

1 International TT Federation

- ITTF President Adham Sharara recently wrote:
Exactly one year and 6 days ago, on 31 December 2012, I posted my usual yearly message on our website. I touched upon the challenges facing us in 2013, such as securing a title sponsor for the ITTF World Tour, restructuring the World Tour into 3 tiers, further redesigning and refining our professional staff structure, and of course I was looking forward to the return of the World Championships to Paris (Bercy) ten years after the very successful 2003 edition.

I also made an announcement “ ... I am proud and honoured to announce that I will seek re-election as President for one last term”. At that time it seemed like a peaceful and lucid announcement. In retrospect it would seem very presumptuous of me, and I humbly apologize for that, as reality took a completely different twist and turn. At the 2013 AGM in Paris, we had an interesting and exciting election, to say the least, resulting in a new 4-year term for my colleagues and me. So, now I can fulfil my promise and serve my last mandate.

2013 was definitely a very exciting year for table tennis. Our sport is ranked by all online sports-ranking agencies in the top 10 amongst all international sports. We are now working hard to move it to the top 5. We are very encouraged by the assessment made by the International Olympic Committee after the London Olympic Games, which moved table tennis to a higher grouping amongst Olympic sports, which resulted in additional funding. We will now incorporate the results of the Olympic assessment in our new action plans. In Paris, we boldly announced that we are adding a new “P” to our P4 Priorities, namely PROMOTION, making it our main priority in the new P5 Plan. In order to move table tennis in the top 5 sports in the world, and in order to move the ITTF even further up the Olympic ladder, we will deploy all our efforts and involve all our volunteer and professional human resources using the DBI (Data-Base Intelligence) concept to achieve our ambitious P5 objectives.

Our mission has always been to secure table tennis in an organized and sustainable structure in all corners of the world. With 218 member national associations, we celebrated a new milestone in Paris making the ITTF the second largest international sports federation in the world, following Volleyball.

In 2013 our social media platforms saw a real explosion with unexpected rates of growth. We are currently the 5th most followed YouTube channel amongst all international sports federations. Our itTV streaming service (free of charge) has also seen tremendous growth as it become the main worldwide window to the world of competitive table tennis.

In 2014, we will have a record number of World Tour events, again divided in 3 tiers, and yes, we did secure a title sponsor for the tour with our good friends GAC Group on board as World Tour Title Sponsors till the end of 2015. And yes, again we will have US\$ 1,000,000 on offer at the World Tour Grand Finals in Dubai. Watch it on TV or on itTV.

We will also revamp and redesign our website, which currently ranks 3rd amongst all international federation’s websites in terms of unique users. This is a position we have held for a long time, and although there are fluctuations, we do end up 3rd on the

average of the past 12 months. However, our website is in dire need of a fresh new look and we will deliver it in 2014. We will also enhance the quality and programming of itTV to respond to the requests made by our loyal viewers.

One of the highlights of 2014 will with no doubt be the World Championships in Tokyo and the Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing. The race for the YOG has already started and young athletes from all over the World are hard at work attempting to qualify for the very restricted field in Nanjing. We will also celebrate the perseverance of our Japanese friends, who took upon them the task to stage a World Championships and made such a bid immediately after they were struck by the triple disaster caused by the infamous Tsunami.

We have another exciting year ahead of us, we cannot predict the future, but from where I am looking, the future looks good for our sport and for our federation. We are more united than ever with cooperation agreements with our Continental Federations and with involvement of all concerned in establishing the future goals and objectives.

I wish our members, our volunteers, our sponsors, our professional staff and all our fans a very Happy New Year and I thank the ITTF's Executive Committee for its tremendous support.

- Alan and Jose Ransome and Richard Scruton attended the ITTF World Tour Grand Finals and the ITTF Star Awards Dinner in Dubai, UAE.
- Richard Scruton attended the ITTF Olympic and Paralympic Commission meeting on 10th January in Dubai and carried out an evaluation of the World Tour Grand Finals referee.
- The Rio 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games qualification systems were agreed at the ITTF OPC meeting.
- Alex Mercer has been selected as an umpire for the 2014 Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing CHN following his successful participation in the ITTF Young Umpires' Project.
- The death of the ITTF Personal Honorary Member, former ITTF Treasurer and former DTTB President, Hans Giesecke (GER), was recently announced. Professionally Hans was the head of the National Police School in Bremen. Hans was a good friend of English table tennis and as a former major championships referee was well known to many English umpires. He attended the London 2012 Olympic Games and he is sadly missed.

2 European TT Union

- Richard Scruton attended the ETTU Executive Board meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 12th and 13th December 2013, and commenced full-time employment as the ETTU Secretary General on 1st January 2014.
- The first European Veterans Team Championships will be staged in Almeria, Spain, from 1st to 6th September 2014.
- The European Championships (teams) will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 24th to 28th September 2014.

3 Commonwealth TT Federation

- Alan Ransome will represent the ITTF at Commonwealth Games Federation meetings and on Commonwealth matters.

- Future Commonwealth Championships are being discussed with prospective hosts for 2015, 2016 and 2017.

4 British TT Federation

- The ETTA nominated representatives Keith Thomas, Sandra Deaton and Sara Sutcliffe, together with Richard Scruton (observer), attended the BTTF Annual General Meeting at Birmingham on 14th December 2013.
- Subsequently a BTTF selection panel was formed including ETTA representatives Keith Thomas, Sandra Deaton and Nick Jarvis to deal with 2014 Youth Olympic Games qualification selections.

Richard Scruton
Deputy Chairman
Vice-Chairman, International Relations