



WBSC

WORLD
BASEBALL SOFTBALL
CONFEDERATION

Game Time!

Executive Board 27th Meeting

By videoconference
27th February 2024

Minutes

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AGENDA

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Roll call
- 3) Approval of the Minutes of the WBSC Executive Board Meeting held on 25th November 2023
- 4) Any matters arising from the Minutes
- 5) President's Address
- 6) Case 1 – Mexico
- 7) Case 2 – Uganda
- 8) Case 3 – Association Francophone de Baseball et Softball
- 9) Any other business

ATTENDANCE**Present (13/16):**

President:	Mr. Riccardo Fraccari
Vice President:	Ms. Beatrice Allen
Vice President:	Mr. Luís Mejía
Executive VP – Baseball:	Mr. Jeffrey Koo Jr.
Executive VP – Softball:	Mr. Craig Cress
Secretary General:	Dato' (Ms.) Beng Choo Low
Treasurer:	Mr. Angelo Vicini
Member At-Large:	Mr. Ronald Finlay
Member At-Large:	Mr. Paul Seiler
Member At-Large:	Ms. Taeko Utsugi
Member At-Large:	Mr. Gabriel Waage
Athletes' Rep. – Baseball:	Mr. Randolph Oduber
Athletes' Rep. – Baseball:	Ms. Ayako Rokkaku

Excused:

Vice President:	Mr. Willi Kaltschmitt
Athletes' Rep. – Softball:	Mr. Cole Evans
Athletes' Rep. – Softball:	Ms. Monica Abbott

In attendance, also:

Mr. Michael Schmidt, Executive Director
 Ms. Karen Gaunt, Member of the WBSC Legal Commission
 Mr. Vincenzo La Rocca, Member of the WBSC Legal Commission
 Ms. Akiko Ito, Japanese interpreter
 Mr. Chris (Chien Fan) Day, Chinese interpreter
 Ms. Vivien Campos, WBSC interpreter

WBSC Staff Members:

Mr. Marco Ienna (COO)
 Ms. Carine Esoua (Integrity Unit)
 Mr. Richard Baker (Media & Communications Director)
 Mr. Victor Isola (Executive Assistant to the President)
 Ms. Yoori Jung (Protocol Department)
 Ms. Mara Hidalgo (Apprentice)

1. WELCOME

- 1.1 President Fraccari called to order this 27th February 2024, WBSC Executive Board (EB) Meeting at 14:00 (Lausanne time) (videoconference). 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. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- 3.1 Secretary General Low informed that the Minutes of the 26th WBSC EB meeting held on 25th November 2023 in Pully, Switzerland were sent earlier to all EB Members and the requests for amendments received by the WBSC Office were applied. There were no requests from the EB members at the Meeting for any amendments.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the Minutes of the 26th WBSC Executive Board meeting held on 25th November 2023 in Pully, Switzerland.

DECISION

The WBSC Executive Board unanimously approved the Minutes of the 26th WBSC Executive Board meeting held on 25th November 2023 in Pully, Switzerland.

4. ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 4.1 There were no matters arising brought up.

5. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

- 5.1 President Fraccari provided a brief update on the upcoming Team Europe versus Samurai Japan event. He also highlighted the eBaseball Series Final, scheduled for 9th March at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, featuring finalists from Japan, Chinese Taipei, and the USA. He informed that this final would be live-streamed and that it was the first time a sport federation would hold an eSport final

event in the Lausanne Sports Museum, with the support of the IOC and of the Lausanne Fondation Capitale Olympique, generating excitement among all participants and stakeholders.

- 5.2 He also reminded the EB members of the WBSC's upcoming 10th anniversary celebrations on the 10th of May at the WBSC headquarters in Pully, Switzerland, when WBSC would be holding several events in conjunction with that. Among the many activities, he informed that there would be a meeting for professional leagues, as well as for the athletes' commission and workshops for the staff members, He stated that more details and information will be provided soon.

6. CASE 1 – MEXICO

- 6.1 President Fraccari briefed EB Members of the issue relating to unaccounted funds from 2014 within the National Federation (NF) of Mexico Baseball Federation, which could potentially lead to its de-registration by the relevant Mexico authority, CONADE's (Mexican National Commission for Physical Culture and Sport). He said he was informed that the de-registration of the Mexican federation would pose significant difficulties and challenges, particularly in relation to the participation of Mexican athletes at tournaments and events, both at national and international levels.
- 6.2 President Fraccari said that efforts were made to communicate with the NF President, Mr. Enrique Mayorga and National Olympic Committee (NOC) Mexico President, Ms. María José Alcalá Izguerra, to find a resolution in the matter. He added that in response to IOC directives to protect athletes, there was a proposal for a temporary suspension of the NF until the final decision and resolution were made, but that parties had indicated to him that a resolution may be forthcoming in the next one-two weeks.
- 6.3 The EB Members discussed concerns regarding Mexico's participation and hosting of the coming WBSC 2024 Premier12 and a proposal for the formation of a special task force to look into the matter.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the following:

1. The provisional suspension of the WBSC membership of the National Federation of Mexico Baseball Federation (Federación Mexicana de Béisbol) if there were no satisfactory resolution to the situation therein within two weeks from the date of this meeting.
2. The establishment of a special task force, whose members shall be selected and appointed by President Fraccari to take necessary steps

under the WBSC Statutes to facilitate the participation of the Mexico athletes and team in tournaments and events, both at national and international levels, and for the hosting and organisation of tournaments and events in Mexico, as proposed by Mr. Finlay and seconded by Secretary General Low.

DECISION

The WBSC Executive Board unanimously approved the following:

1. *The provisional suspension of the WBSC membership of the National Federation of Mexico Baseball Federation (Federación Mexicana de Béisbol) if there were no satisfactory resolution to the situation therein within two weeks from the date of this Meeting.*
2. *The appointment of a special task force, whose members shall be selected and appointed by President Fraccari, to take necessary steps under the WBSC Statutes to facilitate the participation of the Mexico athletes and team in tournaments and events, both at national and international levels, and for the hosting and events and for the organisation of tournaments and events in Mexico.*

7. CASE 2 – UGANDA

7.1 The following report by Ms. Esoua from the WBSC Integrity Unit was sent to the EB Members before this Meeting, on the case on the NF of Uganda Baseball & Softball Association (UBASA) and the UBASA President, Mr. Felix Okuye, in relation to the supposed participation of the National Uganda U-15 Women Softball team in the WBSC U-15 Women Softball (WSB) World cup in Tokyo in October 2023:

- **On June 9th, 2023**

The WBSC sent a letter to UBASA with the following content:

- *As stated in my previous letter dated 31 May 2023, Uganda’s invitation to participate at the 2023 U-12 and U-18 Baseball World Cups has been withdrawn [due to the VISA processing deadlines missed]. I must now insist on turning your focus at securing and meeting the requirements for your participation at the U-15 Women’s Softball World Cup. The initial deadlines established and communicated have already passed. In this case, we can extend the deadlines one last time as follows:*
 - *Guarantee and Participation Fees totalling \$7,000 USD paid by 16 June. We can apply the amounts received for U-12 and U-18 BWC if you wish to, which totalled \$5,000 USD. In this case, the remaining balanced to be received by the deadline would be \$2,000 USD.*

- *Proof of passports and roster upload to management system by 23 June for VISA processing.*
 - *Proof of flights purchase by 30 June.*
- **On June 19th, 2023**

A reminder letter was sent by the WBSC to UBASA with the following content:

 - *As of today, the 19 June, WBSC does not have any clarity from your National Federation as there are missing various requirements to confirm your participation in the WBSC U-15 Women's Softball World Cup. Also, please note that you have not complied with the following:*
 - *You have not responded to the previous communication sent on 9 June, which keeps delaying the ongoing process of successfully organizing the Event.*
 - *The newly established deadlines to cover the corresponding fees have passed, which continues your non-cooperation in this regard.*
 - *As you have been informed in previous communications and following the WBSC Regulations, if deadlines are not followed, your spot in the WBSC U-15 Women's Softball World Cup will become a Wild Card.*
- **On June 21st, 2023**

An email was received by the WBSC from Mr. Felix Okuye promising payment of \$2000 by June 23 and passport copies. Mr. Felix Okuye added that before replying to the WBSC regarding the National Team, he needed to consult with the Government Sports Authority.
- **On June 30th, 2023**

An email was sent by the WBSC to Mr. Felix Okuye addressing missing deadlines on the passport copies and lack of communication to inform the WBSC about delays. The WBSC reminded Mr. Felix Okuye of the flight itinerary deadline on that date and set a new deadline of July 3, 2023, for submitting passport copies and proof of flight itineraries (confirmation of the airlines).
- **On July 3rd, 2023**

Mr. Felix Okuye replied to this email as follows:

 - *This is to give you an update of the status of team Uganda, in regard to the passports and the flight itinerary as of today 3rd July 2023. Passports: We have 5 Athlete passports and 4 officials passports as attached in this email. Tomorrow 4th July 2023 we shall be receiving 6 athletes passports with their passport applications and printing numbers attached on this email. 1 passport for an athlete will be ready on 5th July 2023 and the rest will be ready by 7th July 2023. This delay has been beyond our control but on a good note we have managed to have the*

passport process concluded which has been our major problem. Therefore, as of tomorrow 04th July 2023 we shall be in position to begin uploading the roster information. Flight Tickets: We have negotiated a Team package for the air tickets to enable us to get discounted flight tickets and the passports have been holding back but with this breakthrough we shall have the flight tickets confirmed at least by 08th July 2023 with all the passports available which has been the major hindrance. As of today, we are very much more certain of our timelines based on the reality on ground.

- **On July 5th, 2023**

An email was sent by the WBSC to extend the deadline to July 8, 2023. Mr. Felix Okuye replied by sending 6 other passports indicating that 9 passports were still pending.

- **On July 24th, 2023**

Flight confirmations for 15 athletes and officials were sent by Mr. Felix Okuye.

- **On July 25th, 2023**

An email was sent by the WBSC informing Mr. Felix Okuye that the previously established deadline (July 20) for providing the flight information had not been respected and that the flight confirmation provided the day before couldn't be opened because the format was not valid, requesting him to provide a PDF version by the end of the day. Mr. Felix Okuye requested to share the PDF format the next day.

- **On July 26 and 28th, 2023**

Mr. Felix Okuye sent flight tickets.

- **On July 29th, 2023**

The WBSC replied:

- *While we received now additional 6 flight information, which makes it a total of 20 person of your delegation. Nevertheless – I asked you 2 days ago for a clarification of the tickets as the Flights shown are not the flight numbers used to arrive in Tokyo. So, there is more than inconsistency as I mentioned, and we are still waiting for your explanation and reply on this – as you did not answer to my last email. You keep again delaying everything and we are now again at the point that have to withdraw your participation due your way of acting or better said non acting. Meanwhile we were also told by the people running the Visa application in Japan that this flight information is not sufficient to apply for a Visa as there is no flight ET672 arriving in Japan, nor any flight ET673 departure Japan. Those responsible for the visa process mention doubts about the*

correctness of the documents. We need to get your immediate reply on this flight topic and expect this with no further delay.

- **On August 4th, 2023**

The WBSC sent an email regarding the lack of response from Mr. Felix Okuye and warned him of potential withdrawal.

- **On August 11th, 2023**

The WBSC sent an email:

- *Your requirements for participation at the 2023 U-15 Softball World Cups have so far not been fulfilled. You did not respect any given deadline for providing necessary documents for us and the LOC to confirm your participation nor did you provide us with the necessary data and information to start the Visa process for your team or to confirm your participation. You did not even respect the deadlines you proposed yourself to us – the latest that you told us on Monday 7th August to get all answers we had on the flight itineraries on that day – by today, August 11th, you did again not provide any information. The flight information you sent us earlier were, as we told you, not be confirmed by the airline nor your travel agency, which means this are not booked tickets. We are asking you to clarify this situation since over two weeks now, without getting any response from you or your Agency. With this and due to your ongoing lack of cooperation we do not have as of today any confirmed travel documents for your team. Considering the well documented issues listed in my previous communications, to which there has not been any kind of response or advancement, I regret to inform you that your invitation to participate in the 2023 U-15 Softball World Cup will be withdrawn by Monday, August 14th, 12.00pm CEST standard time if you don't provide the information and fully approved documents (ie only Airline approved booking documents) requested earlier.*

- **On August 14th, 2023**

Mr. Felix Okuye replied that he would send proof for the mentioned flights, while on the same day, he was sending an email to a travel agency, telling them that he was searching to book flights tickets.

- **On August 15th, 2023**

Mr. Felix Okuye sent a number of airline tickets (from a different airline: Ethiopian Air).

- **On August 21st, 2023**

Mr. Felix Okuye sent an email to WBSC forwarding the email with the travel agency regarding a confirmation email with a link to online check

and manage booking for the tickets with Turkish Airlines.

- **On August 23rd, 2023**
The WBSC chose to not withdraw the team, as the tickets seemed valid, and no team was ready to replace Uganda.
- **On August 24th, 2023**
Passports were uploaded onto the management system.
- **On August 30th & 31st, 2023**
The WBSC sent an email to inform UBASA in detail regarding the upcoming events. The next day, Mr Felix Okuye replied:
 - *We are pleased to hear from you and excited to be part of this World Cup. Let us look through and share what is needed from us. Whatever is not clear, we shall immediately contact you.*
- **On September 4th, 2023**
The WBSC countersigned the participation agreement, which was signed by Mr. Felix Okuye on March 1st, 2023.
- **On October 18th, 2023**
The WBSC, after inquiring about UBASA and the lack of responses from Mr. Felix Okuye since October 13th, was informed by the airline company that they never boarded on October 18th, 2023.
- **On October 21st & 27th, 2023**
The WBSC requested information from Mr. Felix Okuye concerning the no-show in two emails. An explanation was required by no later than November 3rd. The WBSC informed Mr. Felix Okuye that further steps might be taken, including a hearing and sanctions. Mr. Felix Okuye replied (on the date of the last email):
 - *Thank you for the communication, it's with a lot of pain and regret that we were unable to make it to the U-15 Softball World Cup. I will share a written statement as guided in your email, we are also waiting for a communication from National authorities that supervise us.*
- **On October 23rd, 2023**
The former president of UBASA apologised by email for the no-show of the team and attached a Petition against Mr. Felix Okuye.
- **On November 3rd and 6th, 2023**
An exchange of emails occurred between the WBSC and Mr. Felix Okuye on the 3rd, with Mr. Felix Okuye providing clarifications on the 6th:

- *First, I am sorry for the dates error on the financial topic “In regards to the financial implication of our no show we request you to allow us communicate a proposal by the 15th of October 2023” in my previous email, the month was an error, the date being 15th November 2023, I therefore inform you that I will get back to you on this date in that regards to the financial implication for the no show.*

As you asked in your email “We communicated the implication of our inability to participate which was captured. Team travel became an issue of national social concern all over Uganda and in a way the concern resulting in our popularity as a sport”. We communicated to the authorities here in Uganda the implication of the team not travelling to the world cup and the consequences based on the participation contract we signed which was captured by the authorities. It is upon this that we also request for the date of 15th November 2015 for us to communicate the financial implication proposal as we are making consultations in this regard. As I mentioned “We have a new National Sports law which took effect in September 2023 after the publication with operational guidelines”. I did not say minor aged athletes could not travel; I mentioned about the clearance procedures. We did pursue the clearances which were delayed beyond our control. In regards to the travel documents, we submitted to you and you verified them, it is against these documents that you confirmed our participation after you had carried out back and forth checks.

- **On November 15th, 2023**

There was no communication from Mr. Felix Okuye.

- **On December 1st, 2023**

A hearing convocation was sent to Mr. Felix Okuye.

- **On December 11th and 12th, 2023**

The hearing took place on 11th December 2023, although due to its attitude to evading questions and technical issues, the WBSC Integrity Unit requested Mr. Felix Okuye to provide written answers to the last questions.

7.2 The EB Members were provided beforehand documents including the minutes of the hearing and the case report above. After the brief presentation of the case from the WBSC Integrity Unit, the EB Members discussed, deliberated and decided on the matter, including the sanctions to be imposed on the UBASA and the UBASA President, Mr. Felix Okuye.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve on the following sanctions against the UBASA and the UBASA

President Mr. Felix Okuye, as proposed by the WBSC Integrity Unit.

DECISION

The WBSC Executive Board approved to the following sanctions:

- 1. To send a warning letter to UBASA in relation to the matter, and*
- 2. To impose a 4-year suspension on Mr. Felix Okuye from holding any elective positions within the Executive Board or any equivalent organs of the WBSC or any associated, affiliated, or recognised members.*

8. CASE 3 – ASSOCIATION FRANCOPHONE DE BASEBALL ET SOFTBALL

8.1 As was reported by the WBSC Member Relations Department, President Fraccari informed that the Association Francophone de Baseball et Softball:

- Has not been active in the last few years.
- Has not fulfilled any of its financial obligations and payments due and payable to the WBSC.
- Has failed to conduct its elections.
- Has not responded to the WBSC letters and notices sent to it.
- Has not held any congresses nor meetings.
- Has not provided necessary information nor updates.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the dismissal of the WBSC Associate Membership of the Association Francophone de Baseball et Softball with immediate effect.

DECISION

The WBSC Executive Board unanimously approved the dismissal of the WBSC Associate Membership of the Association Francophone de Baseball et Softball with immediate effect.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 President Fraccari reminded EB Members of the two upcoming events for the year: namely, the eBaseball Series Final on 9th March at the Olympic Museum and the 10th anniversary celebrations on WBSC Day, 10th May 2024 in the WBSC Headquarters in Pully.

- 9.2 President Fraccari thanked all who attended the Meeting. He also thanked the WBSC staff and the interpreter for their efforts in ensuring the success of the meeting.
- 9.3 There being no other matters, the Meeting adjourned at 15:00 with a vote of thanks to the Chair. [End]

These Minutes, originating from the WBSC Executive Board Meeting held by videoconference on 27th February 2023, are formally confirmed as correct by:

Day _____ Month _____ Year _____

City _____

Signed by _____
Riccardo Fraccari
President

Signed by _____
Beng Choo Low
Secretary General