reforms to be introduced in 2025 in Para Table Tennis. The new World Para Circuit structure, including three tiers, a new online entry system, new branding, and a new World Ranking system (aligned now with the system used in able-bodied competitions), were presented.

Dr AZEVEDO thanked Ms SÖRLING for assigning him the Para TT portfolio following the 2021 elections, to Mr DANTON, for appointing Mr BESSAH for the position of Events Director, and particularly to Mr BESSAH, for his great work in the area of Para TT, which has led to this result.

#### **18. Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games - Update**

The CC noted the progress report of Mr ANDERSSON, Mr BESSAH, and Mr CALIN on the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games. The venue for table tennis has already been identified, and the events of Men's Singles, Women's Singles, and Mixed Doubles have been confirmed. The CC noted that some sports have been removed from the official programme, becoming exhibition events.

Due to the IOC aligning its policies with the United Nations on the denomination of Youth, the YOG 2026 editions in Dakar will only have players under 18 years old at the time of the Games. Also, the CC noted that the IOC has decided not to allow mixed teams (or doubles) with players from different NOCs. The ITTF was confirmed to have 32 quotas per gender.

Mr ANDERSSON updated the CC on the qualification system discussions. The IOC has indicated its preference for not having specific qualification events for Dakar 2026, with further details to be provided by the IOC in Q1-2025. The ITTF expects a 5–6-day competition schedule, with two days of practice, as per the discussions had to date with the IOC and Dakar 2026.

Mr ANDERSSON also confirmed that this edition will not have a lower age cut for sports such as table tennis and that in discussions with the Olympic Solidarity Department of the IOC, a special grant will be allocated to the ITTF for the development of players, coaches, and officials from Africa, with special focus on the West African region.

The table tennis pictogram was also presented to the CC.

Mr OSHODI suggested that a test event be planned in Dakar, as it would be good to gain some practical experience after several years without international events in Senegal.

#### **19. Los Angeles 2028 Olympic & Paralympic Games - Update**

The CC noted the update on the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Table Tennis is planned for the Los Angeles Convention Center, which will be the heart of the Games' activity. The warm-up and practice hall will be located in the same complex.

The CC also noted the continued work of the ITTF on the events programme, with the proposal made in February 2024 to increase the number of events from the current five. The IOC has confirmed that the decision on the events programme will be taken in March-April 2025, following the IOC Session to be held in Greece.

Ms SÖRLING also reflected on the fact that although the venue is not the best in terms of size and also because it is not a permanent venue, the location is ideal, which should also be considered.

#### **20. Strategic Quadrennial Agreements 2025-2028 (Continental Federations Affiliation)**

Mr CALIN thanked Ms Polona CEHOVIN and Mr Mounir BESSAH for the work done in the previous Olympic Cycle Master Continental Agreements (MCAs), as, particularly due to the pandemic, it was a very complex task to handle, when the ITTF had to scale down the activities planned for each continent.

For 2025-2028, the continental agreements will be renamed "Strategic Quadrennial Agreements" (SQAs) to align with the ITTF Statutes wording, which establishes the affiliation of the continents and the signature of such agreements for every Olympiad.

The CC noted that this is the fourth time the ITTF will be entering into affiliation agreements with the continents, a system that started in 2013.

Mr ANDERSSON and Mr CALIN presented the highlights of the SQAs, which are aligned with the new ITTF Strategic Plan. The SQAs aim to define how the ITTF will collaborate with the Continental Federations in the areas of Development, Governance, and Events, and provide them with funding for these areas.

The CC noted Mr ANDERSSON's presentation on the first of the three pillars of these SQA: , Development, which highlights are the ITTF Sports Development Agenda 28 and the key projects and programmes of Participation, Centennial Equipment Drive, Female Talents support, Dakar 2026, Education, and Hopes. Mr ANDERSSON also referred to the planned introduction of a global coaching certification and licensing system.

Mr CALIN referred to the second of the pillars, Governance. The ITTF aims to cascade down the best practices learnt from the five ASOIF Self-Government Assessments to both Continental Federations and Member Associations, to ensure that such best practices are possibly implemented at all levels of table tennis governance, with special focus on Transparency, Integrity, Democracy, and Sustainability.

Mr CALIN then referred to the third pillar, Events, in which the ITTF aims to support the continents in the continental and (when existing) regional events which serve as qualification for World Title and Olympic events, the commercialisation of the sport, and the presentation, to make the events more attractive to audiences. Mr CALIN added that KPIs will be established to allow both the ITTF and the CFs to measure the adequate implementation of the events' directives.

Mr CALIN thanked the Continental Presidents and their SGs/CEOs/COOs for the collaboration in the past few months to finalise the SQAs, reflecting on the fact that the 2021 agreements were signed in May 2021, with the addendums for 2023 and 2024 being signed only in May-June 2024, while now the agreements are ready to be signed before the end of the (previous) year, so to start activities with the SQA dates start.

Ms SÖRLING thanked the CF Presidents and the ITTF Secretary General for the progress done.

## **21. Any other business**

### **21.1. Updated ITTF Branding Guidelines**

Mr LAVIER introduced the new ITTF Graphic Designer, Ms Nadia MALIK, who joined the ITTF in June. Ms MALIK guided the CC through the changes to the ITTF brand presentation, including complementary colours and modernising the fonts being used.

The new stationery and presentation templates were also explained, and the CC noted that they will be made available for their use by the CC members when representing the institution.

The CC also noted the aim to develop an ITTF 2026 Centenary-specific branding in the coming months and, not having any further remarks, the CC congratulated Ms MALIK and Mr LAVIER on their work in this area.

## 21.2. ITTF Americas elections

Mr VILA reported to the CC that two WTT events were held in Argentina and Brazil in the weeks leading to the ITTF Americas elections, which were held in El Salvador. Mr VILA indicated that free hospitality and, in some cases, flight tickets, were provided to delegates from different American associations at the Brazilian event. Mr VILA added that while his words are neither a complaint nor an accusation, he is concerned about the upcoming ITTF elections in May 2025, and expressed his hope that there will not be negative news coming from the ITTF elections to the Olympic World, which could tarnish our sport's reputation hoping for the ITTF to monitor such kind of actions.

Dr AZEVEDO responded that all countries of America were invited, and wanted to highlight that Mr DANTON was present, as Dr AZEVEDO wanted to show the organisation of the event, the new CBTM offices, with its 40 employees, and that CBTM's goal is to invite once again all Member Associations in 2025, regardless of elections, as the CBTM's budget allow them to do so.

## 21.3. Case of the Mexican Table Tennis Association

Mr VILA requested the ITTF Executive Board to look at the Mexican TTA's case, which has had contested leadership for two years, and what is affecting Pan American events. Mr VILA added that until the ITTF authorities resolve the case, ITTF Americas will halt Mexico's participation in Continental activities.

Ms SÖRLING and Mr OSHODI confirmed that the EB is handling the case and hope for a prompt resolution.

## 21.4. Acknowledgement from ITTF Oceania about the SQA signature.

Mr Anthony MOORE wanted to record ITTF-Oceania's appreciation to Ms SÖRLING, Mr DANTON, and Mr CALIN for their work in finalising the SQA on time so the ITTF-Oceania Management Committee could review and endorse it. Mr MOORE added that the SQA is fundamental for developing the sport on the Continent.

## 22. Adjournment

Ms SÖRLING indicated that the next meeting of the CC will be held in Doha, Qatar, on a date to be confirmed at a later stage, and thanked Mr Joneal Mateo JECIEL and the IT team for the technical support.

Not having any further business, the meeting was adjourned at 16h30 <sup>3</sup>.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Petra SÖRLING  
ITTF President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Raul CALIN  
ITTF Secretary General

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<sup>3</sup> With the Continental Federations of Africa, Americas, and Oceania, proceeding to sign their respective SQAs with the ITTF.