

## CONTINENTAL COUNCIL MEETING

Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel, Durban, South Africa  
 Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023 – 09h00 to 12h00 SAST

### MINUTES

CC members in attendance:

SÖRLING Petra	President
LIU Guoliang	Deputy President
AL-MOHANNADI Khalil	Senior Executive Vice-President, ATTU 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
AZEVEDO Alaor	Executive Vice-President
RYU Seung-Min	IOC Member
ACHANTA Sharath Kamal	Athlete's Commission Co-Chair
LIU Shiwen (via Zoom ®)	Athlete's Commission Co-Chair
MOURA Pedro	ETTU Acting President
EL-SALHY Khaled	ATTF President
MOORE Anthony (via Zoom ®)	ITTF-Oceania President
VILA Juan	ITTF Americas President

Staff in attendance:

CALIN Raul	ITTF Secretary General
BESSAH Mounir	ITTF Deputy Secretary General
BROWN Michael	ITTF CFO
ANDERSSON Mikael (via Zoom ®)	ITTF Sports Director

Apologies:

DAINTON Steve	ITTF Group CEO
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#### 1. Welcome from the ITTF President

Ms SÖRLING welcomed the Continental Council ("CC") to Durban, South Africa, and expressed her pleasure to see nearly all in person, with the exception of Ms LIU and Mr MOORE who are joining remotely via Zoom ®. Ms SÖRLING also noted the absence of Mr DAINTON, the CEO, who was ill, and it was recommended that he takes a rest. Ms SÖRLING reflected on the long journey of the ITTF's return to Africa with the World Table Tennis Championships Finals ("WTTC") and expressed her pride for all the work done in preparation for the event, adding that the work is also in progress for the next edition in 2024 in Busan. Ms SÖRLING reflected that while the sentiment in Durban is of pride for what is being accomplished, it does not mean that the ITTF can remain stagnant. The ITTF should seek to improve, readjust and recalibrate. Ms SÖRLING noted that the last meeting of the EB in Singapore in March focused in part on the organisation of the ITTF and improvements to the staff structure. Ms SÖRLING wished to highlight the point in relation to discussions of the Master Continental Agreements ("MCA(s)") that is on the agenda. Ms SÖRLING denoted as a very important matter for the meeting today. Ms SÖRLING concluded her opening remarks with an expression of thanks for the reports submitted by the Continental Presidents and how she looked forward to receiving feedback from

them. Ms SÖRLING invited Mr AL-MOHANNADI to address the CC as the Executive Board ("EB") Vice President in charge.

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

Mr AL-MOHANADDI echoed Ms SÖRLING's opening address and expressed his desire to have constructive discussions on the improvement of relations between the ITTF and each of the Continental Federations, as well as the support for the development aspect of the sport all over the world under the MCAs, which Mr AL-MOHANNADI deemed the most important aspect.

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

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

Ms SÖRLING opened the floor to feedback on the minutes of the previous meeting of the Continental Council held in Amman, which had been circulated to all prior to this meeting.

The CC Members had no comments on the minutes.

### **20230527-CC-01**

The Continental Council approved the Minutes of the CC Meeting held on December 3, 2022, in Amman, Jordan.

### **3.2. Business arising from the Minutes**

Ms SÖRLING highlighted that it is important to discuss the MCAs within the CC, which has been included at item 11 of the Agenda. Ms SÖRLING further pointed to the minutes from the previous meeting wherein it was stated that a working group would be created to facilitate discussions of the MCAs. Since then, it was noted that the EB had been discussing on an ITTF restructure. Ms SÖRLING stressed that for item 11 of the agenda, Mr BROWN, ITTF CFO, and Mr BESSAH, Deputy Secretary General in charge of member relations, have been invited to present an overview of the MCAs, adding that ITTF is in a tight financial situation at the moment.

Dr MESHREF requested that the MCAs be addressed first before the CC reports as the MCAs were a more pressing issue for the CC.

Ms SÖRLING noted Dr MESHREF's comments and was in agreement that the MCAs are a big issue for the meeting, but opined that the reports of the CC had a little more to discuss, which would link to the MCA and that the agenda should be followed in order. Ms SÖRLING suggested to the Continental Presidents to save the parts of their reports relevant to the MCAs for item 11, and when presenting their reports, to focus on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWAT analysis) so that the meeting can move forward smoothly and efficiently.

The CC agreed to follow the agenda in order.

## **4. Continental President Report – Africa**

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr EL-SALHY to address the CC and provide his report. The CC noted the report of Mr EL-SALHY, who expressed his pride in hosting the ITTF in Africa, hoping that everyone shared his sentiment. Mr EL-SALHY stressed that the budget of the MCAs should not be affected by any more reductions, adding that the African Federation requires contribution through the MCA for several areas.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr EL-SALHY for his presentation and asked how Mr EL-SALHY viewed the legacy of the WTTC and the plans forward.

Mr EL-SALHY expressed that the WTTC in Durban received good exposure and expressed his hope that it would be a good sign to the ITTF that Africa is capable and can organise more, bigger world title events if ITTF could provide the same support as it has done for the WTTC in Durban.

Ms SÖRLING agreed with Mr EL-SALHY's comments and noted that neighbouring African countries have expressed how encouraged they feel to have more events following the WTTC and the Contender event held in Durban in January 2023.

#### **5. Continental President Report – Americas**

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr VILA to address the CC and provide his report. The CC noted the report of Mr VILA.

Mr VILA first thanked the warm welcome to Africa, commending the organisation of the WTTC and congratulating SATTB and ITTF Africa.

Mr VILA prefaced his presentation noting that it would be a year of challenges for the Continental Federation of Americas, with two major multi-sport events being held in 2023, the Central American and Caribbean Games in El Salvador and the Pan American Games in Chile. Mr VILA highlighted that these are challenging events to organise but important for the athletes as well as the regional competitions that serve as qualifying events for these Games and the next World Championships and Olympic Games being held in Guyana, Mexico, and Peru.

Mr VILA presented on the ITTF Americas Strategic Plan workshop held in February in Medellin, where leaders of the continent worked on how to achieve financial autonomy.

Mr VILA reflected on the deterioration of the institutional relations between ITTF Americas and the ITTF Administration, which needs, in Mr VILA's opinion, urgent attention.

Mr VILA suggested he would explain more in point 11 of the Agenda.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr VILA for his report.

#### **6. Continental President Report – Asia**

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr AL-MOHANNADI to address the CC and provide his report. The CC noted the report of Mr AL-MOHANNADI.

Mr AL-MOHANNADI highlighted the Asian Cup and ATTU Congress held in Bangkok and updated the CC colleagues on the upcoming events, with the first-ever Asian Veterans Championships to be held in Mongolia in June and the Asian Youth Championships scheduled for the month of July in Doha, Qatar. The EB noted other events in the calendar planned for 2023, and Mr AL-MOHANNADI concluded looking forward to hosting the World Championships 2024 and 2025 in Asia, adding that ATTU is currently working on reforming its Constitution, which should be ready in six months.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr AL-MOHANNADI for his report.

#### **7. Continental President Report – Europe**

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr MOURA, as acting president of the ETTU, to address the CC and provide his report. The CC noted the report of Mr MOURA.

Mr MOURA congratulated SATTB and ATTF for the WTTC being held in Africa.

Mr MOURA updated the CC with the events held in Europe since the previous meeting mentioning that despite the calendar constraints, the different events could be held, particularly the qualification stages for the European Championships, which in turn also serves as qualification for the 2024 WTTC and Olympic Games. Mr MOURA highlighted that players from different continents play in European Club competitions, which makes essential the calendar coordination. Mr MOURA mentioned that for the first time, ETTU is utilising international standards (IFRS) for its auditing, which requires additional work and expenses; however, noting that this aligns with modern good governance standards.

Mr MOURA touched on the ETTU staff updates and the work in progress on implementing ETTU's strategic plan.

Mr MOURA reported that the 2023 and 2024 ETTU calendar is complete with all events allocated and announced, including some confirmed events for 2025.

Mr MOURA mentioned that the ETTU would be working towards implementing IOC's and ITTF's recommendation regarding Russian and Belarusian players, and looked forward to welcoming athlete's back.

To conclude, Mr MOURA referred to the development activities being completed in 2022, and being implemented in 2023 as planned.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr MOURA for his report, and congratulated ETTU for the implementation of IFRS standards for its audits.

#### **8. Continental President Report – Oceania**

Ms SÖRLING invited Mr MOORE to address the CC and provide his report. The CC noted the report of Mr MOORE.

Mr MOORE offered his apologies for being unable to attend in person and reported about a conference he had attended related to the road to Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which noted the challenges for Oceania countries following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr MOORE explained significant issues travelling around the region where flight costs are exorbitant and made matters quite challenging when the Continental Federation contemplates staging events. Mr MOORE referred to the Pacific Games to be held in the Solomon Islands in November and the concern on whether the countries in the region will be able to attend or not.

Mr MOORE highlighted that 95% of the Continental Federation's income comes from the ITTF, and that the Continental Federation is down to one full-time employee, the CEO, adding that ITTF-Oceania is putting more thought into the future of the organisation, its operations in the next 6-12 months, and the structural changes needed to get there, in view of the uncertainties.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr MOORE for his written report and email with suggestions for a better ITTF structure. Ms SÖRLING expressed her commitment to working closely together and reflected on Mr MOORE's concerns about ITTF-Oceania struggling in trying to restart from the pandemic.

Following the presentations by each Continental Federation, Mr OSHODI reflected on the comments from Mr VILA and Mr MOORE on the relationship with the ITTF Management and the ITTF funding, forcing continents to release their staff.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr OSHODI's comment adding that finances is a reoccurring issue and noted that it is clear from ITTF-Oceania's report and ITTF Americas report that there are problems in the relationship between ITTF Administration and the Continental Federations. Ms SÖRLING stressed that the ITTF would need to look into restructuring ITTF Group staff, indicating that work has started; however, due to the WTTC, it was agreed to wait until its completion to avoid any stress before Durban. Ms SÖRLING indicated that this is a very important point and work is underway and that it is important to have the CC's input and valid contribution to be put into this work. Ms SÖRLING expressed her regret that Mr DAINTON cannot attend to give more background.

## **9. Busan 2024 WTTC Finals Qualification Pathway**

Mr CALIN provided a brief introduction about the BoD decision in Budapest 2019 to have 32 Teams in the WTTC Finals, which was amended one year later by the same BoD to have 40 teams. Mr CALIN added on the planned continental championships in September 2023, on the lead to Busan 2024 WTTC Finals and reflected on whether it is feasible at this stage to call for an intercontinental stage, in view of the calendar and the upcoming Multi-Sport Games in September, October, and November. Mr CALIN referred to discussions held with the ITTF Group CEO and the ITTF Group Sports Director, Mr Mikael ANDERSSON, earlier on the week and invited Mr ANDERSSON, to provide a report on the work being made together with the ITTF Technical Commissioner, Graeme IRELAND.

Mr ANDERSSON mentioned that although the intercontinental stage is of great interest, the time aspect and the calendar are issues to consider for the Busan qualification pathway. In view of the financial situation, technical and calendar aspects, perhaps it would be wise to abandon the intercontinental stage this year, suggesting a qualification by world ranking for the remaining teams. Mr ANDERSSON noted that an intercontinental stage would cost around three to four hundred thousand USD, and could eventually be an event poorly attended. Mr ANDERSSON advised, therefore, for a simplified model for this year.

Ms SÖRLING asked when the CC would have to make a decision on this issue.

Mr CALIN noted that a proposition should be made to the ITTF Council meeting in Bangkok, so whatever decision taken can be implemented.

Mr ACHANTA echoed Mr CALIN's comments that finding a spot in the calendar for an intercontinental stage would be a tough task. Mr ACHANTA opined that a selection via world ranking could help in that respect.

Mr ANDERSSON wished to add that if the world team ranking was looked at, there were very few team events, but now there would be more. Mr ANDERSSON anticipated that the world team ranking would come alive and would be better and improve the ranking concept as well. Mr ANDERSSON advised that this should be the first option, also to create a more competitive field for the world championships, which would make for a better broadcast.

Mr EL-SALHY wished to highlight the importance of finalising this matter as early as possible, as the Continental Championships are scheduled in September, and the prospectus and qualification information for Busan should be circulated soon.

Mr OSHODI queried why the decision could not be at the CC meeting.

Mr CALIN clarified that the ITTF Council is the body that needs to decide on the qualification system for the WTTC Finals on the recommendation of the ITTF Technical Commissioner and the Competition Department.

Ms SÖRLING asked whether the recommendation could be agreed upon to be put forward to the ITTF Council for decision, to be done next week.

On a question from Mr MOURA, Mr CALIN clarified that the recommendation would be to use the same qualification options used for the WTTC Finals in Chengdu 2022.

Ms SÖRLING added that the decision is still the ITTF Council, and that the CC would be recommending only.

Mr MOURA opined that the CC's consideration should be that World Championships should be played by the best teams, and the remaining quotas should be decided by world ranking, to ensure that the best teams in the world would be playing the WTTC in Busan.

Mr OSHODI noted that the feeling from the WRWG is that there is a problem with the World Team Rankings (WTR) as there are not enough events, and the rankings would not reflect the reality of where teams are. Mr OSHODI further suggested that a decision should be made unanimously and invited Mr MOURA to reconsider his position.

Dr MESHREF, understanding the rationale behind Mr MOURA's comments, indicated that for the Championships and Olympic Games, the best teams are not the only consideration but that there should be a principle of inclusivity and fairness to all continents. Dr MESHREF noted that the ITTF has gone from a system where everyone was playing to a new model with only 32/40 teams going in, but this should have a mixture of the best teams available but also inclusive of all continents to be present.

Mr MOURA wished to highlight that the CC is discussing a system to replace a part of the qualification system (the intercontinental stage), which was intended to have 24 teams

competing and the best six would qualify, adding that universality is already considered in the already existing quotas for the WTTC Finals.

Mr MOURA added that he understands that the decision would be taken by the majority, and would respect if his suggestion is not taken. However, he felt this would be the fairest way of replacing the abandoned intercontinental stage.

Mr ANDERSSON opined that there is sufficient continental balance, and the only problem would be to find the additional quotas expected to be decided at the intercontinental stage. Furthermore, Mr ANDERSSON added that such continental representation was already secured in the original 32-team system, and the increase to 40 teams came after the universality concept was secured.

Mr MOURA requested to include in the Minutes that understanding the urgency of the matter, with the Continental Championships happening in September 2023 and the WTTC Finals in February 2024, and understanding the position of the CC colleagues, in view of the short period of time available, he would agree to what seems to be the general recommendation to split the six remaining quotas, one per continent, plus the best team from the WTR, as it was made for Chengdu 2022.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr MOURA for his cooperation.

#### 20230527-CC-02

The Continental Council agreed to propose to the ITTF Council to abandon the intercontinental stage for the Busan 2024 WTTC Finals qualification pathway and to select the six remaining teams using the same concept as for Chengdu 2022: one additional quota per continental (5) and the best team in the World Team Ranking.

Action 20230527#01	In charge: SG & Technical Commissioner	Deadline: 2023-07-31
To prepare a proposition for the replacement of the Intercontinental Stage to the ITTF Council.		

### 10. Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

#### 10.1. Format of play

The CC noted that the ITTF Council approved unanimously (via online voting) the format of play for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The CC noted that a similar process should be carried out for the Paralympic Games.

#### 20230527-CC-03

The Continental Council minuted the decision taken via on-line voting on the format of play for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Action 20230527#02	In charge: SG & Technical Commissioner	Deadline: 2023-07-01
To prepare a proposition for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games format of play.		

#### 10.2. Technical Officials selection

Mr CALIN noted that following the decision of the CC in the meeting in December in Amman, when the selection criteria for the Paris 2024 OG and PG ITOs were approved, the selection

panel <sup>1</sup> has been working on elaborating a proposal for the Continental Council that will ensure universality and gender balance. The CC noted that selections are made from candidates presented by their respective Member Associations and that 50% male and 50% female quotas are presented for both Paris 2024 OG and PG Technical Officials' lists.

Dr AZEVEDO requested further clarification on the policy and process of selection and quotas of ITOs.

Ms SÖRLING recommended that Dr AZEVEDO put forward his questions to the selection panel. Mr CALIN addressed the query from Dr AZEVEDO, noting that the draft of the selection policy was presented to the CC in the previous meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2022), and the CC had approved the policy at that meeting.

Ms SÖRLING suggested that following the clarification, the proposed ITO lists will be put forward for approval. The CC approved Ms SÖRLING's proposed next steps.

Action 20230527#03	In charge: SG	Deadline: 2023-06-30
To request the Selection Panel of Paris 2024 ITOs to provide further details to the CC before putting the list of ITOs forward for consideration.		

The CC noted the proposal for the second position as OG Technical Delegate, Freddy ALMENDARIZ (following the appointment of Mr Carlos LEON in December 2022), Jury Chairs for the Olympic Games, Graeme IRELAND, and Paralympic Games, Werner THURY, and Deputy Chairs, Rudolf SPORRER for the OG and WU Sheng Kuang for the PG, and noted that continental representatives would need to be nominated by the Continental Federations.

The CC followed the recommendation and approved the appointments of the second TD for the OG, the Jury Chair and Jury Deputy Chair for the Olympic Games and the Jury Chair and Deputy Chair for the Paralympic Games.

<b>20230527-CC-03</b>	
The Continental Council approved the appointments of the following officials for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games:	
Technical Delegate <sup>2</sup> Olympic Games:	Freddy ALMENDARIZ (ECU)
Jury Chair:	Graeme IRELAND (AUS)
Jury Deputy Chair:	Rudolf SPORRER (AUT)

<b>20230527-CC-04</b>	
The Continental Council approved the appointments of the following officials for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games:	
Jury Chair:	Werner THURY (AUT)
Jury Deputy Chair:	WU Sheng Kuang (TPE)

<sup>1</sup> Tina CROTTA, WTT Para Events & Match Officials Manager, Werner Thury, ITTF URC Chair, and Graeme IRELAND, ITTF Technical Commissioner

<sup>2</sup> Carlos LEON (POR) was already appointed as Technical Delegate in December 2022.



## 11. Master continental agreements

Mr BROWN and Mr BESSAH were invited to the meeting to address the CC regarding the MCAs.

Mr BROWN referred to the ITTF's strategic plan adopted in 2018, which had as one of its key outcomes to have all continental agreements to be combined, hence the introduction of the Master Continental Agreements (MCAs). Mr BROWN referred to the challenges presented in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and showed slides on the historical use of development funds, highlighting that they were underutilised in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Mr BROWN noted several suggestions by the CC for carryover funds over the past years, adding that the concept of carryover funds is challenging to implement and manage practically, and the decision was made not to continue with the carryover system. Mr BROWN presented on the marketing and commercial agreements as well.

Following Mr BROWN's presentation, Dr MESHREF asked about the evolution of funds spent in development, as the figures presented seemed contradictory to those received from the Development Department.

Mr BROWN replied that while the size of the funding available is continuing to grow per year, the dissection is still different, adding that in the past, there were so-called "Olympic allocations", which in current budgets are more properly called "governance grants", and incorporated into the development agreements.

Dr MESHREF asked about the proposed decrease in governance grants, and Mr BROWN mentioned that the governance grants did not exist before 2021.

Dr MESHREF addressed the utilisation of funding and noted that when an increase in funding is shown, there is also an increase in utilisation, but always not being fully utilised. Dr MESHREF queried whether there is something inefficiency in the implementation, as Continental Federations are always in need of funding, adding that perhaps the options available (possible projects) are not what is needed or desired by the Continents, and suggesting that any unspent amounts could be transferred for use on the first three months of the following year.

At that moment, and due to the (negative) body language used by Mr BESSAH, Dr MESHREF interrupted his exposition and referred to the principles of the ITTF, citing ITTF Constitution, highlighting the importance of mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with respect and objectivity, and suggested the ITTF staff (i.e., Mr BESSAH) do not know the ITTF principles. Dr MEHSREF continued citing the ITTF Constitution, suggesting that funds from the ITTF should be applied in the interests of international table tennis.

Dr MESHREF reflected on the fact that the administration is the face of the ITTF, therefore, the face of the EB, and when a Continental Federation president says that the ITTF has a problem with its administration, it is a problem for the EB because the administration is the one that represents the EB and thus, it affects the relationship between the ITTF (EB), the Continental Federations and Member Associations as a result. Dr MESHREF stressed the importance of the Member Associations as they are the core of ITTF and that the ITTF's relationships with Member Associations should be the first priority, reminding that it was the MAs who gave the confidence to the ITTF on the proposed reform of the World Championships.

It was noted that there was not a single decision from the EB to reduce the MCA funding for the continents, but that it was still reduced; instead, in several previous meetings, the EB and Continental Federations have always asked for money to be increased for development. Dr MESHREF further noted that all MCAs should be treated equally and that funding should not be cut to this or that continent just because that particular Continental Federation did not ask for it.

Mr BESSAH expressed his surprise at the comments by Dr MESHREF, noting that the meetings with Continental Federations are conducted with EB members in charge of the Continent involved, and did not recall any negative comments from such meetings. Mr BESSAH further noted that the MCAs were approved at the EB in 2021, and nothing new has been created or done, but that the administration is working in accordance with what was approved by the EB. Mr BESSAH further stressed that no negotiations were made, but it was a discussion with the consideration for the ITTF's available funding and opined that the MCA had reached its objectives better compared with the past.

Mr BESSAH noted that improvement should always be at the forefront regardless and opined that the strategic plan should be reviewed, but that the ITTF is always working to make it better, and through the governance grants, the ITTF is assisting the continents, like in creating websites and providing information. Mr BESSAH noted that while the ITTF is working with the Continental Federations, ultimately, at the AGM, the ITTF reports to the 227 member associations and not to the Continental Federations. Mr BESSAH suggested that all comments received have been positive and that should there be any complaints or problems, they should be addressed any time before and not only at the meetings.

Dr MESHREF replied to Mr BESSAH that the EB can present their thoughts whenever they are deemed fit. Dr MESHREF stressed that funds should not decrease, especially funds for development, as it is part of ITTF's strategy, and noted that the staff are responsible for implementing the strategy. Dr MESHREF further noted an increase in the administrative costs that need to be addressed.

Mr BESSAH indicated that the figures presented by Mr BROWN were overall on the MCAs and not about development specifically, although noting that Dr MESHREF's question and comments on development and the figures Dr MESHREF presented are correct.

Ms SÖRLING added that on a similar question received the day before, she attempted to hold a meeting with Mr DAINTON, but the meeting had not happened due to his illness. Ms SÖRLING noted that the MCA is much more than development and has different facets, but development forms one of the most important aspects of ITTF. Ms SÖRLING stressed that this should be clarified to the EB to make the right decisions.

Mr BROWN noted that it was rightly pointed out that there has been a reduction in development, as mentioned by Dr MESHREF, but that this was a proposal in consideration of the overall ITTF financial situation. Mr BROWN pointed out the need to achieve financial stability and assured that moving forward, he would take note of this situation and ensure a better understanding of the EB strategy so that solutions are found, and the projects on development can be carried.

Ms SÖRLING noted that the most important for the CC is that the money goes out to the activities and noted that the pandemic halted the plans for a much more significant contribution by the ITTF to the continents due to the reform of the WTTC, but the ITTF should come back to its promises. Ms SÖRLING opined that there are other areas to look at to manage the funding, such as cutting expenses and controlling the number of staff, and that this was already addressed at the meetings of the EB in Singapore 2022, Malmö 2022, and Singapore 2023, so asking that this point be minuted for follow up.

Mr MOORE raised the question and comment around the process for the funding and budgeting, explaining that his first conversation about the MCA in 2023 was in September 2022 and then, the next conversation was in April 2023, six-seven months after, and noted that currently the Continental Federation is operating blind in terms of the budget and running the business. Mr MOORE noted that this was the second year in a row where the funding finances are only confirmed in the middle of the year and suggested that it would be good if at quarter four of the precedent year, 65% - 75% of the budget is confirmed so that Continental Federations are better able to plan and strategise.

Mr MOORE expressed understanding that during the year, the budget could change and could be cut, but that at least there should be a longer time to plan, as for now, there is only half a year left to go and a scramble for the second half of the year, with no document signed. Mr MOORE stressed his point that there is a flaw in the process of the budget being developed and would like the EB to take into consideration how to streamline this better, so at least at the start of the fourth quarter of 2023, Continental Federations shall know the budget for 2024 to plan accordingly.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr MOORE for his written reports and comments and asked Mr BROWN to answer the reasons for the delay.

Mr BROWN commented that the ITTF went through a tough period with COVID-19. However, the dissemination of follow-up could be improved with the MCA conversations. Mr BROWN recalls being part of the initial calls in September 2022 for the MCAs and deferred to Mr BESSAH to provide a comment on the context and the conversations.

Mr MOORE interjected that a justification of the timing was unnecessary, just that the system needs improvement.

Mr BESSAH indicated that meetings on the MCA for funding in 2023 were initiated in September 2022, but the delay was due to be pending the confirmation of the budgets by the EB, so the staff were asked to wait for the final available amount to be shared with the Continental Federations, and the confirmation should have been given after the EB meeting in Singapore.

Mr BESSAH agreed that the exact amount should be shared with Continental Federations as early as possible and finalised at least six months before the following year.

Mr VILA expressed his surprise that Mr BESSAH suggested on his first intervention that the relationships with the continents are happy and that agreements have been signed in an agreeable manner, which Mr VILA opined is not true. Mr VILA noted that the yearly remanents

carry over was removed; the World Cadet Challenge was removed; the staff structure of the Regional Director, Competition Manager and Marketing Manager was moved from ITTF Americas to ITTF; the budgets for competitions are being reduced; the budgets for the Hopes activities are being reduced; so, Mr VILA wondered how Continental Federations could be happy.

Mr VILA continued mentioning the equipment packages, so important for the development of the small islands in the Caribbean, the budget for Governance, which is also pushed to be reduced, asking again how the Continents can be happy.

Mr VILA also mentioned the intervention by WTT to try and organise events in countries without approaching the Member Associations or working with entities which are contrary to the ITTF Member Association in that country, such as the case of Colombia or when dates are so limited for Continental Events, that are hard to be scheduled.

Mr VILA further commented on the earlier mentioned institutional relations with the ITTF, particularly when ITTF staff promote candidatures to confront the existing authorities rightfully elected. Mr VILA considered this to be an involution in the institutional aspects.

Mr VILA added that ITTF Americas has no idea about the development plans and what the ITTF is doing for their implementation, suggesting a communication breakdown exists.

Mr VILA then insisted ITTF Americas cannot be happy, and the relations cannot continue this pathway, adding that ITTF staff are to support the Continents, not impose on them, which seems to be the case nowadays, reminding that the ITTF EB is the body choosing the staff and opined that the staff are capable, but not serving in the way that they should. Mr VILA stressed that ITTF Americas is totally unsatisfied. and concluded, indicating that he was sad that Mr DAINTON was not present in the meeting to listen to his concerns and reply to his comments, lamenting his illness because he esteems Mr DAINTON.

Ms SÖRLING noted that notwithstanding Mr DAINTON's absence, the EB is dedicated to improving and listening to the continents and that Mr VILA's remarks are taken very seriously.

Dr MESHREF suggested, noting the argumentation by Mr MOORE, that as the ITTF has a delay in issuing budgets, causing the issues with the utilisation of funds, a decision be taken to allow the budget allocated should roll over at least 3 to 6 months of the following year, to compensate for such delay in issuing the budget for MCAs.

Mr BROWN noted that this proposal, if approved, would be possible but that this would create additional administrative work to manage a carryover fund, and would need to find out how to manage it effectively, hopefully not increasing administrative costs, but possibly in the allocation of resources. Mr BROWN asked to confirm whether the carry over would be for 3 or 6 months.

Ms SÖRLING put forward Dr MESHREF's proposal before the CC, and the CC agreed with Dr MESHREF's proposal.

### 20230527-CC-05

The Continental Council approved the proposal put forward by Dr MESHREF that the unutilised funds allocated in the MCA can be carried over for up to 3 months from 2023 onwards into the following year, and evaluate this measure in the future.

Mr MOURA thanked Dr MESHREF for bringing this discussion to the CC, which shows that the EB is concerned about the Continents, adding that it would be good to get some clarity on the next steps for the 2023 MCAs.

Ms SÖRLING suggested Mr MOURA discuss this timeline with the ITTF staff; however, reminding that in the last meeting, it was agreed to create a Working Group to revisit the MCAs, and what should be done following the meeting.

Action 20230527#04	In charge: President and CEO	Deadline: 2023-08-15
To enforce the creation of the WG on the MCAs.		

## 12. Any other business

Ms SÖRLING opened the floor for any other business.

Mr LIU presented a proposal for a training camp in China, particularly to share the Chinese experience with the rest of the world and help in the development of the younger generation of table tennis players. Mr LIU mentioned that being his first time in Africa, he experienced warm excitement and love for table tennis, adding that both Ms LIU Shiwen and CTTA Secretary General, Mr HE Xiao, were also exchanging ideas with the EB colleagues and MA representatives in Durban about the feasibility of such a camp, and the feedback was very positive.

Mr LIU added that when Ms SÖRLING was invited to Beijing by the Chinese Olympic Committee, she visited the CTTA national training centre and expressed his belief that Ms SÖRLING was impressed.

Mr LIU shared some provisional details of the proposed training camp being hosted in conjunction with ITTF and WTT, a three-week training camp from 18 July to 8 August, open to players between 13-15 years old, and the estimated that the number of participants would be around 100. Mr LIU welcomed suggestions or adjustments to these provisional details, especially to the age group, and that this is just his proposal.

Mr LIU asked the Continental Presidents to send younger generation coaches, as they are the future of the sport.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr LIU and expressed her hope for the training camp to be a yearly event to support the high performance and development plans.

The CC noted the plans for the prize presentations for the last two days of the WTTTC Finals.

Mr EL-SALHY asked in relation to the World Ranking for the Regional Events, feeling that suppressing WR points would be a deterrent for the participation of the players in the regional events. Ms SÖRLING indicated this matter was being dealt with by the WRWG and Mr CALIN

complemented that -in fact- a decision was already taken in the first part of the EB meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May to restore such points for the Regional Events, what will be be communicated following the completion of the WTTC Finals in Durban.

Ms SÖRLING thanked Mr EL-SALHY and the other Presidents of Continental and Regional Associations that wrote to the ITTF as this is a proof that the ITTF is listening, with the matter being solved.

### 13. Adjournement

There being no other business, Ms SÖRLING thanked everyone for the very constructive contributions and the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm SAST.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date