

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel, Durban, South Africa  
Monday 22 and Sunday 28 May 2023 – 09h00 to 12h00 SAST

### EB MEETING MINUTES – FIRST PART (Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023)

Attendance on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May:

EB Members:

SÖRLING Petra	President
LIU Guoliang	Deputy President
AL-MOHANNADI Khalil	Senior Executive Vice-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
RYU Seung-Min	IOC Member

Apologies:

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

Guests:

Mr CARRIM Yusuf	South Africa Table Tennis Board (Welcome address)
-----------------	---------------------------------------------------

#### 1. Welcome and Opening

##### 1.1. President's opening remarks

Ms SÖRLING welcomed the EB colleagues to Durban, South Africa, and expressed her pleasure to see nearly a full EB in attendance, with the exception of the Athlete's Commission Co-Chairs, Mr ACHANTA, who is playing in the World Table Tennis Championships Finals ("WTTTC"), and Ms LIU, who is expected to arrive in Durban on the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> of May.

Ms SÖRLING congratulated Mr CARRIM and the South African Table Tennis Board ("**SATTB**") for successfully hosting the WTTTC, a special occasion since it is the first WTTTC in South Africa in 84 years. Ms SÖRLING proposed that a letter should be written to SATTB, on behalf of the EB, thanking SATTB for their hard work.

All members of the EB agreed that a letter of thanks should be written on behalf of the EB, and that the Secretary General shall draft such a message.

##### 1.2. Welcome words from SATTB

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr CARRIM to address the EB.

Mr CARRIM thanked Ms SÖRLING, the rest of the members of the EB, the CEO, and the Secretary General, for attending Durban and expressed what a privilege and honour it was to host the EB. Mr CARRIM shared how tough and emotional the journey to the WTTTC has been, and how proud he felt of SATTB and South Africa for being able to host the WTTTC. Being a country with very little resources, Mr CARRIM felt that the successful WTTTC was a testament to what South Africa has to offer and would be a good precedent for other host cities to take from. Mr CARRIM

welcomed the feedback from the EB to learn from hosting the WTTTC and prepare SATTB for the next event. Mr CARRIM concluded with heartfelt thanks to the EB and ITTF for their continued support and partnership in making the WTTTC a reality.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr CARRIM for his kind words and invited the EB, Mr CARRIM, Mr DAINTON and Mr CALIN to take a commemorative photo before commencing the meeting.

### 1.3. Roll Call

Before proceeding with the roll call Ms SÖRLING reflected on the long duration of the EB meeting held in Singapore on 17 March 2023 reason why the meeting in Durban shall be split into two sessions: one to be held on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, and one to be held on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Ms SÖRLING added that the CEO took the message from the EB meeting in Singapore in relation to the difficult times ahead and that more will be explained in the CEO report.

As a matter of housekeeping, Ms SÖRLING introduced the efforts being put in place to improve the efficiency of meetings. It was noted that on the meeting agenda, each item on the agenda had been marked with a "(T)", an "(I)" or a "(D)", standing for matters "to talk", "to inform", and "to decide", respectively. The EB noted the Agenda points to be handled on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>, and those to be discussed on 28<sup>th</sup> May ("**EB meeting on Sunday**").

As for the Roll Call, Ms SÖRLING echoed her earlier welcome speech and noted the absence of the Athlete's Commission Co-Chairs on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

## 2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

Mr CALIN requested that the Conflict-of-Interest Policy be added to the agenda, but which may be discussed at the EB meeting on Sunday.

Ms SÖRLING requested to bring back to the agenda the Remuneration Committee, but to be discussed also at the EB meeting on Sunday.

The agenda was adopted, as adjusted with the addition of the requests from Mr CALIN and Ms SÖRLING, and with items 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 12 to be deferred to the EB meeting on Sunday.

Ms SÖRLING noted that a meeting of the Continental Council (CC) shall be held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and to discuss any items needed to be prepared in anticipation of the meeting of the CC.

## 3. **Minutes of the previous Executive Board (formerly known as the Executive Committee) meeting**

### 3.1. Approval of the Minutes from the last meeting

Ms SÖRLING welcomed feedback on the Minutes from the previous EB meeting that were circulated.

Dr MESHREF remarked that since the "EB" is a newly adopted term, the minutes should be adjusted to refer to the old "Executive Committee" as well. In addition, Dr MESHREF expressed some discomfort with the wording of the WTT Board Minutes, which stated that Ms SÖRLING, as the ITTF President, was "invited" to the meeting of the WTT Board.

Dr MESHREF's feedback was noted and will be shared to ensure proper wording is used in the future, as the President does not need an invitation to attend a WTT Meeting. The EB had no further comments on the minutes. Therefore, they were approved.

### **20230522-EB-01**

The Executive Board adopted the Minutes of the EB Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in Singapore.

### 3.2. Business arising from the Minutes

Ms SÖRLING noted that since the previous EB meeting, where a cumulative action list of business arising from EB meetings was presented, a Monday ®<sup>1</sup> board had been set up to consolidate all action items for ease of reference. Ms SÖRLING hoped that this would be an easier way for all members of the EB to keep track of tasks and the progress of tasks.

Mr DAINTON concurred with Ms SÖRLING and expressed that all actions established in EB meetings should be updated to this Monday ® board immediately after each EB meeting.

## 4. **CEO Report / Strategic Plan**

Mr DAINTON was invited to present his report and the strategic plan update.

The EB noted the report that addressed the updates within the ITTF and WTT. Mr DAINTON reflected on the growth of the WTT and noted that the World is just coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr DAINTON reflected on the journey since 2023 started, noting there is not yet a full calendar and the continuous learning from the process of developing WTT. Mr DAINTON presented how WTT continues to grow with its revenues increasing massively, with more sponsors, media rights, and more investors interested. It was noted that a recent valuation was conducted on WTT since World Sports as the first investor had been onboarded and that WTT is currently seeing a USD150 million valuation, which has drawn more interest from big investors.

Mr DAINTON reflected also in the pressures from hosting such large-scale events such as cash flow and that WTT still needs to invest if the business is to grow. Mr DAINTON mentioned discussions with a major investment fund, with the WTT team currently engaged in a due diligence exercise with them. Mr DAINTON mentioned interest from several other sources, adding that this is a proof that WTT is on a reasonably good journey.

Mr DAINTON noted that in the event there is no investment, WTT needs to look at other alternatives which will be explained on the EB meeting on Sunday, and expressed his desire to discuss with the EB members over the next few days in Durban, adding that he would need the full support of the EB if changes are needed to get WTT into a more profitable position.

Ms SÖRLING expressed that this concern about finances weighed heavily on her mind, but she was pleased to find that Mr DAINTON had the same thoughts. Ms SÖRLING expressed that it was important for the EB to be on the same page and active in these discussions on building WTT to greater heights.

Dr MESHREF thanked Mr DAINTON for the complete and accurate report. Dr MESHREF noted that the number of interested investors is a positive sign but that it would be good to also look into reducing the expenses, particularly event expenses. Dr MESHREF was of the view that reducing and restructuring in the areas of Continental Agreements and High Performance and Development should not be a path to be taken, as this is a core service to ITTF Members.

Mr NATRAN reflected that WTT was launched right before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and that the Singapore Smash was a special event, itself representing one of four planned Smashes. Mr NATRAN expressed his hope for a European Smash. While the Singapore Smash was a loss-making event, Mr NATRAN added it is still a flagship event to the table tennis community and proof to the world of the level of events that WTT can do. Mr NATRAN wished to highlight that a Grand Smash cannot be loss-making in that way and that having more events would not necessarily mean more losses for WTT if the approach is right.

Mr DAINTON concurred with Mr NATRAN and added that, while he is taking a prudent approach with investors, one positive takeaway is that the current interested investors do not focus on the losses for WTT, as they see it as a very natural thing for a start-up company. Mr DAINTON

---

<sup>1</sup> Monday ® is the Project Management Software currently used by the ITTF Administration.

noted that the investment fund currently engaged in discussions with the ITTF is spending a significant amount in the scrutiny of WTT, what shows they see the potential of WTT.

Mr OSHODI echoed Dr MESHREF's remarks, stating restructuring should not affect Continental Agreements and services to Member Associations. Mr OSHODI expressed that he is of the view that Mr DAINTON would need to focus on the business/investment part, because while there are more people in WTT doing the work of selling the product and trying to bring in sponsors and host cities, the reality is that the job is not getting done as it was before when Mr DAINTON was focused on Marketing.

EB members feedback was noted.

Mr DAINTON wrapped up the presentation by noting the two wonderful events in Xinxiang and Macau, China, and the celebration of World Table Tennis Day in Macau. Mr DAINTON also mentioned the meeting Ms SÖRLING, Mr LIU, and himself had with the Minister for Sports in China. Mr DAINTON further noted the new Singapore office of ITTF and WTT and expressed his intent to welcome all EB members to this new office soon. Mr DAINTON added that the feedback to the new office has been very positive, particularly from the potential investment fund.

Mr DAINTON continued his presentation, introducing the strategic plan update, which was revised by Ms SÖRLING and Mr DAINTON and circulated a couple of weeks prior. Mr DAINTON encouraged the EB to review it, especially since the EB is finalising a survey to be sent out for feedback to the membership, so to table any feedback and/or concerns at the ITTF Summit in Bangkok.

Dr AZEVEDO drew reference to the strategic plan for another International Federation, which had only eleven (11) key indicators, when in comparison, the ITTF strategic plan has many more, and cannot be easily remembered or followed. Dr AZEVEDO remarked that it would be better if only a few key points were selected regarding WTT, the ITTF, and the ITTF Foundation, and focus on them.

Dr AZEVEDO's feedback was noted.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Dr AZEVEDO and noted that the strategic plan shall be improved and made more formal to be approved at the ITTF Summit.

Mr DAINTON brought attention to the last point of his presentation, the World Cups. It was noted that efforts were being made to bring back the World Cups. It was noted that the World Cups were part of the Master Licensing Agreement ("**MLA**") with WTT. The EB was asked to amend the MLA and remove the licensing of the World Cups to WTT from the MLA so that they can be managed differently.

#### **20230522-EB-02**

The Executive Board approved the amendment to the MLA to remove the World Cups as a licensed event to WTT.

Mr DAINTON noted that there is some work to be done to the ITTF Statutes with respect to reinstating the World Cups, as well as considerations for what the World Cups should look like in the future, management of the event and qualification process, as well as a potential change to create a mixed team World Cup to differentiate the event from a World Team Championship event.

5. **Operations** - [To be discussed on the EB meeting on Sunday]
6. **Athletes** - [To be discussed on the EB meeting on Sunday]

## 7. Events

### 7.1. World Title Events

Mr DAINTON was invited to present about the World Title Events.

#### 7.1.1. WTTC Finals Durban 2023 Update

Mr DAINTON noted that the WTTC in Durban has started well and strong, with 127 players in the men's draw and 126 in the women's draw, with some walkovers. Mr DAINTON noted that some tweaks should be made to avoid any walkovers in the future and ensure that the WTTC has a full field of players. Mr DAINTON noted some feedback received on tables 5 through 8. It was noted that these courts are according to the regulations in terms of size. However, Mr DAINTON explained that for future WTTC events, these tables could be bigger. Overall, however, Mr DAINTON was pleased that these were the only remarks received and expressed that this was a good indicator that the WTTC is an overall relative success.

#### 7.1.2. WTTC Finals Busan 2024

Mr DAINTON noted that the contract with the Korean Table Tennis Association (**KTTA**) for the WTTC Finals in Busan 2024 had been signed, with the dates for the event locked in, and that a further discussion with Mr RYU should be held for the dates of the Summit. Mr RYU indicated that a follow-up email with details would be circulated and expressed confidence in a successful event in Busan. Mr RYU noted that the final challenge is to confirm a title sponsor for the event but assured that preparations are on track.

Ms SÖRLING reflected on her recent trip and WTTC 2024 signing ceremony in Busan before flying to South Africa and expressed her thanks and pride in the hard work of Mr RYU and the team for organising the WTTC Finals in 2024.

#### 7.1.3. WTTC Finals update Doha 2025

Mr DAINTON noted that the WTTC Finals in Doha 2025 have been confirmed at the ITTF Summit in Amman, Jordan. Mr DAINTON noted that the next step would be to prepare the contract with Qatar Table Tennis Association.

Mr AL-MOHANNADI indicated that the dates would need to be finalised before moving on to the contract to be discussed with ITTF. Mr AL-MOHANNADI expressed confidence for a good event in Doha in 2025.

Ms SÖRLING highlighted that Mr AL-MOHANNADI's portfolio included the World Championships. As a matter of good governance, Ms SÖRLING proposed that herself and Mr NATRAN would be involved in the discussions for the event in Doha to prevent any conflict of interest.

The EB approved Ms SÖRLING's proposal.

#### **20230522-EB-03**

The Executive Board approved Ms SÖRLING and Mr NATRAN as the points of contact for the World Table Tennis Championship Finals in Doha 2025.

#### 7.1.4. WYTTC Nova Gorica 2023

Mr DAINTON noted that preparations for the World Youth Table Tennis Championship in Nova Gorica 2023 were going well, with Mr Tiago VIEGAS, the WTT Youth Series Event Manager leading this event preparations.

#### 7.1.5. WYTTC Helsingborg 2023

Mr DAINTON noted that Helsingborg is an experienced organiser of Youth events, and Mr VIEGAS will do a site inspection later in the year.

7.1.6. World Masters Table Tennis Championships Rome 2024

Mr DAINTON noted that Ms SÖRLING and the ITTF Sports Director, Mr Mikael ANDERSSON, have been working on the World Masters Table Tennis Championships event to be held in Rome 2024, with the contract getting close to be finalised. It was noted that there were some equipment issues to solve, as this event requires much equipment. Mr DAINTON noted that entries would open in June 2023 and requested the EB to promote the World Masters event in their own countries to get as many people involved and excited as possible. Mr DAINTON noted that, as the first World Masters Championships that the ITTF is managing, this event is a big chance for full involvement by the ITTF.

7.1.7. Others

7.1.7.1. World Championships Finals 2026 – bid update

Mr DAINTON noted that the bid process for the World Championships Finals in 2026 was ongoing, with 5 expressions of interest received from: China, with the city to be decided; London, England; Kitakyushu, Japan; Stockholm, Sweden; and Bangkok, Thailand. It was noted that the countries are now entering the second stage of the formal bid process, with the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to submit a formal bid to then be awarded at the AGM due to be held in Bangkok, on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

7.1.7.2. World Youth Championships 2025 – bid update

Mr DAINTON noted that expressions of interest had been received for the World Youth Championships 2025 from: Bahrain, Peru, and Romania, to undergo the same process as interested countries for the World Championships Finals, to be tabled before the ITTF Council at the Summit in Bangkok.

7.1.7.3. World Masters Championships 2026 – bid update

Mr DAINTON noted that 2026 marks the centenary of ITTF and that the ITTF wishes to do something special. The EB reflected that once the locations for the World Championships Finals 2026 and the World Youth Championships 2026 have been chosen (in 2023), the ITTF could strategically look at what locations the World Masters Championships 2026 and World Para Championships 2026 could have to try to ensure a global presence for its World Title events held around the globe on that special occasion.

7.1.7.4. World Para Championships 2026 – bid update - As addressed in 7.1.7.3.

7.1.7.5. World Cups - As addressed in section 4.

7.2. Olympic and Paralympic Games

Mr CALIN was invited to present on the Olympic and Paralympic Games preparations.

Mr CALIN indicated that part of his update would be presented at the Continental Council during the meeting on Saturday. The EB noted that the schedule for both Olympic and Paralympic games and the Qualification Systems had been confirmed. As it is the ITTF tradition, the EB members are invited to attend the Olympic Games. Information will be circulated in the coming weeks in order to confirm attendance and start working on the accreditation process and hotel bookings.

The EB noted that, traditionally, the EVP in charge of Para Table Tennis is invited to attend the Paralympic Games and that a further briefing would be given at the meeting on Saturday.

7.3. World Ranking

Mr OSHODI was invited to present a report by the World Ranking Working Group (**WRWG**).

The EB noted two propositions of the WRWG. The first one being about the ranking points for regional events in odd years. The WRWG reviewed the letters received from Continental and Regional Federations after the WR points were removed from these events in even years. The WRWG resolved that the points should be reinstated, offering three options to be considered by

the EB, with option 1 being the preferred. Mr OSHODI explained that other requests on the letters received will be discussed as part of the thorough review of the World Ranking systems after the Olympic Games.

The second proposition to be considered was related to the expiration of points awarded at Continental Games in the World Team Ranking, suggesting that they should remain valid until the next edition of the same event takes place, to ensure consistency across continents.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr OSHODI for his presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Dr MESHREF noted that the WTTTC Finals in Chengdu had little incentive for players to attend as there were no ranking points, except for the teams, and this resulted with teams that were not going with their full power. Dr MESHREF noted that this would probably not be the same for the WTTTC in Busan since the incentive is the Olympic Team quotas.

Mr OSHODI agreed with the comments of Dr MESHREF's and expressed that this input will be considered in the holistic review to be conducted by the WRWG.

The EB agreed with the recommendations of the WRWG, and both propositions were passed.

#### **20230522-EB-04**

The Executive Board approved the reinstatement of the WR points to the Regional Championships in odd years (Option 1 of the three options proposed).

#### **20230522-EB-05**

The Executive Board approved the maintenance of the World Team Ranking points at the Continental Events until the next edition of the same event is completed.

### **8. World Table Tennis - [To be discussed on the EB meeting on Sunday]**

### **9. Development - [To be discussed on the EB meeting on Sunday]**

### **10. ITTF Foundation**

Ms SÖRLING thanked the ITTF Foundation for the excellent work done for the World Table Tennis Day and the lovely celebration in Macau, noting that the activity garnered a lot of attention within the sport of table tennis and the wider sporting community.

Ms SÖRLING noted that an ongoing activity by the ITTF Foundation was being held in Durban within the area of Parkinson, and that a more detailed report will be presented on Sunday.

### **11. Governance**

#### **11.1. Members**

##### **11.1.1. Russia / Belarus update**

Mr CALIN was invited to present the Russia/Belarus update.

Mr CALIN reported on the progress over the last few weeks, including the mediation between the ETTU and Russian Table Tennis Federation (**RTTF**) in Istanbul earlier in the month. Mr CALIN appreciated the humble and cooperative approach taken by both parties and expressed hope that the CAS case may be solved by mutual agreement.

Mr CALIN thanked the ITTF Legal Department for preparing a chart outlining the process that ITTF will take. It is noted that the ITTF is of the opinion that background checks of the players are not a necessary precursor for players to play in events as these players are to sign additional declarations, for which veracity they are responsible. Mr CALIN noted that if there is any complaint, the chart prepared by the legal department explains the

mechanism to be followed, with the Integrity Unit, and the ITTF Tribunal being involved so the matter can be taken inhouse without further expense.

It is noted that the ITTF will made clear to the RTTF and Belarus TTA that athletes shall be competing as neutral athletes in singles and doubles only.

Ms SÖRLING noted that the technicality must be difficult to implement and expressed that the ITTF would like to bring the Russian and Belarusian athletes back as soon as possible.

Ms SÖRLING wished to note that in the future, should the ITTF be a mediator in processes, there must be a consideration of who should bear the cost for such mediation.

#### 11.1.2. Membership – 227 Activation Task Force

Ms SÖRLING explained that this item was a topic discussed with Mr DAINTON at the beginning of the year, adding that while the ITTF is the biggest federation in terms of members, not all 227 members are present at competitions and meetings. It is therefore important to ensure that members are active, or if members are not active, what ITTF can do to reactivate them.

Ms SÖRLING proposed thus the creation of a Task Force coordinated by ITTF President, Ms SÖRLING, EVP of Development, Dr MESHREF, and ITTF Group CEO, Mr DAINTON, to work on this matter and hopefully assist in improving the current situation and regain activity in those members that are not active.

The EB approved the task force to be implemented to work on reactivating member associations.

#### **20230522-EB-06**

The Executive Board approved Ms SÖRLING's proposal to create an Activation Task Force to work on reactivating Member Associations.

#### 11.2. Continental Council (CC)

Ms SÖRLING noted that the meeting of the CC shall be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The presidents of the Continental Federation shall be physically present, with the exception of ITTF-Oceania President, Anthony Moore, who shall be attending the meeting remotely.

#### 11.3. Committee Updates

Mr CALIN was invited to present on committee updates.

Mr CALIN reported on the different meetings planned by the Committees, most of them hybrid, and thanked Mr DAINTON for implementing a new system with appointed staff member to assist the committees in arranging for meetings, facilitating administrative tasks such as minute taking, and in so doing, creating a more efficient process, and encouraging more active participation within the committees.

#### 11.4. Working Groups Update

Mr CALIN noted that the Membership Activation Task Force would constitute an additional working group. Mr CALIN further noted that the Service Working Group remains inactive for several years and that the EB should consider what should be done with it.

Mr MAEHARA was invited to present on the Entourage Working Group (EGW). Mr MAEHARA noted that the first meeting EWG group was held on 12 April 2023, in a hybrid format, which was attended by the ITTF President. The EWG has planned to meet on a regular basis to focus on specific topics.

Mr CALIN noted that the Governance Review Working Group (GRWG) had its propositions passing at the AGM in Amman, which is indicative of steps in the right direction for governance.



Mr CALIN noted that new steps of propositions shall be put forward later this week to cover, among other issues, the participation of Refugees.

Dr MESHREF noted that the 2022 version of the ITTF Handbook remains to be the “updated” with the 2023 Statutes not yet published.

Ms SÖRLING concurred with Dr MESHREF, that it is important to have an updated version of the ITTF Statutes published, however noting that the AGM in 2022 was held in December of 2022, which was a lot later than anticipated and as such affected the date of publication of the 2023 ITTF Handbook.

#### 11.5. Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI)

Ms SÖRLING noted that in a meeting with the Gender and Diversity Commissioner it was agreed to develop the structure of the ITTF Group Task Force on GEDI. With Ms KAJEE currently working on the WTTC, it was agreed to defer this point to the second part of the meeting on Sunday.

#### 11.6. Integrity/Safe Sport

Mr SYMONS was invited to present on the Integrity / Safe Sport area.

Mr SYMONS provided an update on the Integrity Board activities, noting that a further board appointment had been made in December 2022 during the ITTF Summit in Amman. Mr SYMONS opined that recommendations for appointment to the Integrity Board should go to the ITTF Council out of session so that a functioning board can be constituted as soon as possible. It is noted that the Integrity Board sets a review of the integrity regulations as a high priority.

Ms SÖRLING queried how the work of the Integrity Board was going, and in Mr SYMONS’ view, was it going according to expectations.

Mr SYMONS noted 2 issues – one being the Integrity Board itself, as Mr CARPENTER Kevin, the Head of Integrity, and Mr SYMONS are non-voting members on the board. It is additionally noted that there has only been one Integrity Board meeting in February, and it has been a slow process. The second issue noted by Mr SYMONS is the workload, with Mr CARPENTER being the only person who works on the ground, which is an ongoing issue until the Integrity Board is fully constituted.

The EB noted that Mr CARPENTER’s contract, expires in October 2023. On recommendation of the Chair of the Integrity Board, Mr Enric RIPOLL, the EB agreed to extend Mr CARPENTER contract for another three<sup>2</sup> years.

#### **20230522-EB-07**

**The Executive Board approved the renewal of Mr CARPENTER’s contract for another three years.**

#### 11.7. One Hundred Years

Mr DAINTON was invited to present on this topic, suggesting that with ITTF’s 100-year anniversary coming in 2026, a bank account for such event had been opened, and with the host for the WTTC Finals 2026 expected to be confirmed at the ITTF Summit in Bangkok, it would be important for the EB to consider some branding and planning to celebrate ITTF’s 100 years.

Mr AL-MOHANNADI queried whether the 100 years celebration and the ITTF Summit should be done together with the WTTC Finals 2026; Mr CALIN indicated that, to date, the competition department had circulated the expressions of interest documents for the WTTC Finals (the sporting event only).

#### 11.8. Others

##### 11.8.1. Propositions and Resolutions for the Council and AGM

<sup>2</sup> Although in the meeting was mentioned “two (2)” the agreement with Mr Carpenter is for three (3) years extension.

Mr CALIN noted that this item on the agenda is planned for the EB meeting on Sunday.

11.8.2. Personal Honorary Members applications

The EB noted that Tunisia and Slovakia had proposed Mr Cherif HAJEM and Mr Zdenko KRIZ respectively to become ITTF Personal Honorary Members. The EB noted that the proposals should go for vetting, and then being put forward for consideration of the ITTF Council which is the body that can present them to the AGM for decision.

11.8.3. ITTF Summit 2023

Ms SÖRLING wished to note that the EB has accepted the bid from Bangkok, Thailand, to host the ITTF Summit 2023 from 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> August at the previous meeting of the EB held online.

**20230522-EB-08**

As per the online decision on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023, the Executive Board agreed that Bangkok, Thailand, will host the ITTF Summit 2023.

11.8.4. ITTF Summit 2025 and 2026

Ms SÖRLING suggested to delay the decision on the host for the ITTF Summit 2025 and 2026 to the congress in Busan 2024.

**20230522-EB-09**

The Executive Board approved to delay the decision for the ITTF Summit 2025 and 2026 to be tabled at the ITTF Summit in Busan 2024.

**12. IOC Member Report**

The EB noted Mr RYU's report. Mr RYU indicated that the IOC International Athlete Forum was confirmed for 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 in Lausanne. Mr RYU expressed his hope for the ITTF AC Co-Chairs to attend this Athletes Forum.

**13. Other Business**

13.1. IMGA report

The EB noted the written report.

13.2. WADA report

The EB noted the written report.

13.3. ASOIF update

The EB noted the verbal report presented by Mr CALIN.

**14. Next Meeting - [To be discussed on the EB meeting on Sunday]**

**15. Adjournment of the first part of the meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023**

Ms SÖRLING thanked all the EB colleagues for their cooperation and looked forward to the second part of the EB meeting on Sunday. The first part of the meeting was adjourned on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 11h57 SAST.

## EB MEETING MINUTES – SECOND PART (Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023)

Attendance on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May:

EB Members:

SÖRLING Petra	President
LIU Guoliang	Deputy President
AL-MOHANNADI Khalil	Senior Executive Vice-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
RYU Seung-Min	IOC Member
LIU Shiwen (via Zoom ®)	Athletes Commission Co-Chair
ACHANTA Sharath Kamal	Athletes Commission Co-Chair

Apologies:

DAINTON Steve ITTF Group CEO

Staff in attendance:

CALIN Raul	ITTF Secretary General
BROWN Michael	ITTF Group CFO (sections 5 and 8)
POUND Matthew	WTT Managing Director (sections 5, 6 and 8)

### 1. Welcome and Opening

#### 1.1. President's opening remarks

Ms SÖRLING welcomed all to the second meeting of the EB, and noted the full attendance of the EB, with the Athletes Commission Co-Chairs in attendance, Mr ACHANTA in person, and Ms LIU online. Ms SÖRLING expressed her regret that Mr DAINTON was still not feeling well and unable to join. Ms SÖRLING noted that since the first part of the EB meeting on Monday 22 May 2023, she has been involved in many meetings and has watched many great table tennis matches which have been attended by great crowds. Ms SÖRLING noted that the meeting of the Continental Council held the day before was also very constructive, and that she felt encouraged and proud of the progress of the organisation.

Ms SÖRLING noted that the EB would continue with the items on the agenda which had not been addressed in the first part of the meeting.

#### 1.2. Welcome words from SATTB

[Please see above, in the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

#### 1.3. Roll Call

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

### 2. Adoption of the Agenda

[Please see above the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

### 3. Minutes of the previous Executive Board (formerly known as the Executive Committee) meeting

#### 3.1. Approval of the Minutes from the last meeting

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

#### 3.2. Business arising from the Minutes

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

#### 4. CEO Report / Strategic Plan

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

#### 5. Operations

##### 5.1. Finances

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr NATRAN to address the EB as the Vice President of Finance.

Mr NATRAN drawn to the EB's attention that the budget of the ITTF was approved at the AGM in 2022. It was noted that the data provided show the ITTF Group figures as a whole. It was further noted that there was an increase in the income of the ITTF Group in part due to the increase in marketing and TV rights. Mr NATRAN also noted the significant increase in expenditure as well, which he deemed to be an issue that should be managed in the forthcoming period, and posited possible financial management techniques that the EB could adopt for the ITTF Group. Mr NATRAN noted that WTT has serious potential investors, and should an investor wish to invest in WTT, there would be a significant income and cashflow for ITTF. Mr NATRAN noted that the EB would be presented the option to increase the credit line with the ITTF's Swiss bank or consider potentially taking loans with commercial banks to manage the ITTF's cash flow in the short and medium term and improve the revenues and business on WTT's side. Mr NATRAN expressed that in line with these financial techniques, it would be important to increase the expenditures of WTT and partly ITTF, to generate a better outcome this year than that approved at the AGM last year. Mr NATRAN summarised and stressed that the final goal is to manage cash flow in the medium and long term, and the final goal is to finance the ITTF's business model and manage expenditures.

##### 5.1.1. Update on 2022 Financial Results and Audit

Following Mr NATRAN's address to the EB, Mr BROWN reported on the current operations across the ITTF Group entities. The EB noted that the audit for the Financial Year 2022 would be presented to the Audit and Finance Committee before being put forward to the ITTF as usual. The EB noted some historical recommendations from auditors that the ITTF Group can look to implement, such as the establishment of a remuneration committee.

Ms SÖRLING noted Mr BROWN's request was already covered and that it is already put before the audit and finance committee to propose recommendations.

Mr BROWN presented the bottom-line total for the ITTF Group, which had improved compared to the previously approved AGM budget. Mr BROWN also presented on the revenues and commented that the ITTF Group is moving in the right direction.

Ms SÖRLING mentioned that during the WTT Champions event in Macau earlier in the year, Mr DAINTON and Ms SÖRLING had discussed and started working on reducing the costs of the ITTF Group. However, due to the WTT in Durban, no actual changes have been made so far to prevent stressing the staff before the ITTF's biggest event. It was noted that this work was highlighted to the EB at the previous meeting of the EB.

Mr BROWN concurred with Ms SÖRLING adding that the team is currently working on this matter the background. Mr BROWN presented an update to the 2023 WTT Budget and the revisions proposed to achieve a more balanced approach. It was noted that such a revised budget has yet to be approved by the WTT Board. Mr BROWN presented an overview of the consolidated finances, updated as of 31 March 2023, and presented a quarter-by-quarter forecast.

##### 5.1.2. Budget 2023 and 2024

Mr BROWN presented the ITTF budget and mentioned that there is work being undertaken with Continental Federations on the Master Continental Agreements which are still in the process of being finalised. Mr BROWN presented four versions of the ITTF budget which were prepared based on different considerations, indicating that the ITTF is relatively on track to achieve the

third version of the budget. Mr BROWN noted that it is still a race against time to achieve the bottom-line balance that ITTF wishes to have to meet its objectives for projects.

Mr BROWN presented the WTT forecast versus the actual and noted that WTT is ahead of its forecast from a budget perspective. It was noted that the reason why the figures are different is due to depreciation and monetisation. It was noted that the annual budget is still on track from a WTT perspective and that the second quarter should be profitable.

The EB was presented with different options, whether the EB wants to continue with higher losses, whether the EB wishes to maintain the AGM-approved budget, or whether to look at further reducing the expenses.

Ms SÖRLING opened the floor for remarks adding that this was a proposal to the EB to (i) approve the budget forecast, (ii) stick to the budget that was approved at the AGM, which would mean that the ITTF would have to work hard to cut costs, or (iii) make a better result bottom-line than what was presented at the AGM.

Dr MESHREF queried for more background on the different versions presented.

Mr BROWN clarified the different versions.

Dr MESHREF noted that the general expenses in WTT are very high and suggested to stick to the AGM approved budget.

Mr BROWN clarified that the ITTF AGM has approved the budget, however the day-to-day operation basis, the EB would be able to approve whether more, or less, should be spent, adding that WTT was tracking against the budget and forecast, and suggesting that WTT is on track and would be able to manage the losses and expectations in the coming quarter.

Dr MESHREF queried why the events in the first quarter were generating losses, while the second quarter is generating income if the same strategy of losses and revenue are being followed. Dr MESHREF further queried how a forecast can be made when there is not a fully confirmed calendar of events.

Mr BROWN indicated that with each event there is a profit and loss, and that the figures take into consideration non-event related aspects as well. It was noted that the forecasts are based on internal projections for the events to take place within the year.

The EB noted that the loss from hosting the Singapore Smash and Dr MESHREF queried whether it was the formula of the Grand Smash and if the losses would be compounded if WTT hosts four Grand Smashes a year, as planned.

Mr BROWN replied that with each event Profit and Loss account, the team would look to stress test. It was noted that there have yet to be four Grand Smashes as planned because currently there would be the potential that there could be compounded losses. It was noted that the Grand Smash, while a marquee event, is still in its nascent stages and it is currently still not easy to get an initial buy-in by broadcasters and sponsors. It was noted that growth requires investment. Mr BROWN highlighted that the Singapore Smash in 2023, was the first Grand Smash properly open to the public with no COVID-19 restrictions. It was further highlighted that in completing the due diligence process for WTT's potential investor where the company has been scrutinised in all areas of the business, no questions or flags were raised into the investment made for the Singapore Smash. Mr BROWN assured that so far, WTT has received primarily positive feedback on the event for now, therefore on the right track with growing and investing in the Grand Smash.

Dr MESHREF reiterated the concern that if Grand Smash events continue to generate a loss as the expenses are high such as the accommodation and the prize money, wondering if there

are other expenses that lead to the loss-making of the event. Dr MESHREF further highlighted that WTT was relying on having four (4) Grand Smashes per year and ranking points, but there have only been one in 2022 and one in 2023 so far, which also translates to losses in the potential for players to earn up to 4000 ranking points. Dr MESHREF further noted that the WRWG should consider extending the validity of the WTT points, so they count for the Olympic Games, since WTT is not providing athletes another chance to improve their world ranking if marquee events with big ranking points are not being held.

Dr MESHREF expressed that the financial issues of the organisation and the lack of a full calendar affects the players and athlete's world rankings, earnings, and schedules, and with WTT being the ITTF's main platform for events, more consideration needs to be put towards improving the finances. Dr MESHREF opined that the ITTF should work towards the budget approved at the AGM, and that it would be even better to have extra money for development aspects of the ITTF, especially since the ITTF has made a significant investment already in WTT.

Dr MESHREF stressed that the current situation cannot be carried on, otherwise, the organisation would be losing more. Dr MESHREF insisted it is important to pay attention to this matter and repeated his recommendation to keep the budget approved at the AGM, ensuring that more funding is put into development and towards core ITTF objectives.

Ms SÖRLING concurred that this was a very important topic to be determined.

Mr SYMONS requested that Mr BROWN go through the issues and the variation between the original AGM approved budget and the current proposed versions.

Mr BROWN noted that from a WTT aspect, the organisation is in line with the AGM-approved budget based on revisions made, whereas from the ITTF side, at this stage, there is higher expenditure on operations instead of projects. Mr BROWN noted that it would be important to manage and streamline the expenses, and it would be a primary decision of the EB to assess whether the current state is following the AGM-approved budget or doing better than AGM approved budget. It is noted that once that decision is made, the ITTF would need to work on how best to enact that forecasted budget. Mr BROWN noted that with each passing day, the ITTF is losing a day to make the necessary changes. Mr BROWN proposed that he would prepare a forecasted budget with what WTT would look like with and without the investment from the potential investor identified.

Ms SÖRLING opined that there is no other way and no alternative, and that the EB would need to take responsible decisions. Ms SÖRLING concurred with Mr BROWN that with each day, the ITTF loses an opportunity to make changes, and that the EB should not decrease the ambitions of the AGM approved budget but should make decisions and do everything that the EB can to reach the ITTF's desired bottom-line or better. Ms SÖRLING stressed that should a cut in expenses be required, it should not be towards the development area. Ms SÖRLING suggested to move in that direction and for the ITTF CEO and CFO to come back on the necessary actions to take. Ms SÖRLING expressed hope that the investor coming in can help WTT.

Mr BROWN noted that the management is looking at the many ways where cuts could be made which would not greatly impact revenues as well, noting for example, that if WTT is cutting expenses which result in a product that does not look nice for broadcast on television, this could impact the delivery of contracted rights and negatively affect the revenues from television broadcast.

Mr NATRAN expressed that the increase in the incomes demonstrates that the current business model is working. Mr NATRAN added that that the best solution would be reducing expenses while ensuring that the product is not harmed and that a high level of quality presentation is made for the events. Mr NATRAN agreed that the CEO has a duty to go into details where expenditures can be cut, but opined that in his view, it is obvious that general and

administrative expenditures should be decreased where it does not harm the business model and the quality that events have reached at this point.

Mr OSHODI requested further clarification from Mr BROWN, noting that the issue on investment and revenue had been raised before. It was noted that the business of WTT is in events, and that the revenues would be TV rights and sponsorships. Mr OSHODI queried that if the investment went through, and the monies were to be applied to event expenditure, what would be left, especially if the event is loss making. Mr OSHODI further questioned whether it was proper governance to revise the AGM's approved budget.

Ms SÖRLING clarified that current proposed options before the EB are not to approve a new budget, but an updated forecast, and that the forecast is how the organisation is doing in relation to the budget. It was noted that the ITTF has taken events in-house with the incorporation of WTT, which means that there is higher income, but also higher costs involved as there are now more staff to work on these events, as opposed to allowing LOCs to host events, but earning less revenue.

After an exhaustive discussion and consideration, the EB approved working in line with Mr BROWN's third proposal and noted that Mr BROWN and Mr DANTON would need to provide regular updates in future meetings of the EB on progress.

#### **20230528-EB-01**

The Executive Board approved Mr BROWN's proposal number 3 for the EB forecast.

##### 5.1.3. Risk Management Project progress update

Mr BROWN presented on cash flow challenges. Depending on the speed of securing an investor Mr BROWN proposed three other primary ways for cash flow to be achieved: (i) line of credit; (ii) loans; and (iii) sale of assets. Mr BROWN noted that the ITTF currently has a line of credit in place, which has been in place for the past 15 years although only utilised seldomly. That line of credit could be increased at no initial cost, but Mr BROWN highlighted that the organisation would have to be mindful of the loan interest that might be incurred. Mr BROWN detailed the proposed terms put forward by the bank for the increase in the line of credit.

Mr BROWN also explained about the possibility of WTT taking out a loan, however noting that Singapore banks are quite regulated and risk adverse to providing a loan to a company whose parent company is not an entity incorporated in Singapore. Mr BROWN also provided an update on the sale of the ITTF's property in Renens which had been put on hold for the time being but was an option for the ITTF to resume the process.

The EB noted a deeper discussion on WTT finances will be held in section 8 of the agenda later in the day in presence of Mr POUND. Mr BROWN noted that the investment would alleviate the cashflow stress WTT is facing at the moment and would cover the short term and medium term cashflow needs not impacting ITTF budgets.

Mr BROWN put before the EB for decision the following: whether the EB agrees to increase Line of Credit with UBS Bank; (ii) agrees to seek loans should they be necessary and (iii) whether the sale of property in Renens should recommence, and for the order of priority to be determined by the EB.

Ms SÖRLING suggested to delegate in the EVP of Finance, Mr NATRAN, Mr DANTON and Mr BROWN the management of the cashflow matters, to make the right choices for the ITTF, and to decide the order of priority.

Ms NATRAN agreed with Ms SÖRLING's proposal and wished to highlight that should a loan be taken, the organisation would have to do this in parallel with exploring expenditure cuts.

The EB agreed on the proposed pathway.

**20230528-EB-02**

The Executive Board appointed Mr NATRAN, Mr DAINTON and Mr BROWN to make executive decisions on behalf of the EB to manage ITTF's cashflow.

Mr BROWN noted that should WTT be unable to obtain an investor soon, the management would look into the adjustments to be made and present a consolidated budget for 2024 without an investor. However, should an investor come in to WTT, all outstanding payments from WTT to ITTF shall be paid off.

Mr RYU noted that he was not an expert in financial matters, but approached this issue from an athlete's perspective, noting the focus on the possible reduction of athlete's prize money from events. Mr RYU noted that the principle of awarding higher prize monies should be kept as the event prize money from WTT, while higher than previous awards of prize money, is still considered low. Mr RYU considered the income of athletes in wanting to ensure that there would be higher prize money awarded.  
Dr AZEVEDO concurred with Mr RYU.

Ms SÖRLING noted that there was still a fair bit to discuss on WTT matters and proposed that item 8 of the agenda be addressed first after the coffee break, before returning to items 5.2 through 5.9 for comment, and then moving on to item 6 on the agenda.

The EB members approved the amendment to the order of the agenda.

5.2. Information and Technology

The EB noted the written report.

5.3. Education

The EB noted the written report.

5.4. HR

Dr AZEVEDO thanked Ms LOURDES, the Human Resources Director, for providing him with the requested access to information on staff working for the organization.

Ms SÖRLING concurred with Dr AZEVEDO and noted that the EB can now access the BambooHR<sup>3</sup> platform to see the staff directory.

Dr MESHREF noted Human Resource priorities and recalled that Mr DAINTON required the EB's approval for some structural revisions of staff. Ms SÖRLING indicated that Mr DAINTON noted this during the Monday meeting of the EB, however he was not in attendance to provide an update.

5.5. Sustainability

The EB noted the written report.

5.6. Communications

The EB noted the written report.

5.7. Protocol

Mr RYU queried whether there was any intent to hire support staff for Lausanne Offices.

Ms SÖRLING indicated that a position had been advertised initially, but the candidates interviewed did not meet the relevant criteria. Currently, with the situation of finances, the organisation was considering the reallocation some existing staff members to support the Lausanne office, and that the process is ongoing.

<sup>3</sup> Bamboo HR ® is the software being used to manage the ITTF Human Resources.



## 5.8. Others

### 5.8.1. Equipment

Dr MESHREF noted a comment he received from a player regarding the table tennis balls used at Youth Events, which the player had opined were not good. Dr MESHREF recalled a similar problem with the ball supplier for WTT senior events last year and requested that the relevant equipment staff at ITTF investigate this matter.

Mr SYMONS as the vice president in charge of Equipment mentioned that a compliance test had been taken and that he would follow up on the results.

Ms SÖRLING concurred with Dr MESHREF and added that at the next EB meeting it should be discussed the issue of equipment for development Activities. It was noted that Member Associations had feedback on the delays in the delivery of equipment. Ms SÖRLING noted that it was embarrassing to see that equipment had been delayed to Member Associations for years in some cases, and while the pandemic had a large part to play for such delay, the ITTF should prioritise to solve this issue and check whether contracts with equipment suppliers would have to be reviewed. Ms SÖRLING noted that she would like to see a report from the relevant staff in charge tabled at the next EB meeting.

### 5.8.2. Home of Table Tennis

Mr MAEHARA provided an update on the Home of Table Tennis project and noted that no other offers have been made since the EB meeting in Singapore. Mr MAEHARA noted that he would provide any further updates at the next EB meeting.

## 6. **Athletes**

Dr MESHREF suggested that Mr POUND stays for the Athletes Commission report, as there might be issues related to WTT.

### 6.1. Athletes Commission Report

Ms SÖRLING invited the Athletes Commission Co-Chairs to present their report.

Mr ACHANTA congratulated the ITTF for successfully organising the WTTTC in Africa, noting that conditions for the practice and competition tables were very good, and athletes could feel the support from spectators. It was further noted that hospitality, transport, and medical services provided were very good. Mr ACHANTA wished to thank the organisers for providing the space and opportunity for the Athletes Commission to host the Players meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, and wished to thank the ITTF and WTT staff for attending and taking the time to dialogue with players.

Mr ACHANTA presented the points for improvement that had been noted from the feedback received from players. Match scheduling at events is a recurring problem which had been brought to the attention of the EB before. Mr ACHANTA proposed the possibility of establishing a working group to facilitate better match scheduling. It was noted that the table tennis balls provided at the WTTTC were of good, top quality which made the quality of matches very good. However, there was a difference in quality of the balls from the Singapore Smash in March and the WTTTC and that there should be some discussion with the equipment manufacturers to ensure that equipment quality for events is consistent for future tournaments. Additionally, it was noted that players would like to know with enough anticipation which balls are to be used at future tournaments and to ensure that all athletes have access to these balls for their practice, noting that some member associations do not have access to the same equipment.

Mr ACHANTA noted issues with the final calendar of events is a recurring complaint. It was noted that players wish to have a finalised calendar of events as soon as possible to organise their schedules and avoid incurring penalties, as well as prepare for the 2024 Olympic Games. It was noted that the players additionally would like to request a period of at least four weeks before the Olympic Games in 2024 to be free of WTT events to allow players to prepare properly. Mr ACHANTA noted that this could be a potential issue for world ranking, however, this period of

preparation would be important for players to bring their best selves and show the best side of table tennis.

Mr ACHANTA suggested that the WR points of the World Championships should be carried forward for the purpose of qualification into the Olympic Games as there are not many top level events (Grand Smashes and Champions) as was planned in the new structure of tournaments, therefore having fewer opportunities for players to collect points.

Mr ACHANTA strongly recommended that wildcard nominations be taken away and all top players are given the chance to play in any level tournaments for the time being in view of the lack of top-level events in the calendar, as this will reduce the advantage of those receiving wild cards.

Mr ACHANTA suggested the World Championships Finals and the Grand Smashes should have 64 seeded players, as currently some second-round matches are easier than some first round matches due to have only 32 players seeded, not being fair, and to play best of seven games, same as in the World Championships.

To conclude Mr ACHANTA suggested the WRWG should review the points awarded at the different rounds of events, particularly after Paris 2024, as currently the first rounds receive very low points, and it makes very hard to catch players ahead in the WR, making the WR not very dynamic.

Ms LIU concurred with Mr ACHANTA, noting that the issues reported were items that the EB could help solve and improve for the players. Ms LIU hoped that the Athletes Commission could get the support of the EB colleagues to solve these problems.

Ms LIU additionally noted that at the meeting of the Continental Council the previous day, Mr LIU had shared the plans for China to host a Youth Training Camp. It was noted that Ms LIU would be facilitating and assisting to coordinate the youth training camp. Ms LIU noted that while her visit to Durban was short, she was thankful to have had the time to discuss the youth training camp with the EB colleagues and had received many good suggestions. Ms LIU looked forward to working with Mr ACHANTA on implementing the EB's suggestions.

Ms SÖRLING thanked and congratulated the Athletes Commission for the work done thus far and wished to express the EB's full support for the work of the Athletes Commission, to improve the conditions for the players as the most important stakeholders of the ITTF. Ms SÖRLING was not opposed to the proposal by Mr ACHANTA to create a working group to better understand match scheduling issues and finding a solution.

Dr MESHREF concurred with Ms SÖRLING in congratulating the AC for the excellent report and noted a previous conversation with Mr ACHANTA wherein a few points of concern were brought up but not addressed in the report of the Athletes Commission.

One about the late publication of the daily schedules in events, as often after 9 pm still the next day schedule is not released.

Other point being the number of seeds in events other than WTTTC Finals and Grand Smashes, i.e., WTT Champions, which have 32 entries, and Contenders or Star Contenders, asking Mr ACHANTA if the number of seeds should be also, in these events, half of the draw.

Mr ACHANTA confirmed that a lot of players have been asking for earlier information on the tournaments schedules, and that as players, they would prefer half of them being seeded, asking what the procedure will be to change the current system.

Mr POUND noted that changes to the seeding procedure would require a change to the WTT rule book which would need to be amended and tabled for approval at the WTT Board. Mr POUND noted that he wished to set up a meeting with the WTT team and the Athletes Commission to

discuss the points brought up by the Athletes Commission report and to work collaboratively on finding a solution.

Dr MESHREF raised the point of the Athletes representative in the WTT Board, adding that probably with that presence many of the current problems could be solved faster.

Dr MESHREF noted that the Athletes Commission has brought up similar points in the past for WTT's decision which have yet to be solved or implemented, such as the seeding, calendar, and scheduling. Dr MESHREF stressed that athletes' requests should be put as the highest priority as players are the ITTF's most important stakeholder, and as the EB, this sentiment would need to be reinforced to ensure that players decisions and requests are translated into real action and not just feedback received with no follow up. Dr MESHREF encouraged his EB colleagues, Deputy President, Mr LIU, and Senior Vice-President, Mr AL-MOHANNADI, on their capacity as WTT Board Members, to look at the requests of the AC hoping that this time WTT take action and hears the athletes' concerns.

Dr MESHREF further asked if the youth training camp planned in China is somehow financed by the World Sports equity.

Mr POUND mentioned that WTT and World Sports are in the final stages of detailing the agreement for the training camp funding.

#### 6.2. Entourage

The EB noted the written report.

#### 6.3. High Performance

The EB noted the written report.

#### 6.4. Table Tennis Sport / Innovation

Ms SÖRLING invited Dr AZEVEDO to present on item 6.4 of the agenda.

The EB noted the report of Dr AZEVEDO about the Olympic Esports Week that will be held in Singapore in June. Ten sports will have Olympic Esport Series official events, and Table Tennis will have an exhibition event. Dr AZEVEDO indicated this is a great opportunity to get positioned on the Esports market.

#### 6.5. Others

##### 6.5.1. Eligibility

##### 6.5.1.1. Refugees

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr CALIN to present on item 6.5.1.1 of the agenda.

The EB noted the report from Mr CALIN about the first IOC recognised Table Tennis Refugee, Mr Mahdi AHMADIAN, originally from Iran, and currently being Refugee in Austria. The Olympic Refugee Foundation (**ORF**), an IOC entity, had contacted the ITTF a few months earlier once the athlete was granted an official refugee status, as confirmed by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

While a generic proposition for the participation of refugees will be put forward for the AGM, the EB was asked to approve exceptionally, as per the provision in the ITTF Constitution, the participation of Mr AHMADIAN, with a "Refugee" status.

The EB approved the proposition as per the recommendation of IOC ORF.

#### **20230528-EB-03**

The Executive Board granted Mr Mahdi AHMADIAN with a special authorisation to compete with Refugee status in international competitions.

#### 6.5.2. Gender Identity and Sex Variations

There were no updates.

### 7. **Events**

#### 7.1. World Title Events

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting on 22 May 2023]

#### 7.2. Olympic and Paralympic Games

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting on 22 May 2023]

#### 7.3. World Ranking

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting on 22 May 2023]

### 8. **World Table Tennis**

#### 8.1. Investment Update

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr POUND to present on the updates of WTT.

Mr POUND updated the EB on the conversations WTT was having with potential investors and the progress.

Mr BROWN provided a finance update and some background to WTT's business plan and noted the importance of driving up revenues. Mr BROWN mentioned that the business plan for WTT is currently being assessed by a "big four" Consulting Firm for the due diligence exercise initiated at the request of a potential investor, with the amount of work for this exercise being extensive.

Mr POUND provided more context for the valuation discussions with the investors and the implementation with the business model of WTT. Mr POUND noted that WTT needs to be focusing on events to meet its objective to grow the market of table tennis. Mr POUND noted that commercial partners should be secured as a priority and then external investment as well for WTT to better sell its product. Mr POUND noted that the investment market is seeing some issues with inflation going up and the knock-on effects of COVID still at play, however WTT has managed to have a few very constructive discussions with over 20 investors, with one being the forerunner identified to invest and a couple of promising discussions with other entities occurring simultaneously. Many of the discussions had with potential investors have been very positive, noting that some were willing to invest a significant amount, however, this would mean that WTT would have to be sold to this investor, which is not what ITTF wants.

Mr POUND provided some background on the current prospect investor, making references to other properties in which the same fund is currently investing. Mr POUND added that WTT intends for the investment to be a long-term one and the potential to use table tennis as a growth tool within the country of the investing firm, to create a better environment and enhance the image of the country. The EB noted that the potential share to be offered and the potential amount to be received for.

The EB noted the next steps and timelines hoping to have a binding offer by the end of July. Mr POUND anticipates that, all going well, the EB would receive the proposed final terms of investment in July or early August for approval.

Mr BROWN provided more background on the due diligence process which the team has been working on for the past 6 weeks and creating a virtual data room with many documents being shared for valuation by the relevant consultants and parties engaged, adding that the prospect investor appears to be sparing no expense with respect to this due diligence exercise into WTT.

Mr POUND presented for decision by the EB and asked for the EB's approval for WTT management to move forward with ongoing conversations with the prospect investor in WTT.

Ms SÖRLING noted that the due diligence exercise was hard work, and noted the timeline for discussion, and that the EB would have to prepare for a potential offer to be tabled before them in August. Ms SÖRLING noted that the decision before the EB was not a binding offer, but a mandate for the WTT management to continue negotiations with the prospect investor.

The EB approved the decision to continue negotiations with the prospect investor.

#### **20230528-EB-04**

The Executive Board approved Mr POUND's request for WTT management to continue investment conversations and negotiations with the prospect investor.

#### **8.2. Calendar**

Mr POUND mentioned that the WTT calendar of events is currently being finalized, with a few outstanding points, and noted that the events calendar is forming up and coming together quite nicely for the second half of the year.

Dr MESHREF wished to highlight that the WTT events Calendar had issues in the past where there was an overlap of events which results in difficulty for players to travel, especially those requiring visas, and did not provide enough time for the players to recuperate and prepare for the next event. This also resulted in players incurring penalties for failing to turn up at events. Dr MESHREF highlighted that this was unfair and that WTT would need to look into the ensuring the calendar is well organized.

Mr POUND noted Dr MESHREF's concern and would work with the team to look into this issue.

Mr ACHANTA asked for an update on the China and Frankfurt Champions events to be held in 2024. Mr POUND noted that these events would be in late October and the start of November, after the Olympic Games.

Mr SYMONS requested for the finance slides as presented earlier by Mr BROWN to be circulated.

#### **9. Development**

[Please see above, the minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

#### **10. ITTF Foundation**

[Please see above, the minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

#### **11. Governance**

##### **11.1. Members**

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

##### **11.2. Continental Council**

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

##### **11.3. Committee Updates**

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

##### **11.4. Working Groups Update**

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

##### **11.5. Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI)**

Ms SÖRLING noted that at the first part of the EB meeting on Monday, it was agreed that Ms KAJEE, the Gender Commissioner, would prepare a proposal to be tabled at this meeting. Ms SÖRLING presented the proposal on behalf of Ms KAJEE with respect to constituting the task force and requested EB approval to proceed.

The EB approved Ms KAJEE's proposal for the task force.

**20230528-EB-05**

The Executive Board approved Ms KAJEE's proposal for the composition and process to establish the GEDI Task Force.

11.6. Integrity/Safe Sport

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

11.7. One Hundred Years

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

11.8. Others

11.8.1. Propositions and Resolutions for the Council and AGM

Mr CALIN was invited to present on this item. Mr CALIN noted three propositions for the EB's approval.

Ms SÖRLING noted that the propositions presented by Mr CALIN were not necessarily for approval by the EB at this meeting, but for the EB to review and revert if having any remarks, the following week offline.

Mr CALIN mentioned that any proposed amendments should be decided on as soon as possible for publication on 22 June 2023.

Mr CALIN noted that the ITTF EB Conflict of Interest policy would also be circulated to the EB for review and approval.

11.8.2. Personal Honorary Members applications

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

11.8.3. ITTF Summit 2023

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

11.8.4. ITTF Summit 2025 and 2026

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

**12. IOC Member Report**

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

**13. Other Business**

13.1. IMGA report

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

13.2. WADA report

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

13.3. ASOIF update

[Please see above, the Minutes of the first part of the meeting, on 22 May 2023]

13.4. Any other business

Ms SÖRLING opened the floor for any other business.

Dr MESHREF wished to bring to the EB's attention a possible Integrity case that would be instigated by Mr VILA, President of ITTF Americas on the alleged interference from ITTF staff on the election of the Continental Presidents.

Mr OSHODI noted that this matter should not be discussed at the EB meeting and that it was hearsay, that this matter should be left for the Integrity Unit to investigate further.

Dr MESHREF further wished to note that he was not happy following a conversation with Mr DAINTON the previous day and felt that he was not treated with respect. Dr MESHREF requested Ms SÖRLING to speak with Mr DAINTON on the matter.

Ms SÖRLING noted that respect and culture is important to the organisation and noted Dr MESHREF's comment.

Mr ACHANTA queried when team ranking, dates, and format, will be decided for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Mr CALIN noted Mr ACHANTA's comment and opined that due to the sensitivity of this matter, the WRWG should make a proposal as soon as possible to the EB or to the Continental Council.

Ms SÖRLING thanked the EB for their input and participation in active discussions and gave the word to Mr LIU, the Deputy President.

Mr LIU thanked all in attendance and wished to draw special attention to the report by the Athletes Commission. Mr LIU alluded to players as being the children of the sport, and that it is the primary job of the EB to take care of its children. Where the players raise requirements and issues, the EB must give special attention, explanation or solve the problem for them. Mr LIU further noted that the governance system has proven to be a hot topic for discussion which cannot be solved in one day, but that it should be on the constant forefront of the EB to look to discuss and resolve. Mr LIU also asked for the management team to ensure respect for the opinion of the EB, and respect of the sport to improve efficiency.

#### **14. Next Meetings**

To be decided at a later date.

#### **15. Adjournment of the second part of the meeting on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27 SAST.

---

Petra SÖRLING  
ITTF President

---

Date

---

Raul CALIN  
ITTF Secretary General

---

Date