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National Federation Presidents  
National Federation Secretaries General

Lausanne, 4 December 2020

Dear Sir, Madam,

The ICF has received many views in the last week regarding the ICF Board of Directors' decision to include Extreme Slalom and remove two Canoe Sprint Medals for the Olympic Games in Paris 2024. I will try to address your concerns as accurately as I possibly can in this letter.

I can completely understand the frustration, anger and concern this decision has caused yourself, your coaches, your athletes and our fans. The risk and negative impact to athletes and national federations is of utmost concern to us and we have tried to limit this damage as much as possible.

However, when I explain the timeline and what transpired you will see that there was very few options available and the ICF Board of Directors took the most informed decision it could make as the situation was presented.

The key point in this whole debate is that the IOC informed the ICF that we would have to accept an athlete quota reduction for Paris 2024 for Canoeing. This is missed or ignored in a lot of the debate and arguments, but is the fundamental driver for the decisions the ICF Board of Directors made within the timeframe presented by the IOC.

### **Extreme Slalom**

The consultation with NFs, athletes and coaches has been detailed and completed over several years as far back as 2016 the ICF has identified it as a potential Olympic event for Paris 2024. Specifically:

- In 2016 (Baku), Tony Estanguet spoke about it as a potential new event fitting IOC agenda 2020 criteria
- In 2018 (Budapest), Simon Toulson, Tony Estanguet and Jose Perurena spoke about it in their respective speeches at the Congress
- 2018 and 2019 It was promoted and highlighted as potential Olympic event in Paris 2024 at all team leaders meetings during the seasons.
- March 2019 The ICF Secretary General wrote to all NFs encouraging participation in Extreme Slalom to improve our chances of Olympic inclusion. The response was positive from many NFs.

- Junior Canoe Slalom, Krakow 2019. Team leaders meeting it was explained in detail how the ICF was trying to integrate Extreme Slalom into the Olympic Programme
- During 2020 Canoe Slalom World Cups the timeline for inclusion to the Games as additional medal was passed to the NFs attending.

It is clear that the objective of adding Extreme Slalom to the Olympic Programme was well communicated and the opportunity to discuss was made available to NFs, coaches and athletes.

The interest of Extreme Slalom from broadcasters (eg. NBC, BBC, OBS) and the International Olympic Committee has been very positive. The tv audience figures have been very encouraging and have on occasions performed better than the more established Olympic events. So the desire of these organisations to have Extreme Slalom on the Olympic Programme were important factors in the issue.

### **Canoe Sprint Olympic Programme**

Consultation regarding the Tokyo and Paris 2024 programme has been consistent and regular with NFs, coaches, athletes. We welcome the feedback we have received from many sources.

- The athletes meeting in 2017 and 2019 at the Canoe Sprint World Championships involved discussions on the Canoe Sprint Programme
- ICF Congress 2018 workshops looked at the future Olympic programme for Canoe Sprint as well with a view of formulating Paris 2024.
- The coaches meeting held in Poznan 2019 discussed the Olympic Programme as well

The formal Technical Committees for both Canoe Sprint and Canoe Slalom have regularly been involved and consulted about their opinion of the Olympic Programme.

### **Paris 2024 Olympic Programme Timeline**

Every four years the IOC asks the International Federations their requests for changes to the upcoming Olympic Programme.

For Paris 2024, the request came in 2019 and the ICF Board discussed and approved in November 2019 and reconfirmed in March 2020 (First Board meeting of the year) the application of Extreme Slalom to be added to the Olympic Programme, as additional medal events.

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There were some minor changes to the Men's Canoe Sprint Programme to be considered K1 200m to K1 500m, C2 Men 1000m to 500m and K4 500m to 1000m. But the final decision was not taken on these points at that time. The application was subsequently filed with the IOC in March 2020.

10 June 2020, IOC confirmed they would keep the decision on the Paris 2024 programme as December 2020.

12 August 2020, IOC informed the ICF that we could submit new events that required no new athlete quotas, used existing venues. It was clear at this time that additional medals were still being considered by the IOC and would be decided by them 7th December 2020.

The ICF continued on this basis with the proposed programme, including extreme slalom as extra medals.

Then in Mid September 2020, the IOC informed the ICF Secretary General that the ICF would be required to accept an athlete quota reduction for Paris 2024 to compensate for the new sports added to the Olympic Programme and keep within the 10,500 total athlete quota for the Games.

The proposed athlete quota cut was between 25 and 35 athletes. The ICF Executive Committee saw this as catastrophic for the sport. The ICF Secretary General was instructed to respond to the IOC with factual information on why Canoeing should not bear such heavy losses.

Then, on 12 and 18 November the IOC stated that no additional medals would be granted to canoeing for Paris 2024. At this point the ICF indicated that we would not pursue the extra medals for extreme slalom.

To counter the athlete quota reduction, various options for the canoe Olympic programme changes were offered to the IOC (eg. 5000m) but all were rejected except for Extreme Slalom.

After a lot of negotiations and hard work the IOC lowered the number of quota reductions to 12 athletes which would still weaken the Canoe Sprint programme with 12 medals.

Subsequently, the ICF Board was left with two proposals for the IOC, accept 12 Sprint medals but with not enough quotas (10 boats per competition) to have a useful tv product and risk further cuts after Paris 2024 or accept Extreme Slalom and 10 Canoe Sprint medals which would lead to more single boat quotas being available for more nations.

## **ICF Decision Making**

The IOC is the ultimate owner and authority on the Olympic Programme and each four years they set out the criteria and the timeline for deciding the Olympic Programme. The IOC recognizes the authority of the ICF Board of Directors to make this decision. Below is list of the decisions that the ICF Board of Directors have made for previous editions of the Games:

- 2009 – ICF Board LONDON – 200m events inclusion
- 2013 – ICF Board LIMA - remove MC2 from 2020 Olympic Programme and replaced by WC1
- 2015 – ICF Board CAPE TOWN – update Canoe Sprint even list for 2020 Olympic Programme.
- 2017 – ICF Board MANCHESTER – final approval for the whole 2020 Olympic Programme.

I would point out the specific amendments made in Chapter 12 of the Canoe Sprint Rule book.

12.1.1 Applications, entries and programme for the Olympic Games must be in accordance with the IOC Rules.

And

12.1.3. Where ICF rules are applicable they may be subject to IOC rules related to the Olympic Games.

Article 4 of the ICF Canoe Sprint Rules lists the full possible events for Canoe Sprint including the Olympic events. But the competition programme for the Olympic Games is under Sport Rules in Chapter 12 and supercedes the International Competition Rules so as to allow for such an eventuality where the IOC required swift action of the ICF as has regularly occurred.

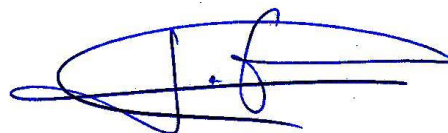
Finally, I completely understand that the decisions made by the ICF can be hard for everyone involved in Canoeing, change is always unsettling, but as has been explained in detail the ICF needed to react to a specific situation of reduced athlete quotas given to us by the IOC and has endeavored to limit the damage as much as possible to the Canoe Sprint programme.

The IOC on 7th December 2020 will announce the Olympic Programme for Paris 2024. I encourage you to embrace this programme and be proud

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that our sport continues to be showcased as part of the Olympic Games with 16 medal events which provides so many benefits to yourselves and our stakeholders.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JP', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jose Perurena  
ICF President