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INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION
THE PRESIDENT

XXXII ICF Ordinary Congress 2008 – Rome/Italy

President's Report

The Summer Olympic Games of Beijing are now only a memory; we experienced a great sports celebration. China, after receiving much criticism in the run-up to the Games, presented itself as an excellent host who created the best possible conditions for the athletes in order for them to give their best performance in a fair competition and raise enthusiasm among the spectators world-wide.

Beijing remarkably pointed the way; with gigantic efforts to provide a perfect programme in gorgeous stadiums within sixteen Olympic days. This overall scenario will not be topped very quickly. China has even exceeded the highest organizational expectations. As a matter of fact, Olympic Games are the cosmopolitan performance exhibition of sports. Culturally, the Olympic Games are far more than an exhibition of sports. They reflect the individual striving for top performance, the value of sport in societies, the readiness for international cooperation, the self-confidence of nations and population groups, technology and the emotional impact of its media presentation. All this never becomes more apparent than at Olympic opening ceremonies which are already more than the attunement of the athletes and their commitment to fair competitions. Today they are the orchestration of the Olympic idea which is broadcast worldwide and sensed a billion times through a cultural-esthetic consolidation. And they are also the most effective platform on which the host city and nation can present their own perception to the world.





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Once again, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the people responsible at the Organizing Committee and the Chinese canoe federation very cordially for having given our athletes these wonderful experiences at the Games.

By showing outstanding performances and fair behaviour, our athletes have promoted our beautiful sport of canoeing worldwide in an impressive way and with a lasting effect. The competitions in canoe flatwater racing and canoe slalom at the "Games" in Beijing have undoubtedly assured the position of the ICF within the Olympic family.

Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that a permanent re-evaluation of the Olympic sports was introduced by the IOC; we, too, need to seriously deal with how to further develop Olympic canoeing, make the programme more attractive for spectators and media – especially TV - and thus make it sustainable. This applies particularly to flatwater racing. I do hope that at the Congress in Rome we can all decide on a modified World Championships and World Cup programme and thus set the course for the future.

In this context, we also certainly need to consider how to optimize the Olympic qualification system in the future. In any case, the qualifications for the Games in Beijing caused problems for a number of national federations.

The current related situations are described comprehensively in the written reports of the individual disciplines.

All in all, it can be stated that the conclusive result of the report period is again unequivocally positive.





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Fortunately, the ICF family has been growing; 147 national canoe federations of all continents are currently members of the ICF and further federations are trying to become members.

The financial situation in general still has to be described as solid and thus healthy whereas it should not be kept secret that we need to make efforts even more intensively to generate additional funds (marketing, sponsoring) in the future to be able to finance the future requirements solidly.

For a number of Olympic sports and so for canoeing the media presence becomes more and more important. Fortunately, in connection with the Olympic Games in Beijing we again had impressive media data. The media presence between the games is, however, still in deficit. A sustainable improvement is only possible if we act jointly (ICF - continental associations -- national associations) as the situation of national television stations, radio, agencies, newspaper is directly concerned.

In the report period ten meetings of the executive committee and three meetings of the board of directors were held.

Besides the usual business dealings and the items already mentioned the following main focuses were worked on or discussed.

Youth Olympic Games

The IOC decided on the Youth Olympic Games on the occasion of the Session in Guatemala in July 2007 on suggestion of the President, Dr Jacques Rogge. The first Games for the Olympic summer sports will be held in Singapore in 2010.





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These Games are based on the three pillars "sports, education and culture" as well as experience character, thus they differ quite essentially from the Olympic Games regarding content.

In the meantime, we have worked out modified suggestions for the canoeing programme and submitted them for approval; the Secretary General will report to the congress on the current stand.

Modification World Championships programme and World Cup system for canoe flatwater racing

I have already mentioned this problem area in my written reports for the ICF Congress in Stockholm (2004) and Hong Kong (2007). In the meantime, for several reasons we have reached a situation where a clarification is mandatory. The Congress will be provided with corresponding suggestions, developed on the basis of numerous discussions in the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors and the Competition Commission, which we have to discuss properly and with future orientation and we need to make clear decisions on them.

European Broacasting Union (EBU) television contract

Already in November 2007 we have resumed negotiations with the people in charge at EBU about a prolongation of the contract expiring at the end of 2008 and reached an exceptionally pleasant result for the ICF. The ICF will receive a contract running until the end of 2012. We also have been able to improve some contract contents in favour of the ICF. The Secretary General will report to the Congress on details and the current stand.





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World Games 2009, Taiwan

Canoe polo is established in the programme of the World Games (games of the non-Olympic sports) as "sport in the programme", dragonboating will be included as an invitational sport – as it was four years ago in Duisburg/Germany. After long negotiations with the organizing committee and intensive support by the International World Games Association (IWGA) we have managed to annul the participation fee for dragonboat athletes in the amount of USD 75 per athlete and day (over USD 1,000 per team/day) as originally requested. The dragonboat athletes are now treated like all athletes of the sports in the programme.

In this context, I would like to mention that only the ICF is a member of the International World Games Association, thus is the sole organization responsible for the execution of the dragonboat events at World Games. An application for membership of the International Dragonboat Federation (IDBF) was recently declined by the IWGA.

New Anti-Doping Regulations

The World Anti-Doping Conference (WADA) was held from 14 to 17 November 2007 in Madrid. The changes suggested by the sport federations were largely taken into account by the Conference. Higher penalties have been stipulated for severe violations, but mitigations will also be possible for athletes who concretely support the investigations in doping cases and therefore provide indications to find the backers and to be able to fight the doping networks. This means: the strengthening of the regulation concerning chief witnesses for which the ICF has particularly shown commitment. The new WADA regulation concerning chief witnesses allows a reduction of the penalty to a quarter of the normal degree of penalty if an athlete





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cooperates with the investigating institutions to the full extent. At the same time, however, the degree of penalty has been increased and can be extended for doping offences. In the future, the two-year ban for the first doping violation (ICF rule) can even be extended to up to four years in serious cases (ICF demand).

On the one hand, this new flexibility permits more drastic and severe penalties. On the other hand, it does justice to the requirements of a penalty in accordance with the rule of law taking into account the individual guilt when determining the penalty.

Meanwhile, the "International standards for Testings" were adopted. According to this, the "missed tests" within 18 months will be punished with a ban of one to two years instead of only three months, as it has been before. It is important that all tests count, no matter whether they are carried out by WADA, NADA, the national or international association.

The resolution obliges all sports organizations to implement the new Code in their statutes by 1 January 2009 at the latest.

Don McKenzie, chairman of the medical and anti-doping committee will report and explain the details and the concrete impact on the ICF rules.

At the end of my report I would like to state that the ICF has had to face exceptional challenges during the time since the last Congress which could only be solved through the close cooperation of the canoe family which include the ICF, the





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continental associations, the national federations and the many volunteers and staff working for the federations.

Many thanks to all of you for your commitment and the work you performed for the benefit of canoeing.

Duisburg, October 2008

Ulrich Feldhoff

ICF President

