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PRESS RELEASE

Re : Cancellation of the Ponomariov-Kasparov Match

FIDE delivered the Players Undertaking to World Champion Ruslan Ponomariov and Grandmaster Garry Kasparov, to sign before August 12, 2003. Kasparov returned his duly signed contract before the deadline but Ponomariov signed the contract with reservations.

At the Presidential Board held in Abuja, Nigeria, FIDE reiterated that the contract shall be signed without reservations and extended the deadline to August 25, 2003. FIDE again extended the deadline to August 28, 2003. Without the signature of Ponomariov on the Players Undertaking, FIDE is unable to move ahead with the planned Match which was due to start on September 18, 2003 in Yalta, Ukraine.

Since the signing of the Prague Agreement, FIDE has tried patiently to meet with the recommendations of the players involved. However, as the governing body of world chess, FIDE will not give in to unreasonable request or pressure from any player involved in the unification process.

In place of the FIDE World Cup earlier scheduled for December 2003 FIDE shall organize the World Chess Championship (Knockout) Tournament to determine the next World Champion and FIDE shall not allow the selfishness of any one player to cause a hindrance to the unification process as already scheduled and approved by the FIDE General Assembly in Bled last year.

It is with deep regret therefore, that FIDE has to cancel the Ponomariov-Kasparov Match. However, FIDE shall endeavour to proceed with the unification process. A proposal shall be placed to the forthcoming FIDE Congress in Halkidiki, Greece, 27 October – 3 November, 2003. The winner of the FIDE World Championship in December 2003 shall be crowned World Champion and he shall play Grandmaster Garry Kasparov next year. The winner of this match shall then play the final unification match.

In the coming days, FIDE shall give a full account of its negotiations with the players in the now cancelled Ponomariov-Kasparov Match.