



International Rafting Federation

Minutes of the 2015 Congress Sukabumi, Indonesia *December 4 and 6*

FIRST SESSION – Dec 4

1. Opening of the Congress

The Congress was chaired and opened by Mr. Joe Willie Jones, the President. As Chair of the Congress, the President reminded the attendees of the formal process under which the Congress functioned, and that a single delegate representing each Member Nation shall be allowed to cast votes and to speak in representation of the views of their Member Nation. He informed the Congress that issues shall be voted on via a show of hands and decided by the majority. He also reminded the attendees that the 2015 Congress will be carried out during the World Rafting Championships and so it was decided to split the Congress into two sessions so that the Congress could be conducted during times that did not conflict with the schedule of WRC activities.

Motion I **A motion was made by the Chair for a roll call to ascertain each countries delegates, and to establish a quorum. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General.**

A roll call of the Congress was made and it was determined that enough delegates were present to establish a quorum. The Congress thereby proceeded with the full authority established under the IRF Bylaws.

Delegates from Member Countries that answered the roll call:
Argentina, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech, Denmark, Great Britain, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa.

Proxy delegates that answered the roll call:
Germany, Nepal and Croatia

Finland was in attendance during the second half of the Congress.

2. Board of Directors in Attendance

Mr. Joe Willie Jones – President and Chair
Ms. Sue Liell-Cock – Secretary General
Mr. Pieter Bekkers - Head of Media and Marketing Committee
Ms. Emilia Begunova – Co-Head Recreation and Conservation Committee
Mr. Rafael Gallo – Co-Head Recreation and Conservation Committee
Mr. Gaspar Goncz – Head of Guide Training and Education Committee
Ms. Deb Cook– Head of Sport and Competition Committee

3. Membership Reports

The Chair recognized Ms. Sue Liell-Cock, the Secretary General, who then reported on the following membership issues:

1) Applications for Membership:

Malaysia – Application for Provisional Member under the advice and approval of the BOD.

Dominican Republic – Application for Provisional Membership under the advice and approval of the BOD.

The Secretary General reported that the BOD has reviewed the applications for IRF Membership by organizations representing rafting in the countries of Malaysia and the Dominican Republic, and has found them to be in order. The BOD therefore requests the Congress to vote to formally accept these organizations into the IRF under Provisional Membership status.

Motion II **A motion was made by the Chair requesting that the Congress vote to accept Malaysia and Dominican Republic for IRF Provisional Membership status. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.**

It was so resolved by the Congress to accept Malaysia and Dominican Republic as IRF Provisional Members.

2) Suspensions of Full Members:

Spain – The Secretary General reported that repeated requests have been made to our member from Spain, *Real Federación Española de Piragüismo* (Spanish Canoe Federation / SCF), to align themselves with the IRF Bylaws (running National Selections as requested by the rafters in the country, mentioning rafting on their website, include the IRF Racing calendar on their events calendar, among other issues). It was further reported that a response was received from the SCF Administration saying they were going to institute these required changes, however many months passed with no action. The Secretary General informed the Congress that a warning was then issued by the IRF BOD to the SCF, stating that SCF membership in the IRF was in danger of suspension due to their inaction, and that the BOD had issued a final deadline for the SCF to act. It was then reported that the SCF apparently chose to ignore this warning, as the deadline passed with no response and no action taken by the SCF.

Due to this inaction, BOD has recommended that the Congress vote to place the *Real Federación Española de Piragüismo* membership in suspension.

Motion III **A motion was made by the Chair requesting that the Congress vote to suspend the *Real Federación Española de Piragüismo* from IRF membership. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.**

It was so resolved by the Congress to suspend the membership of the Real Federación Española de Piragüismo for failing to conform to IRF Bylaws.

3) Warnings to Full Members:

Portugal – The Secretary General reported that repeated requests have been made to our member from Portugal, *Federação Portuguesa de Canoagem* (Portuguese Canoe Federation / PCF), to align themselves with IRF Bylaws. The PCF has reported that they are in the process of changing their statutes and website to include the IRF and rafting.

The Secretary General reported that the BOD then issued a warning to the *PCF* that a final deadline of March 2016 has been established to make these changes or their membership could be suspended. The BOD requests that the Congress vote to ratify these terms of continued membership.

Motion IV A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress vote to accept the terms of continued membership of the *Federação Portuguesa de Canoagem* recommended by the BOD. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.

It was so resolved by the Congress to suspend the membership of the *Federação Portuguesa de Canoagem* if they have not conformed to IRF Bylaws by the March 2016 deadline.

4) Extensions of Provisional Members:

India – Due to political complications and other factors, our Provisional Member from India, *Rafting Federation of India (RFI)*, has not been able to meet its obligations to the IRF to become a Full Member. Conversations with the RFI have given cause for the BOD to believe that these issues will likely be solved within the next year. The BOD asks that the Congress vote to formally approve the extension of Provisional Membership of the RFI.

Motion V A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote to extend the Provisional Membership status of the *Rafting Federation of India* for an additional year. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.

It was so resolved by the Congress to extend the Provisional Membership status of the *Rafting Federation of India* for one year.

4. Report by the President

The President reported on the major accomplishments that had been achieved by the IRF since the 2013 Ordinary Congress, and the direction and objectives of the IRF for the immediate future as detailed in his written report that was distributed to members prior to the Congress.

The President also spoke of the importance of the Congress as the place where the IRF member nations can meet to decide on the future of the IRF, stressing the importance of participation from all IRF members and the BOD if the IRF is to fulfil its objectives and mission.

He mentioned by name the Committee Heads that had done work to achieve IRF goals and gave special recognition to Ms. Sue Liell-Cock for her extraordinary work and dedication, and to the work done by Mr. Pieter Bekkers on many fronts within the IRF.

5. Report by the Secretary

The Secretary General gave a brief summary of the written report that she had distributed to member nations prior to the Congress. She also praised the President for his hard work and dedication to the IRF and gave special thanks to Mr. Pieter Bekkers for his efforts towards organizing the 2015 WRC and securing venue for the 2016 WRC.

Ms. Liell-Cock then proceeded to give a brief summary of the financial reports for the fiscal year 2015 to date, and the budget and financial outlook for 2016 that was also sent out to all members prior to the Congress.

The Chair then asked the delegates if there were any questions or concerns about the financial reports or the proposed 2016 budget. No questions or concerns were voiced.

Motion VI **A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to accept and approve the 2015 Financial Reports and the Budget for 2016. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.**

It was so resolved by the Congress to accept and approve the 2015 Financial Reports and the 2016 Budget.

6. Reports from Heads of Committees

It was stated by the Chair that each member nation had been sent Committee reports prior to the Congress and that delegates had hopefully taken time to read them. As such, it was so moved and agreed by consensus that in the interest of saving time, it was not necessary for the Congress to receive an oral report from the Committee Heads.

7. Discussions and Resolutions on Proposals

Prior to the Congress, the IRF Administration received a total of four (4) formal proposals which were submitted in timeous fashion by IRF Member Nations and the BOD. As per IRF Bylaws, these proposals required discussion and movement by the Congress. The Chair presented each of these proposals to the Congress and recognized the delegates who represented the nations who had submitted these proposals.

PROPOSAL 1 **A Proposal to Accept Various IRF Bylaw Updates and Changes**
proposed by the IRF President and the BOD

1. The Chair impressed upon the Congress the importance of updating the IRF Bylaws, which had not been updated for several years, to meet current conditions in the IRF so that the BOD and Committees can continue to do their work efficiently and effectively. Delegates were reminded that a copy of the proposed updates had been sent to each of the IRF Member Nations prior to the Congress so that they could be examined. The Chair then invited the Congress to discuss, debate or question any of the proposed Bylaw changes.
2. No member chose to speak to the proposal and so the discussion was concluded.

Motion VII A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to accept and approve all of the proposed updates and changes to the IRF Bylaws as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rafael Gallo. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the proposal being approved unanimously.

It was so resolved by the Congress to accept and include all of the proposed changes and updates to the IRF Bylaws.

PROPOSAL 2 A Proposal to Include Hydrospeed & Paralympics in the Bylaws as Objectives of the IRF

proposed by the Italian Rafting Federation (FIRaft)

1. The Chair recognized the delegate from Italy and invited him to present the FIRaft proposal. The invitation was declined and the delegate explained that he was not familiar with the proposal as he had not been briefed on it by the FIRaft administration.
2. The Chair then read the Italian proposal to the Congress in its entirety and invited the Congress to debate and discuss the proposal.

Key points of the Hydrospeed Proposal discussion:

1. Mr. Gaspar Goncz, Head of the GT&E Committee and delegate for Hungary requested to speak and was so recognized. Mr. Goncz explained how the IRF has had a GT&E hydrospeed certification program and a sub-committee established for quite a long time and it has died due to lack of interest. He also said that there are already a few international organisations handling hydrospeed and that organised hydrospeed world championship competitions already existed.
2. Mr. Nick Chater, delegate from New Zealand, requested to speak and was so recognized. Mr. Chater said that hydrospeed activities were included under the umbrella of the NZ Rafting Association and that it worked very well.
3. The Chair spoke and said he was also aware of an International Hydrospeed Federation that has been established and suggested that the IRF should be careful of stepping on the toes of an established federation that is already representing the sport. He expressed concerns about creating conflict with another international organisation rather than working with it. He also stated that at the moment the IRF has a huge amount on its plate in its efforts to grow the sport of rafting, and that adding another separate sport to the IRF's list of concerns is not sensible at this time due to a lack of resources and funding.
4. Mr. Pieter Bekkers, Head of the Media and Marketing Committee and delegate from Netherlands, requested to speak and was so recognized. Mr. Bekkers stated through an interpreter (Mr. Dirk Ladiges) that the IRF is struggling to manage and finance everything it does at the moment with so few members actually assisting with these things.

5. No other members requested to speak so the discussion was concluded.

Motion VIII A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote whether to accept or decline the Hydrospeed proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gasper Goncz. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded. The proposal failed with 2 delegates in favour and the majority against.

It was further stated by the Chair that the IRF administration encourages each of our member federations if they so desire, to include hydrospeed among its activities, and to approach the existing international hydrospeed federation for involvement should they desire to engage in international hydrospeed competitions.

Key points of the Paralympics Proposal discussion:

1. The Chair stated that the reality of getting rafting into the ordinary Olympics is a very long and complicated process and will not likely happen in the immediate future. He agreed with the FIRaft statement that Paralympics could very well be a faster way of getting the IRF involved in Olympic sports. He concluded that he did not see any problem with including Pararafting and Paralympic Competition in the IRF Bylaws.
2. Mr. Rafael Gallo, BOD member and delegate for Costa Rica requested to speak and was so recognized. Mr. Gallo stated that he feels Paralympic rafting should be included in the IRF Bylaws.
3. Mr. Gaspar Goncz requested to speak and was so recognized. Mr. Goncz stated that he felt developing Paralympic Competition in the IRF was a good idea.
4. Ms. Sue Liell-Cock requested to speak and was so recognized. Ms. Liell-Cock stated that recently more people have been talking about taking disabled people rafting so there is definitely an interest there.
5. No other members requested to speak and so the discussion concluded.

Motion IX A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote whether to accept or decline the proposal to include Paralympic rafting in the IRF Bylaws as an IRF objective. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the proposal being approved unanimously.

It was so resolved by the Congress to include Pararafting and Paralympic Competition as an IRF objective in the Bylaws.

PROPOSAL 3 **A Proposal to include Ergometer competition as part of the IRF World Rafting Championships**
proposed by the Serbia Rafting Federation (SRF)

1. Mr. Boris Purjakov, delegate for the SRF was recognized by the Chair and invited to present the Serbia proposal. Mr. Purjakov spoke to the

Congress and gave a brief explanation of how Ergometer competition worked and stated that the SRF would like the IRF to include Ergometer competition at future WRC's.

2. The Chair spoke, explaining to the Congress that Ergometer competition is not mentioned in the IRF Bylaws as a concern or objective of the IRF, therefore the IRF is unable to include Ergometer competition as an officially recognized IRF WRC sport. He also noted that the SRF proposal does not request a change in the Bylaws.
3. Mr. Purjakov requested to respond and was so recognized. Mr. Purjakov stated that Ergometer competition was similar to rafting competition and so should be included as part of rafting competition. He stated that an SRF sponsored Ergometer competition was held alongside the 2015 ERC and that the SRF considered it successful, and the SRF would like to see similar competitions included in the WRC.
4. The Chair spoke and again explained that if the objective of the SRF proposal is to include Ergometer competition as an official IRF activity in future World Rafting Champs, that this was not possible unless the IRF Bylaws were changed. The Chair noted that the IRF has very clearly defined 'Rafting' in the IRF Bylaws and that the use of Ergometer exercise machines and Ergometer competitions do not conform to this definition. The Chair noted that the SRF proposal would need to specifically propose a change in the Bylaws to include Ergometer competition as an IRF objective. IRF members could then evaluate how such a change in the Bylaws would affect the interests and objectives of the IRF and thus send their delegates to the Congress properly informed and prepared to vote for or against the proposal.
5. Mr. Purjakov requested to respond and was so recognized. Mr. Purjakov then clarified, with the help of an interpreter (Mr. Goran Lolic) that the SRF does not desire to change the IRF Bylaws to officially include Ergometers, but that the SRF proposal is only for the IRF to include an Ergometer World Championship to be run at the same time as the IRF World Rafting Championships.
6. The Chair spoke and pointed out to Mr. Purjakov that that since Ergometer competition was outside of the interests and objectives of the IRF, it cannot insist that WRC organizers fund and organize this activity. It would instead be something that each WRC organiser would need to independently decide, as each WRC organizer is free to choose which extracurricular entertainment or activities they include during the WRC. He further stated that the IRF administration would have no objection to WRC organizers including Ergometer competitions as a side event as long as the WRC was not negatively impacted. He then encouraged Mr. Purjakov to speak directly to the hosts of the two upcoming WRC's – Wadi Adventures and Japan – both who had representatives at the meeting, and discuss this possibility.
7. Mr. Purjakov had no further comments and no other members requested to speak and so the discussion was concluded.

The First Session of the 2015 IRF Congress was adjourned by the Chair with pending business to be carried forward to the Second Session.

SECOND SESSION – Dec 6

The Second Session of the 2015 Congress was called to order by the Chair. The Congress was informed that the quorum established during the First Session was still in effect and that the Congress would proceed under the full authority given to it under the IRF Bylaws.

The Chair then called for a discussion on the remaining proposal carried forward from the First Session.

PROPOSAL 4 Proposal to Reinstate the U23 Division (or create a U21 Division)

proposed by the Union of Boaters of Czech Republic (SVCR)

1. Mr. Martin Procházka, delegate for the SVCR, was recognized by the Chair and invited to present the Czech Republic proposal. Mr. Procházka read the proposal and explained their reasoning in wanting to see either the U23 Division re-established, or a U21 Division created to replace U19. Mr. Procházka stated that the SVCR believed that there was too large of a gap between the U19 and the Open Division, and that as a result youth are abandoning the sport because there is no incentive to stay involved while they develop the skills and physical ability necessary to become competitive in the Open Division.
2. The Chair invited the Congress to discuss and debate the Czech proposal.
3. Mr. Pieter Bekkers requested to speak and was recognized. Mr. Bekkers (speaking through his interpreter Mr. Dirk Ladiges) stated that the Netherlands agrees with the Czech proposal and that the U23 Division should be reinstated.
4. Mr. Nick Chater, delegate from New Zealand requested to speak and was recognized. Mr. Chater stated that New Zealand agrees with the Czech proposal and the importance of having two youth Divisions. He also stated that if it has to only be one, then it should be a U21 Division.
5. Mr. Takuya Ikeda, the delegate from Japan requested to speak and was recognized. Mr. Ikeda explained that in Japan they have developed a University league with about 60 teams, and that eliminating the U23 Division has been devastating for this league. Mr. Ikeda also stated that they find it very hard to create U19 teams as it is harder to get parental consent and funding for the extra persons required to accompany underage youth while traveling to competitions.
6. The Chair then spoke, reviewing the history of the 2014 Congress decision to eliminate the U23 Division, reminding the delegates that event organisers had complained that four age Divisions were too much to handle, Judges had complained that the events had become too long for them to attend, and that many national federations had complained that four age Divisions were too much to maintain and fund. The Chair also reminded the delegates that the primary objective behind creating

the U19 Division was to encourage youth into rafting at as young an age as possible, therefore, replacing the U19 Division with a U21 Division would utterly defeat this objective.

7. The Secretary General requested to speak was recognized. Ms. Liell-Cock stated that a number of countries that had voted to eliminate the U23 Division during the 2104 Congress have since contacted the IRF and stated that they had changed their opinion as they have experienced the same problem that Mr. Procházka described.
8. The Chair spoke and suggested to Mr. Procházka and the Congress that rather than voting to change the IRF Youth and Junior Divisions yet again, a better course of action might be to establish a fact-finding body to deeply investigate all sides of the issue and present the study's conclusions to Congress in order that Congress is able to make an informed decision as to what course of action the IRF should pursue for the long term.

The Chair also reminded the Congress that regardless of what they may vote, the organizers for the 2016 and 2017 WRC's had already signed contracts with the IRF that did not include obligations to host a U23 Division competition. He suggested that as temporary solution that the IRF administration can officially request Wadi Adventures (host for the 2016 WRC) and Japan (host for the 2017 WRC) to include U23.

9. Mr. Procházka requested to respond and was recognized. Mr. Procházka stated that the SVCR wished to stay with their original proposal to request that the Congress vote to immediately reinstate the U23 Division rather than investigate the issue further.
10. The Chair spoke and pointed out that it was unwise for Congress to reverse its 2014 decision so soon, as chopping and changing age Divisions every year is not good for the sport and makes it extremely difficult for event organizers and national federations to make plans with any amount of certainty. The Chair then suggested that if Congress does vote to re-instate the U23 Division, it should also resolve not to revisit this decision for at least four (4) years. There was a general voice of agreement by the Congress to this statement.
11. No other members requested to speak and so the discussion concluded.

Motion X

A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote to accept or decline the Czech proposal to reinstate the U23 Division. The motion was seconded by Mr. Procházka. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the majority approving the proposal.

It was so resolved by the Congress to immediately reinstate the U23 Division.

Motion XI

A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote keep the U19 and U23 Divisions intact for a minimum of four (4) years without further age changes. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the proposal being approved unanimously.

It was so resolved by the Congress that the U19 and U23 Divisions shall

be kept intact for a minimum of four (4) years without further age changes.

Motion XII A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote to direct the IRF Administration to send an official letter to Wadi Adventures and the Japan Rafting Federation requesting that they include the U23 Division in their WRC events. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the motion being approved unanimously.

It was so resolved by the Congress that the IRF Administration is directed to officially request that the hosts of the 2016 and 2017 WRC's include the U23 Division.

8. Election of IRF Officers and Committee Heads

The Secretary General reported to the Congress the individuals who had put their names forward as candidates for election as the Officers and Committee Heads which form the IRF Board of Directors.

1. It was made known that:
 - a. All five (5) current Officers of the IRF would stand for re-election.
 - b. Five (5) of the current Committee Heads were standing for re-election as Head of their former Committee or are standing for election as Head of a different Committee.
 - c. Mr. Kianoosh Mehrabi from the Iran Rafting Federation was standing for election as Co-Head of the Recreation and Conservation Committee.
 - d. These eleven (11) candidates would fill all available positions, and no position had more than one candidate seeking the post.
2. The Secretary General then read the list of BOD positions available and the candidates for each position:

OFFICER CANDIDATES

- President: Joe Willie Jones.
- 1st Vice President: Peter Micheler
- for 2nd Vice President: Oleg Grigoriev
- Secretary General: Sue Liell-Cock
- Treasurer/ Development: Alex Pastir

COMMITTEE HEAD CANDIDATES

- Sport & Competition: Head - Pieter Bekkers
 - Guide Training & Education: Head - Gaspar Goncz
 - International Relations: Head - Rafael Gallo
 - Media & Marketing: Head - Deb Cook
 - Recreation & Conservation:
 1. Co.Head - Emilia Begunova
 2. Co-Head - Kianoosh Mehrabi
3. The Chair stated that since there were no opposing candidates, in the interest of saving time, the election could proceed as a single vote, with the Congress voting to accept or decline all candidates for the post that they were seeking.

Motion XIII A motion was made by the Chair requesting the Congress to vote to elect all candidates to the positions they were seeking. The motion was seconded by the Secretary General. A vote was taken by the Congress and recorded with the motion being accepted unanimously.

It was so resolved by the Congress that all candidates for the Board of Directors are hereby elected to their respective positions.

9. Committee Member Appointments

The Chair recognized the Secretary General who then requested that all member nations who desired representation on one or more Committees to please contact the IRF Administration so that their representative could be considered for appointment.

The Committees are:

- International Relations
- Recreation & Conservation
- Media & Marketing
- Sport & Competition

10. Additional Business

1. The Chair addressed the Congress and asked if there was any pending business that a delegate wished to bring forward for discussion.
2. Mr. Rafael Gallo requested to speak and was recognized. Mr. Gallo spoke the need of all aspects of rafting to be active in the IRF, not only racing. He said he would be working closely with the Recreational Rafting & Conservation and Media & Marketing Heads so as to spread the word of the IRF further as well as take various aspects along this line further.
3. Mr. Eric Boudreau, Head of the Judge's Committee and the delegate from Canada requested to speak and was recognized. Mr. Boudreau spoke about Judging at events and said there is an increasing demand for a higher quality of judges and judging at A and B level events from competitors and nations. He further stated that, as there is no funding for this, the IRF is reliant on whichever Judges can afford to pay for their own travel expenses and can afford the time to attend events rather than the IRF having the luxury of choosing the best Judges for the job. Mr. Boudreau mentioned that the IRF is often short of judges, and that if the IRF is going to improve upon this situation, we must look at asking a Judge's fee from each team which can then go towards covering the expenses necessary to ensure that a sufficient number of well trained, top rated Judges are present at every WRC.
4. Mr. Tim Marshall, Race Director for the 2013 WRC asked to speak and was recognized. Mr. Marshall added to Mr. Boudreau's statement by saying that the quality of judges and judging is very important towards an event's success, and that it is crucial to improve upon the current situation if the IRF is ensure high quality events.

5. The Chair spoke about the IRF not being a rich organisation and that we are always needing extra funding to ensure the growth of the sport and to improve the quality of our events and judging. He then invited attendees with ideas on increasing funding to bring their ideas forward and help to realise them.
6. Mr. Gaspar Goncz requested to speak and was recognized. Mr. Goncz encouraged attendees to get more involved with the Guide Training & Education aspect of the IRF and to ensure that their countries were instating the GT&E scheme. Mr. Goncz informed the Congress that the GT&E scheme was rapidly growing and had become the recognised international standard for guide training and certification. He also encouraged people to get involved in all of the other committees in the IRF.
7. Mr. Kianoosh Merabi, delegate for Iran, requested to speak and was recognized. Mr. Merabi spoke about the importance of the newly developed IRF 'Best Practices' scheme for river tour operators and how it can help IRF as well as all of its members. He encouraged all Member Nations to get involved in this aspect.

11. Closing of the Congress

1. With no further business for the Congress to discuss, the Chair thanked all delegates and BOD members in attendance for their interest and participation, and wished their respective countries success in the WRC.
2. The Chair adjourned the Second Session and closed the 2015 IRF Congress.