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WBSC

WORLD
BASEBALL SOFTBALL
CONFEDERATION

Game Time!

Executive Board 23rd Meeting

By videoconference
17th November 2022

Minutes

WBSC Executive Board 23rd Meeting

By videoconference

17th November 2022

AGENDA

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Roll call
- 3) Approval of the Minutes of the WBSC Executive Board Meetings held on 3rd and 5th July 2022 in Taipei City, TPE
- 4) Any matters arising from the Minutes
- 5) President's Address
- 6) WBSC Events Report 2022
- 7) Analysis of future Baseball and Softball Events
- 8) Review of the Ethics By-Laws
- 9) Prospective new Members
- 10) Any other business
- 11) Adjournment

ATTENDANCE

Present (10/14):

President:	Mr. Riccardo Fraccari
Vice President:	Mr. Willi Kaltschmitt
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

Excused:

Vice President:	Ms. Beatrice Allen
Vice President:	Mr. Luís Mejía
Athletes' Rep. – Baseball:	Mr. Justin Huber
Athletes' Rep – Softball:	Ms. María José Soto Gil

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)
 Mr. Richard Baker (Media & Communication)
 Mr. Joan García (Event Department)
 Mr. Valerio Cianfoni (Baseball5 & eSports)
 Mr. Victor Isola (Executive Assistant to the President)

1. WELCOME

- 1.1 President Fraccari called to order this 17th November 2022, WBSC Executive Board (EB) Meeting at 13:00 (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 Executive Director Schmidt 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 22nd WBSC EB meeting held on 3rd July 2022, in Taipei City, TPE, and the post-Congress WBSC EB meeting held on 5th July 2022, in Taipei City, TPE, were sent earlier to all EB Members and there was no request for amendments received by the WBSC Office.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the Minutes of the 22nd WBSC Executive Board meeting held on 3rd July 2022, in Taipei City, TPE, as proposed by Mr. Cress and seconded by Mr. Waage.

DECISION

The WBSC Executive Board unanimously approved the Minutes of 22nd WBSC Executive Board meeting held on 3rd July 2022, in Taipei City, TPE.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the Minutes of the post-Congress WBSC Executive Board meeting held on 5th July 2022, in Taipei City, TPE, as proposed by Mr. Cress and seconded by Mr. Waage.

DECISION

The WBSC Executive Board unanimously approved the Minutes of post-Congress WBSC Executive Board meeting held on 5th July 2022, in Taipei City, TPE.

4. ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 4.1 There were no matters arising brought up.

5. **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

5.1 President Fraccari informed that this was the first Executive Board (EB) meeting after last Ordinary Elective Congress held in TPE on 4-5th July 2022. He congratulated again all the elected and appointed members. He informed that to complete the election process for the Executive Board members, WBSC just completed the elections of the Athletes' Representatives under the new approved structure which is a more inclusive and democratic election process to elect who will represent the athletes on the WBSC Executive Board and also in the respective Baseball and Softball Division Boards. He stated that an Extraordinary Congress in writing was called to ratify the election of those Athletes' Representative and the results would be announced on 25th November. The following Athletes' Representatives were put forward for ratification:

- Men's Baseball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Executive Board: Randolph Oduber (NED)
- Women's Baseball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Executive Board: Ayako Rokkaku (JPN)
- Men's Softball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Executive Board: Cole Evans (NZL)
- Women's Softball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Executive Board: Monica Abbott (USA)
- Men's Baseball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Baseball Board: Timothy Atherton (AUS)
- Women's Baseball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Baseball Board: Wing Ki Mui (Vanessa) (HKG)
- Men's Softball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Softball Board: Vaclav Svoboda (CZE)
- Women's Softball Athletes' Representative in WBSC Softball Board: Maria Soto (VEN)

5.2 President Fraccari continued by informing that after the successful delivery of the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, this year (2022) was a very busy year full of tournaments (9 international events); and that next year (2023) would be even busier with 13 international tournaments and institutional events on the WBSC calendar, including the IOC Session that will announce the Final Sport Programme for the Games of LA2028.

5.3 President Fraccari reported on the LA28 campaign and the on-going discussions with the IOC and the LA28 OCOG (Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games) there were going well. He added that Baseball-Softball was on the short list together with other 8 Sports (namely, breakdance, motorsport, squash, karate, kickboxing, flag football, lacrosse and cricket). He informed that WBSC submitted the RFI (Request For Information) to the LA28 OCOG presenting all the requested information and in October (2022) met the latter to present WBSC's proposal; he added that the MLB was also present to support WBSC's candidature and proposal.

- 5.4 Mr. Schmidt reported on a meeting held in Lausanne with LA28 OCOG representatives (as President Fraccari was at that time, attending the Baseball5 World Cup in Mexico City). He explained the meeting went well and that the LA28 representatives expressed satisfaction with the on-going discussions between WBSC and MLB about having Baseball-Softball on the LA28 sport program. To Mr. Seiler's question as to whether the LA28 representatives were in Lausanne only for WBSC, Mr. Schmidt confirmed that WBSC is the only IF of the short-listed sports based in Lausanne. Mr. Seiler added that the cooperation of MLB in the process is paramount and was of high interest for LA28; he said that the MLB owners would soon be involved. Mr. Cress thanked everyone involved in the submission of the documents to LA28 and in the October discussions.
- 5.5 President Fraccari then reported on the ANOC General Assembly held in Seoul, on 18-21 October 2022 that he and the Secretary General attended to represent WBSC; he added that they also met with many IOC members and NOC leaders, KBO and Korea Baseball Softball Association leadership.
- 5.6 He informed of his visit to Saudi Arabia to meet the newly formed WBSC Member, namely Saud Arabia Baseball Softball Federation. He said there are many opportunities there. He said that he also had the opportunity to meet representatives of ARAMCO, the biggest oil company in the world. He said that with a good strategy, there were many opportunities to develop Baseball-Softball in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- 5.7 He reported on the historical first edition of the Baseball5 World Cup in Mexico city that he attended. The tournament was held in one of the most iconic squares of the American Continent there, namely, Zocalo. He added that he could not imagine a better place for celebrating this special event, which was live streamed on WBSC media platforms and channels, and on social media. He informed that since WBSC launched Baseball5 in November 2017 with an event in Cuba, and despite the global Covid-19 pandemic, the sport has grown exponentially and already over 100 countries have had some B5 event, activities, and activations. He reminded that the first edition of the Youth Baseball5 World Cup is expected to take place in 2023 and Baseball5 will also make its debut in the Youth Olympic Games at Dakar 2026. He added that Baseball5 is the first team sport created for mixed-gender competition and with its unique accessibility, it is perceived as an opportunity for many countries with very less resources and where Baseball-Softball has yet to be prominent, such as Africa and Middle East, to be engaged in Baseball5. He said that Baseball5 was recently confirmed on the programme of the 6th Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games (AIMAG) in Bangkok-Chonburi in November 2023 as well as the ANOCA (Association of NOCs in Africa) Beach Games in Tunisia 2024. He said that ANOCA was evaluating the opportunity to have Baseball5 on the official programme of the next edition of the African Youth Games.
- 5.8 He gave some highlights of the 1st Baseball5 World Cup in Mexico city:

- 5.8.1 Twelve teams participated:
- Group A: Cuba, Hong Kong, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, and South Africa
 - Group B: Chinese Taipei, France, Kenya, Korea, Tunisia, and Venezuela
- 5.8.2 The tournament included 50 games, all broadcasted and live-streamed all over the world.
- 5.8.3 There were seven (7) fields-of-play, four (4) of which were open to the public for fan-based engagement with Baseball5.
- 5.8.4 Tunisia was playing in its first ever WBSC World Cup - the 79th nation/territory (the ninth from Africa) to feature in WBSC World Cup history.
- 5.8.5 Total number of athletes was 96.
- 5.8.6 Number of accredited media was 107.
- 5.8.7 Number of spectator seats 4,000 (2,000 each court).
- 5.9 Mr. Kaltschmitt informed that he also attended the Baseball5 World Cup and was impressed by the high standard of the event and competition.. Mr. Vicini also added he noted the event was well organised by the LOC (Local Organizing Committee) and highlighted that Baseball5 allows high level competition from all participating teams.
- 5.10 President Fraccari reported the atmosphere was special and that was demonstrated by its explosive presence in the social media. Mr. Kaltschmitt reminded about the game for influencers that played an important role in the publicising of the event.
- 5.11 Mr. Waage said that the public's interest in Baseball5 could be that games were more evenly contested and therefore more unpredictable.
- 5.12 President Fraccari explained the WBSC proposal for a new agreement with the Continental Associations to allocate funds for development projects to assist Continental Associations (CA) in their growth under the purview of the Development Commission. He added that this new development strategy was presented by him at the WBSC Congress held in Taipei City, TPE (4-5th July 2022).
- 5.12.1 Mr. Vicini informed that the proposal was for 70% of the development funds to be managed through the CAs and 30% directly by WBSC for special projects. He added that the allocation of the funds would not be equal for every CA but would depend on the events and activities carried out by each CA.

- 5.12.2 President Fraccari proposed the EB Members to study and consider the document for the CA development funding before approval.
 - 5.12.3 Mr. Kaltshmitt stressed the importance of monitoring the use of the funds.
 - 5.12.4 Mr. Finlay added the general idea is positive, but that WBSC needed to carefully review the process of approval of the funds and monitor the implementation of the CA project.
 - 5.12.5 Mr. Schmidt explained the project was ready to be implemented but the Executive Board members and CAs still had time to reflect on, and review it. In any event, he added that the CA funding proposal could only be implemented when the WBSC 2023 budget is approved by the Executive Board.
 - 5.12.6 Mr. Day reminded that the Development Commission has CA representatives in the Commission who should be responsible for monitoring.
 - 5.12.7 Mr. Waage appreciated the principle to empower the CAs and highlighted that the process and the monitoring could further support the growth and governance of CAs.
- 5.13 Mr. Ienna reminded the Executive Board members that the first round of governance review of the Continental Associations was completed in 2021 and that the WBSC Integrity Unit was going to start the second round of the review soon. President Fraccari requested that the CA review governance questionnaire be sent to all Board members for their information.

6. WBSC EVENTS REPORT 2022

- 6.1 President Fraccari stated that after two long and difficult years due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, WBSC resumed our physical events and activities with a very busy tournament schedule for 2022 with the implementation of health and safety requirements and protocols. He emphasized the need to reshape the future of the WBSC organisation to embrace and anticipate new trends to guarantee the sustainability of the WBSC and diversify income sources of the WBSC to guarantee our financial self-sustainability.
- 6.2 He added that WBSC has initiated new projects, such as the planning for a Baseball Champions League and the development of our digital assets like the Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT), developing presence on the Metaverse, the increase of our presence in new youth focused social media platforms. Above all, he briefed the Executive Board on the release of our eSports Strategy which is composed of 3 pillars: Mobile Games (BB & SB), Console Games (Konami partnership & OVS) and Virtual Reality (Virtual Cup). He said that for the mobile game, which has per target the mass

participation, WBSC needed the help of all our members to promote it and use the opportunity for all WBSC National Federations (NFs)-Members to have a new source of revenue. He stressed the need for a collective effort by all stakeholders to maximize the potential of that project.

- 6.3 He asked everyone to reflect on the future of WBSC tournaments and on the need to reshape them from many perspectives to make them more attractive to potential organisers by making them more sustainable through reducing costs and attracting sponsors and investors for the benefit of the WBSC and its hosts, and to ensure a balanced and profitable model.
- 6.4 Mr. Cianfoni briefed the Executive Board Members on the eSport strategy. He also reported on the first Virtual World Cup that was played all over the world in recent months with the Newdin's Strikezon system; he said that the finals of that Virtual World Cup would be held in Seoul, South Korea on 27th November 2022. He added that the video game that Konami was developing would be launched in early 2023 and that WBSC would use that to participate in the 2023 Olympic eSports tournament; he said that the target was to create a WBSC eBaseball Series.
- 6.5 Mr. Cress informed that the Softball Division was already holding discussions and meetings to review the WBSC Softball tournaments to make them more cost-effective and sustainable.
- 6.6 Mr. García then presented the documents sent to the Executive Board Members and gave the general overview of the WBSC events 2022 – 2026. He reported on the WBSC events completed in 2022, with the implementation of Covid-19 health and safety protocols. He continued by outlining the WBSC program of the 13 events for 2023(excluding the proposed Baseball Champions League).
- 6.7 Mr. García then explained the classification process at the continental level for the WBSC World Cups and pointed out that the additional efforts would be required to maintain the 2023 international calendar (both World and Continental levels) because of new challenges with the opening of borders and relaxation of health and safety requirements and protocols, such as the cost of flights and international travel and other organizational costs have increased, the visa application and approval process was taking longer.

7. ANALYSIS OF FUTURE BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL EVENTS

- 7.1 Mr. García continued his report on the status of bids for the next WBSC tournaments for Baseball, Softball and Baseball5, with a brief overview of the hosting terms, conditions, requirements and responsibilities.
- 7.2 President Fraccari stressed that the global calendar must be reviewed and finalised to enable the CAs to organise their continental events, tournaments and activities.

- 7.3 Mr. Waage asked about the pending bids for some of the Softball World Cup tournaments, to which Mr. Schmidt answered that the bids were still in the process of being finalised and would be announced later.
- 7.4 President Fraccari pointed out that some recent continental events-world cup qualifiers were poorly organised and this would give a bad image of our sport. He said that it is important that WBSC work with the continents and monitor what they organise and how they do it to always guarantee the best possible and fair competition to the participating teams.
- 7.5 Ms. Low requested a discussion and review of the continental allocations to find a better balance of the representation of the continents in the respective World Cups.

8. REVIEW OF THE ETHICS BY-LAWS

- 8.1 Ms. Low presented the proposed review of the WBSC Ethics By-laws, which was sent earlier to the Executive Board members, for consideration and approval.
- 8.2 Mr. Ienna explained that the proposed changes were to update the WBSC Code of Ethics.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the new WBSC Ethics By-Laws, as proposed by Ms. Low and seconded by Mr. Seiler.

DECISION

The WBSC Executive Board unanimously approved the new WBSC Ethics By-Laws.

9. PROSPECTIVE NEW MEMBERS

- 9.1 Mr. Schmidt informed that there were no applications for new membership or dismissal of membership for the Executive Board's consideration. He said that the WBSC Office was working with several parties on new memberships.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 There was no other matter brought up.

11. ADJOURNMENT

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 There being no other matters, the Meeting adjourned at 14:50 with a vote of thanks to the Chair. [End]

These Minutes, originating from the WBSC Executive Board Meeting held by videoconference on 17th November 2022, are formally confirmed as correct by:

Day _____ Month _____ Year _____

City _____

Signed by _____
Riccardo Fraccari
President

Signed by _____
Beng Choo Low
Secretary General