



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES ÉCHECS

Recognized by the International Olympic Committee

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Lausanne, 31 January 2001

To All members of the Executive Board

To All National Federations

Dear Friends:

It has become necessary for me to issue this statement in the face of the misunderstanding, which has arisen following the Presidential Board's decisions in respect of the use of the Continental Championship as basis for qualification for the World Chess Championship as well as the new time control for FIDE events. I am in touch with the President as well as FIDE Deputy President Georgios Makropoulos, who met over the weekend in Athens with World Championship Cycle Committee Chairman Willy Iclicki on some of the issues of concern.

I would like to begin by stating that there has clearly been a misunderstanding. I have taken time to go through the tapes of the General Assembly meeting in Istanbul as well as the resolutions of the Presidential Board, the initial Press release after the Tehran Board meeting as well as the clarification of some of the issues raised in the Press release, which was contained in our circular letter of 4 January 2001.

The extract of the tape recording of the Minutes clearly shows that it was the true intention of the General Assembly that the final decision regarding the matter of the new time control and the World Championship be dealt with at the Presidential Board. Delegates would also kindly recall that this precedent is nothing new and that our Statutes allow it. Permit me to recall that the final decision on the Regulations for the World Championship, which was applied in Groningen/Lausanne, in 1997/98, was reached after the General Assembly meeting in Yerevan in 1996 delegated this matter to the Presidential Board and there are many more instances where the General Assembly has mandated the Board or in some cases, the President, to act on its behalf in very complex situations. Let me also state that having specifically delegated the issue of time control and the World Championship to the Presidential Board, the input of the Qualification Commission or any of its constituent parts or where applicable, the World Championship Cycle Committee, can only be secondary to that of the Presidential Board now, acting in the name of the General Assembly.

With specific reference to the time control issue, it was clear on the 12th of November in Istanbul, that a poll amongst the players at the Olympiad had not been taken and could not have been taken, given the circumstances and share logistics of having a

reliable poll in Istanbul with the little time left. What then could have been more representative than the decision to take a sampling from the cream of our top professional male and female players, who were present in New Delhi for the World Chess Championships. Out of the 159 players polled, 135 players returned their questionnaires. The sampling produced the following result: 61 to 42 in favour of a reduced time control. 32 were non-committal. As we clarified in our circular letter of 4 January 2001, the Presidential Board merely lowered the time barrier to make it possible for these lower time limits to be used for title and rating purposes as well.

In arriving at its decision, the following technical experts were present at the two sessions of the Board meeting in New Delhi and Tehran:

Mr. Willy Iclicki, Chairman of the World Championship Cycle Committee, Mr. Casto Abundo, Rating Administrator, Mr. Geurt Gijssen, Chairman of the Rules Committee, GM Valery Salov, President of the World Players' Council, GM Zurab Azmaiparashvil. The Board members present were as follows:

FIDE President K. Ilyumzhinov, Honorary President F. Campomanes, Deputy President G. Makropoulos, Vice President P.T. Ummer Koya, General Secretary N. Tabbane, Treasurer D. Jarrett, Continental President B. Kutin, Continental President L. Mazouz.

I am in a position to say that all the issues were thoroughly debated at the two sessions of the Board in New Delhi and Tehran before the Board reached its decision. This was apart from various meetings at Committee levels chaired at different times, by the President and Deputy President. In keeping with our Statutes, and where communication allowed, contact was established with some of the Board members by fax or telephone for their input, when the matter was being debated especially at the Tehran stage.

Let me now address the issue of the Status of the Zones. As I stated in my earlier note, the Zonal structure shall continue to be maintained as the bedrock of our chess development effort. They shall continue to be used for purposes of titles and ratings as contained in the Handbook. But as was clear from our discussions in Istanbul, the Continental Championships for commercial reasons will now be used for purposes of qualification to the World Championship. At the same time, the Continental Championships are now going to be administered by the Continents and they are expected to select the winners for qualification for the World Championship from this event, along Zonal lines. It should also be noted that the Presidential Board had granted substantial increases to the number of qualifiers from the Continents thus allowing for all possible variations to satisfy the needs of the Continents as well as the Zones from within this Continental structure.

In addition, FIDE is proposing to provide financial support towards the prize fund for the continents for this important event of the World Championship cycle, as follows:

Europe – USD 120, 000 less 20% to FIDE = USD 96, 000

Americas – USD 80, 000 less 20% to FIDE = USD 64, 000

Asia – USD 80, 000 less 20% to FIDE = USD 64, 000

Africa – USD 70, 000 less 20% to FIDE = USD 56, 000

It is now up to the Continents to use this financial incentive from FIDE to generate additional sponsorship for the prize fund through a bidding process out of which 20% shall go to the Continents. It is also possible for the Continents to decide, which financial support they may wish to advance to those Federations, which need them for their players, the stipends for the officials as well as the nomination of tournament officials. It is anticipated that these extra expenses will now be taken care of from the additional sponsorship generated by the Continent.

As can be seen from the foregoing, the idea of using the Continental Championship as basis for qualification to the World Championship will now make it an important activity for the players and officials of the Continents. It would also help to provide FIDE with a solid number of events, which could be presented to a General Sponsor with additional financial benefits to everyone.

Finally, it is very clear from our Statutes that decisions of the Presidential Board are of a continuing nature until subject to review by either the General Assembly or Executive Board at a subsequent meeting. In the case of what has been decided on now by the Presidential Board, in respect of the time control and the Continental Championship, it is our respectful submission that this was well within the contemplation of the General Assembly, when it mandated the Board to decide on these matters. Such decisions, which have been validly taken by the Board, cannot therefore be described as illegal.

I hope that with this clarification we can all join hands with the members of the Presidential Board who are genuinely also working with all their hearts for the benefit of chess to satisfy the needs of the players, the zones, the Continents and all of FIDE.

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Emmanuel Omuku
Executive Director