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**WBSC**

WORLD  
**BASEBALL SOFTBALL**  
CONFEDERATION

*Game Time!*

# **Executive Board Extraordinary Meeting**

By videoconference  
7th June 2022

# Minutes

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## WBSC Executive Board Extraordinary Meeting

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By videoconference

7<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**AGENDA**

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Roll call
- 3) Open discussion
- 4) Any other business
- 5) Adjournment

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## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Present (13/13):**

President:	Mr. Riccardo Fraccari
Vice President – Baseball:	Mr. Willi Kaltschmitt
Vice President – Softball:	Ms. Beatrice Allen
Executive VP – Baseball:	Mr. Tom Peng
Executive VP – Softball:	Mr. Craig Cress
Secretary General:	Dato' (Ms.) Beng Choo Low
Treasurer:	Mr. Angelo Vicini
Member At-Large:	Mr. Tommy Velázquez
Member At-Large:	Mr. Ronald Finlay
Member At-Large:	Mr. Paul Seiler
Member At-Large:	Ms. Taeko Utsugi
Athletes' Rep – Softball:	Ms. María José Soto Gil
Athletes' Rep. – Baseball:	Mr. Justin Huber

### **In attendance, also:**

Mr. Michael Schmidt, Executive Director  
 Ms. Akiko Ito, Japanese interpreter  
 Mr. Chris (Chien Fan) Day, Chinese interpreter  
 Ms. Vivien Campos, WBSC interpreter

### **WBSC Staff Members:**

Mr. Marco Ienna (COO)  
 Mr. Richard Baker (Media & Communication)  
 Mr. Victor Isola (Executive Assistant to the President)

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## **1. WELCOME**

- 1.1 President Fraccari called to order this 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 WBSC Executive Board (EB) Extraordinary Meeting at 13:05 (Lausanne time). He welcomed all the attendees and outlined the matters as listed on the Agenda for discussion in this Meeting.

## **2. ROLL CALL**

- 2.1 Secretary General Low completed the Roll Call as per the attendance list above and confirmed that there was a quorum for this Meeting to proceed.

## **3. OPEN DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 President Fraccari started the meeting congratulating Ms. Soto for the recent election to President of the National Olympic Committee of Venezuela (COV); he also mentioned the election to Vice President of the same NOC of Ms. Aracelis León Alvarado, President of the National Federation of Baseball of Venezuela. President Fraccari then informed all executive members of the recent passing of former NPB Commissioner, Mr. Kumazaki, a close personal friend, WBSC Order of Honor awardee, and a great leader in international baseball, having contributed to the success of Premier12, Baseball5 and the inclusion of baseball and softball in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games schedule.
- 3.2 President Fraccari informed that he received a letter (Attachment 1) dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 signed by WBSC Europe, WBSC Oceania, WBSC Americas Softball and mentioned to be also in the name of the majority of their member federations as well as in the name of some National Federations of WBSC Africa. In this letter it is requested that the IV Ordinary Congress be moved for various logistical reasons and related to the pandemic or to be organised in hybrid format. However, after some discussions with the relevant stakeholders, they denied the agreement to send this official letter and reported that there had been manipulations, both by telephone and by official letter. Furthermore, President Fraccari communicated that WBSC Africa celebrated its Extraordinary Congress on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 to modify the Statutes of the organisation and approve the path to lead to new elections of their Executive Committee at the next Ordinary Congress of WBSC Africa to be held in Taipei City on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and there was unanimous approval on both points.
- 3.3 Mr. Schmidt took the floor and presented the details of the letter received by WBSC and the summary sent in advance to all Executive Members (Attachment 2).
- 3.4 President Fraccari added that the letter was sent over a week after the nomination announcement and more than two months after the official call of the in-person WBSC Congress; he also added that the WBSC Office is following the pandemic trend in Taiwan on a daily basis, and this is currently in a deflection of the contagion

curve.

- 3.5 Mr. Kaltschmitt took the floor and said that he considers what is being done by the WBSC Office and the official call of the Congress are correct and right and he confirmed that there are no particular problems with the application for visas as well.
- 3.6 Secretary General Low asked if it is correct that any signatories of the letter can attend the current meeting of the Executive Board and asked the Legal Commission for a clarification.
- 3.7 Mr. Finlay, Chair of the WBSC Legal Commission, said that under the WBSC Statutes, only National Federation members have the right to petition the EB and that Continental Associations have not such right; furthermore, even if Mr. Velázquez is a signatory to the letter, he has the right to participate in the Executive Board meeting as a member of the Executive Board.
- 3.8 Mr. Seiler asked the Legal Commission a confirmation about the legitimacy, and he received such confirmation. He then added and confirmed that WBSC is doing business as per its Statutes and therefore legally and the proposed answer (Attachment 2) to the letter (Attachment 1) responds to all points in a fully sufficient manner.
- 3.9 Mr. Peng pointed out that the letter was signed by people who now deny having granted their signature for this purpose and this is enough grounds to consider the letter (Attachment 1) as null. He also confirmed the visas have been submitted correctly and the Taiwanese authorities are processing them. In addition, the Taiwanese Government is also currently easing its anti-covid measures as the situation is getting better and the Asian continent has planned to organise its congresses in correspondence with the IV WBSC Congress.
- 3.10 Mr. Finlay took the floor to emphasise the importance of this Executive Board to protect its members and thus discharge the Executive Board's duty of care. Moreover, he stressed there have been no elections since 2014 and the National Federations members have the right to have elections; finally, he stated the convening of the Congress has been done in line with the WBSC Statutes. He further stated the importance in the Elections By-Laws of the integrity of the election process and that a hybrid Elective Congress could not presently be supported.
- 3.11 Mr. Vicini agreed to respond as suggested by Mr. Schmidt but stressed the fact that it looks like the letter in question (Attachment 1) is manipulated.
- 3.12 Mr. Velázquez declared that he heard of the letter from his continental executive members and his first reaction was of surprise as he had not consented to such a signature. He reported that there was a meeting of the softball NFs of the Americas



and that only the covid risks and the price of tickets were discussed. He mentioned that the continent moved and cancelled a continental congress in Guatemala due to the pandemic and he added that he had written to Mr. Schmidt several times mentioning the risks of the trip to Taiwan and he pointed out that to his knowledge 10 members of Americas softball are planning to participate out of 30.

- 3.13 President Fraccari underlined the fact that we have received a letter, but we have not received a communication saying that the signature of Mr. Velázquez had not been approved. In addition, 18 members of Americas softball have applied for the visa and that bubble events have very low risks as we have already experienced at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and in many other WBSC events.
- 3.14 Mr. Velázquez specified that there is no opposition to the Congress in Taiwan and that only a consultation was made with the NFs since a congress in Guatemala was cancelled under similar conditions.
- 3.15 Mr. Kaltschmitt specified that in Guatemala the congress was cancelled because the national government asked to do so and instead in Taiwan there is full support for the event. Furthermore, the second important point is that someone has falsified the signature of Mr. Velázquez and asked for clarification on this.
- 3.16 Mr. Velázquez clarified that he is investigating the matter and that he has seen on the letter (attachment 1) a signature with two names that he does not normally use for international signatures and therefore he supposes his signature has been falsely used.
- 3.17 President Fraccari replied that the investigation should not take long and that we have not received any written notification that the signature is not recognised and approved.
- 3.18 Ms. Allen confirmed the African NFs are ready to go to Taiwan for the Congress, but she highlighted the importance of ensuring the legality and integrity of the WBSC.
- 3.19 Mr. Cress thanked Mr. Schmidt for the work done in analysing the letter and preparing a report and possible reply and declared himself in agreement with the document (Attachment 2).
- 3.20 Secretary General Low repeated the WBSC Executive Board has no authority to remove the Congress from Taiwan as it is a decision of the members; furthermore, she added the signatories of this letter do not have the image and interest of the WBSC at heart and therefore she proposed to consider further legal action.
- 3.21 Mr. Finlay made a proposal to be submitted to vote and to follow legal action at the right moment.

- 3.22 Mr. Kaltshmitt expressed his particular thanks to CTBA for organising the Congress and all the work they are doing.

**PROPOSAL:**

As Executive Board to recommend not to change the dates, location and format of the IV WBSC Congress to be held in Taipei City, TPE, on 4-5 July 2022, and to proceed with the in person IV WBSC Congress and Division Meetings in TPE on 4-5 July 2022 as announced and scheduled.

***DECISION***

*The WBSC Executive Board unanimously voted not to change the dates, location of the in-person IV WBSC Congress to be held in Taipei City, TPE, on 4-5 July 2022, and to proceed with the in person IV WBSC Congress and Division Meetings in TPE on 4-5 July 2022 as announced and scheduled.*

**4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 4.1 There was no other matter brought up.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

- 5.1 President Fraccari thanked all who attended the Meeting. He also thanked the WBSC staff and the interpreters for their efforts in ensuring the success of the meeting.
- 5.2 There being no other matters, the Meeting adjourned at 14:00 with a vote of thanks to the Chair. [End]



*These Minutes, originating from the WBSC Executive Board Extraordinary Meeting held by videoconference, on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022, are formally confirmed as correct by:*

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_  
Riccardo Fraccari  
President

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_  
Beng Choo Low  
Secretary General

Dear WBSC Executive Board,

We, the Boards of the Continental Federations for Europe, Oceania, Americas Softball and a number of Member Federations from Africa are writing to you on behalf of a majority of our Member Federations, in our role of representing the interests of our respective continents. Together, we have severe concerns about the arrangements for the WBSC Congress in Taiwan in July. We are collectively requesting that the Congress be relocated to Europe or the USA for the following reasons listed below.

We appreciate the work undertaken by the WBSC Board and staff to organise this Congress and do not underestimate the extent of work involved in this request. However, we are concerned that the effort of the WBSC Members, the safety and health of everyone involved.

Taiwan's restrictions are still extensive – more so than most other possible host countries. Their COVID regulations, visa requirements and the need for WBSC member nations to travel 'on trust' of a visa on arrival are unviable and have the potential for significant error, despite assurances to the contrary. The potential of refusal of entry, and the lasting effects on this of anyone denied entry to their ability to travel, are far too severe to undertake. All of the WBSC members will require visas and we are uncertain if there are any countries that are banned from entry. There still might be a possibility that delegates from many of these countries may need to engage Taiwanese consulates in countries other than their own.

Holding this under the published circumstances may prevent a substantial number of countries from attending the Congress. This is due to:

1. The need to secure visas from the start was an issue and although now we all have received documentation from the WBSC office assuring us an entry visa there still is uncertainty, one which cannot be ignored. This leaves many of us with a concern as to when we will receive entry visas or if there are no visas but an entry list when we arrive at the airport.
2. The high costs of travel. The need to purchase flexible or cancellable air tickets will substantially increase the costs of travel, in many cases doubling the costs. For the majority of the WBSC Members, who receive no financial assistance, this will be problematic and, in many cases, prohibitive. July travel is also likely to be more expensive than travel at other times of the year.
3. The COVID restrictions in Taiwan are still extensive and problematic. It is our understanding that Taiwan is closed to tourism. It is no longer open to visa-free entry from the USA and Europe. Many countries are reporting potential restrictions on their return home from Taiwan. Many have grave concerns for their health. This may additionally call into question several countries' ability to travel. Any assurances of exception or management from Taiwan made now are subject to last minute change and disruption. The risk of an exponential climb in cases is too great to take for an international Congress of this nature. For those countries where travel is longer than 24 hours, they will not be able to provide the necessary COVID test negative within the 24 hour range.

4. The WBSC has a duty of care to its Members and their delegates. Taiwan has been declared high risk domestically and internationally. With the possibility of cases continuing to climb in Taiwan, the decision may put delegates at risk of infection, travel disruption, extensive isolation and quarantine, in Taiwan and potentially on the return from Taiwan. There are no Taiwanese governmental exceptions confirmed as in place to assure delegates that they will not be subject to a seven day quarantine on arrival in the country.

These issues have already caused far too many countries to question their attendance of this Congress, especially without these issues being substantively addressed within a day of the deadline for registration. The arrangements have already caused countries to decide that they are unable to attend and participate in the WBSC Congress and, critically, election. It would be unfortunate that many Federations would be disenfranchised due to avoidable circumstances. In short, these circumstances mentioned could in an extreme case result in the Congress becoming inquorate.

There are many options that can be considered with well-established infrastructure to accommodate up to 400 guests on a short notice such as European countries or the USA. It is our view that the WBSC would also save costs if hosted in one of the European countries these countries due to an overall reduction in travel of the Head office staff that usually assist in running the Congress.

We hope that you will consider this request positively, even if it means postponing the Congress to find a more secure and safe venue as mentioned above. We are willing to assist the WBSC in finding such a venue.

Alternatively, if a venue change is impossible we would ask you to use the specific **Article in the Statutes, Article 13.1 (C)**. The WBSC specifically held an Extraordinary Congress for the inclusion of being able to hold a congress by way of electronic means (Hybrid) due to the COVID situation and would behoove you to actually implement this due to the extraordinary circumstances that have arisen. This would allow any delegate who is unable to attend Taiwan due to COVID restrictions, fear of infection, or visa problems be able to participate remotely.

We also request a guarantee from the WBSC, that any delegate turned away at the Taiwan border be recompensed in full for their travel costs and any subsequent immigration issues, and that there is a dedicated budget allocated to accommodate, look after and repatriate any delegates who fall ill or become caught up in COVID protocols and that a fund is set aside to recompense delegates who have losses due to their own country's regulations for returning travellers from Taiwan.

This matter is crucial and we request a response by return. There will be a meeting of the concerned Members next week to consider our next steps. We hope to hear from you before then. We look forward to a positive response from you which will maximize the probability that a large majority of our Member federations will be more able to join and have their voice heard at the Elections.

Regards,

Kruno Karin  
President  
WBSC Europe

Laurent Cassier & Rex Capil  
Co Presidents  
WBSC Oceania

Tommy Velasquez  
President  
WBSC Americas Softball



**Africa Member Federations**

Benin BBSB Federation  
Baseball Botswana  
Botswana Softball Association  
Ghana BBSB Federation  
Baseball Federation of Kenya  
Softball Federation of Kenya  
Softball South Africa  
South African Baseball Union  
Uganda BBSB Association  
Zambia BBSB Association  
Zimbabwe Baseball Association  
Zimbabwe Softball Association

Michael Schmidt  
*Executive Director*

Pully 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022

*Subject: IV WBSC Congress and Division Meetings.*

Dear WBSC Executive Board Members,

We have received a letter addressed to the WBSC Executive Board (attached and to be referred to as "letter received" from now on) signed on behalf of the Presidents of WBSC Europe, WBSC Oceania and WBSC Americas Softball and some African Federations requesting that the WBSC Congress, scheduled for 4-5 July 2022 in Taiwan, be postponed and/or be relocated to either Europe or the USA.

For this reason, we have called for an urgent meeting of the WBSC Executive on 7 June 2022 to consider all the associated points related to the IV WBSC Congress and Division Meetings and the matters raised in the letter received.

Please find here some considerations regarding this letter received:

**1. Holding the WBSC Elective Congress and Baseball and Softball Biennial Elections.**

- At the last Congress in Sakai City, JPN, on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019, Taipei City (TPE) was awarded the hosting rights for the IV WBSC Congress and Division Meetings
- The WBSC Elective Congress was due to be held in March 2021
- The IV WBSC Congress was then postponed from 2021 to March 2022 with Taipei City (TPE) confirmed as host – both unanimously approved by the member federations.
- It was then deferred from March 2022 to July 2022.
- This Congress has increased importance as an elective Congress, the first for the WBSC since Gaborone in 2014.
- Notices for an in-person Congress were given on March 30, officially called by the Secretary General (with no complaints from any member).
- The Nomination for Election process was announced on April 14 with a deadline to send such nominations by May 14.

- On May 9, the WBSC Executive Director confirmed the location and invited all Members to start organising all their logistic travel details taking into consideration the fluid situation of the pandemic.
- May 14, the Nomination for Election process closed.
- May 18, further information on the logistics of an in-person congress in Taipei City (TPE) were sent (again, with no complaints from any member).
- May 20, the E-visa information (an easy application process with only a passport scan and form to be filled in, which takes only 3 minutes) was sent.
- May 25, nominations were sent to all members taking into consideration the in-person format of the Elective Congress for both WBSC Board and the Divisions' Boards.
- May 30, the WBSC sent a reminder along with a summary outline.
- June 2, the letter received was received after the publication of Nominations

## 2. Requirements of WBSC Statutes

- Statutes require three months' Notice of a WBSC Congress to be given
- Executive Board does not have the power to shorten the period of Notice
- Executive Board does not have the power to relocate the WBSC Congress without giving a further three months' Notice
- It is the Members, not Confederations, that have a right under the Statutes to make representations to the Executive Board
- Meanwhile, a number of Member Federations as well as Continental Board Members (including those mentioned in the letter received dated June 2, 2022) have written to the WBSC stating that those Member Federations/Continental Board Members do not agree with the letter received and are supportive of the Congress proceeding as planned.
- The African members, in their Extraordinary Congress on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, unanimously agreed to have the Elective Congress of WBSC Africa in person in Taipei City (TPE) on 4th July during the WBSC Assembly and Congress.
- Although the Statutes allow a Congress to be held in a hybrid format, the integrity of an Elective Congress (especially this time that the Congress is called to elect the entire WBSC Executive Board and the Divisions' Boards) cannot be guaranteed when in a hybrid format.

## 3. COVID-19 Restrictions and Considerations

- The Quarantine period has been lifted entirely as communicated
- All participants need to do a Covid-19 PCR test in the 48hr before departure time

On arrival in Taiwan:

- Proof of Certificate of full vaccination against Covid-19 (WHO vaccines only)



- Covid-19 Antigen negative test taken upon arrival at the airport (cost covered by the LOC)
- All participants will be in a protected environment (bubble)

During the stay in the “bubble”

- Use of FFP2 face masks
- Restricted areas for participants
- No interaction with individuals outside the bubble
- WHO and many Governments (especially in Europe and the Americas) have encouraged the world to react and make efforts to live in the “New Norm” adopting safe measures
- The WBSC and the LOC, together with the local authorities, are doing everything to make the Congress as safe as possible

Safety First

- The thorough Covid protocols for the Congress members are for the safety of all participants
- Considering some parts of the world, some countries in Europe for example, do not have any Covid safety protocols, these safety protocols have been put in place with the safety of all participants as the No 1 priority.
- These measures have also been successfully implemented at four WBSC tournaments last year as well as at the Olympic Games.

#### **4. Visa Requirements**

- Easy access to an E-visa for all participants by sending a Passport Scan and a form (maximum time duration 3 minutes)
- Speculation regarding visa problems at the border in the letter received lacks any logic or proper concern. The process to obtain a visa is very simple, as described in the point above, and the WBSC and LOC have communicated their availability for any Member who has any potential concerns or issues with this process.
- Over 170 visa applications have already been processed

#### **5. Costs of Travel**

- The WBSC communicated that any kind of ticket can be purchased in an effort to avoid expensive air tickets.
- For example, some federations informed the WBSC that by the end of May the cost of fares from Europe to TPE and return was around EUR 1,100.
- The last congresses held in Tunisia, Botswana and Osaka had similar travel costs or more for which the WBSC received any complaints .

## 6. Costs of Hosting the WBSC Elective Congress and Baseball and Softball Biennial Elections

- The LOC has undertaken a large amount of work, spent money, made bookings and will cover the entire cost of the Congress on their side.
- No other Member Federation (in Europe, the USA or elsewhere) has volunteered to host and/or cover the cost for such.
- Visa restrictions in USA as well as various European countries are a lot more difficult than the agreement the WBSC has managed to confirm with the Taipei authorities (see point 4)
- Many Member Federations have already booked travel and therefore will have related costs for any last-minute changes.

Considering all this, it is recommend to the EB to move on with the organization of the Congress in person in Taipei City on 4 and 5 of July 2022.

Best regards,



Michael Schmidt