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9 March, 2016

Mr Simon Toulson – Secretary General
International Canoe Federation
Avenue de Rhodanie 54,
CH 1007 Lausanne, Switzerland

VIA EMAIL: simon.toulson@canoeicf.com,

Dear Simon,

RE: ICF FUTURE GOVERNANCE PROPOSALS PAPER

As advised, Australian Canoeing (AC) has had the opportunity to review the ICF Governance proposals and offers the following commentary for future discussion.

The scope of proposed change in the composition and role of the Board and of the Executive combined with significant changes to the operating structure and governance of the ICF is a concern to AC.

Our sense is that over the past two Olympiads, the ICF has had time to make changes. The time has now passed for changes to be “rushed” through at the upcoming Congress and for new elections to take place under a compromised model that represents an archaic and overly complicated dysfunctional structure.

Our recommendation is that the structural changes such as the composition of the Executive and Board should be the responsibility of the newly elected Executive and Board (elected under the current governance model). The major shifts in the structure and governance of the ICF should more closely reflect modern organisational governance principles / models and take place progressively from January 2018.

In the meantime, the ICF Management should be charged by the Board to deliver the ICF objectives and in particular to prioritise the following:

- Safeguarding and growing the presence of Canoeing in the Olympic program;
- The technical direction of the Olympic disciplines by professional staff;
- World-wide promotion and the generation of Sponsorship and Marketing revenue;

In order to understand the philosophy in the change in structure it would be helpful to have explanatory notes as to why the move to the new structure is beneficial to the organisation.

The proposals are inadequate as they only address a portion of the structure and do not address key areas of voting (e.g. reduction of Europe's vote) nor does it highlight what the issues are with the current structure (an analysis) on which the review and any change should be based. It does not address casting votes, remuneration and most importantly finances.

In addition, AC makes the following comments:

Finance Committee

There is no mention of the Finance Committee in the structure yet it is articulated in the Roles and Responsibilities. There are no roles for the Finance Committee in the papers.

No one has the responsibility for drafting the budget or accounting for it such as investments etc. except for what is written in the role of the Secretary General.

The Finance Committee is the Executive which is not best practice. The President should not be on the Finance Committee and the Committee should comprise financial and risk skilled members and not just whoever is on the Executive. The Committee should make recommendations to the Board for their consideration, hence they should not be one and the same.

Further to this with the revenue and investment entrusted to the ICF it is no longer good governance to have a volunteer treasurer. A suitably qualified accountant must be considered and this should not be a Vice President (or elected position but rather a qualified appointment similar to the Secretary General).

There is no mention of risk in the documents or delegated responsibility to look at risk. This should be included.

Further, there is no mention in the paper of the need to employ a staff member with a financial qualification.

Statutes

There is a need for further clarification on what is a statute change and what should be a guideline.

President

The role of President is crucial to the ICF, it should not be progressively diluted because of other political functions or responsibilities outside the ICF and the creation of a 1st Vice President to fill gaps therefore seems unnecessary.

Secretary General

Further clarification is necessary on whether the Secretary General is a voting member of the Board.

Vice Presidents

The leadership of the Olympic disciplines is crucial. It is our belief that the elected Vice President overseeing a Technical Manager reporting to a Secretary General is flawed and problematic. Our recommendation is to appoint a Sport Director for each discipline with greater autonomy or a combined Sport Director for the Olympic disciplines as many National Federations (NF's) currently implement this model including GER, FRA, GBR and AUS etc.

Technical Committees

The structure suggests there is a Slalom and Sprint Technical Committee on page 20 however later in the document it shows an additional two Sport Commissions. It is very unclear the reporting and responsibility lines for the Technical Committees, furthermore by creating the Sport Commissions it appears to add another reporting layer to the Board hence clarification is required. It is also unclear as to who is charged with the responsibility of the technical rules.

Athletes Commission

The paper states that the Athletes Commission is a Technical Committee for which Congress elects the Chair. There needs clarification as to why the Athletes Commission Chair is no longer elected by the Athlete members.

In conclusion, AC rejects the proposed structure, as we do not feel that the proposed model is in the best long-term interests of the ICF, the sport and its members.

Following the 2016 Congress, the newly elected members of the ICF should be responsible for delivering a modern governance model for 2018 implementation. The NF's need to be further engaged in the formulation of an implementation timeline for the delivery of a new governance model which includes determination of the nomination procedures for identifying suitably qualified individuals supported by a fully functioning technical committee with appropriate



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expertise. The current ICF Slalom Technical Committee is a good example of this. Some analysis of the time and costs to run such a committee should also be considered as part of the analysis.

In the meantime, the role of management, in particular professional financial and technical discipline management, should be a priority.

I am happy to expand on any of these points to assist the ICF. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Danielle Woodward OAM
President & Chair
Australian Canoeing Ltd.