

## PAC may 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 special assembly report

This assembly had two purposes:

1. Adopt changes to Panam regulations
2. Decide on the date of the next general assembly and elections

IFSC President Marco Sclaris attended the beginning of the assembly and addressed to the members. He specifically expressed the fact that the changes to the statutes that would be voted needed to be approved by the IFSC board. And that if in any case there was changes voted at the PAC assembly that were not approved by IFSC board they would be taken into consideration for a later review. I think it was a clear and fair statement as this is what is stated in IFSC statutes and PAC regulations. This has, however, annoyed some national federations which believe that, not being statutes, PAC should have all the necessary latitude to make its choices on regulations not necessarily having impact on IFSC and have expressed it.

We had for the preparation of the assembly the support from IFSC office specially Erica that provided assistance in preparing the slides for the votes and organized the technical aspects with Cosme Mejia from Ecuador that also provided support in the organization of the event.

Here are several challenges and issues that we faced and that I would like to report.

- First, Martin Lascano that had been the main person working on the statutes changes and who was supposed to present the changes during the assembly could not attend. Both his parents quite elderly caught COVID and he needed to stay by their side through a very rough period. Martin's father died from covid a few days ago.
- I took over making the presentation. Unfortunately, I had a power cut in my neighborhood about an hour before the assembly leaving me without electricity while finalizing the preparation. Power came as the meeting had already started leaving me without the visual support I had prepared on an additional screen that I had set but to which I could not have access. Thanks to Erica, that supported dealing with the slides presentation we could manage even if not optimal.
- Several NF representatives had connection issues at different times during the assembly that at some point even prevented them from being able to exercise their voting right. This part is problematic in my point of view. I previously addressed this potential situation to Erica and explained how the Canadian Olympic committee, the week before, during its general assembly and elections to which I attended made sure that all votes were casted even for those having connections issues. Giving extra time when needed and providing a phone number to call or text if it happened during a vote. But this was declined and never considered.
- Quorum was presented counting countries whose membership had been suspended by the vote of the IFSC board on the enforcement of *article 10*<sup>1</sup> of IFSC statutes on April 21<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Article 10 – Suspension

A Member may be suspended from membership by the Executive Board for the following reasons:

- a. Non-payment of any liabilities to the IFSC;
- b. Failure to comply with these Statutes or other Regulations of the IFSC.

A suspended Member faces the temporary forfeiture of the rights granted by its relevant membership category.

, 2021 prior to IFSC general assembly. Moreover, those countries have never been counted towards quorum in Panam since they have never paid any membership fee or participated to any PAC or IFSC event or assembly in the entire existence of the organization. Those countries were originally counted as aspiring members<sup>2</sup> ( a category that had no membership fee and no longer exists) and never acted in any way to get to a different membership status. (first assembly of 2009 minutes are here attached) This matter has been addressed at many occasions and was raised prior to the assembly and again dismissed without consideration by an IFSC office staff. This is very important since it had an impact in some votes. There are 3 votes that took place and were considered not valid for lack of quorum and I disagree and argue this interpretation and request that those votes are considered valid. The votes casted have not been written in the report of votes provided by Erica and should have been reported as the vote took place and a majority of members voted to approve those articles.

- The executive director also attended the meeting and I must say that his participation was not necessarily supportive and even at some occasions I would qualify as not appropriate. This was noted not only by myself but also by other board members and NF representatives that made specific comments about it.

Here some examples:

- He expressed his bad mood and exasperation at several occasions even telling the assembly that the meeting was long and he was tired because he had been up since European morning and it was late for him... I'm sorry but this was the Pan-American assembly! Our NF adapt to European time all the time and This was inappropriate.
- He also interfered in the discussions without being invited at several occasions in a very impolite way cutting of people and even trying to influence the vote. This assembly was the expression of democracy and will of the Pan-American NF. President Sclaris had already explained that this expression would be listened to, even if it might not be at this point approved by IFSC board. His interventions were not in my point of view and the one of PAC board members and other NF appropriate.
- He tried to put an end to the assembly and stoped the votes while we still had attendance quorum and I had to insist to go through all the votes. The situation was due to a connection problem of some members that were unable to cast their vote and when I proposed to make sure that all NF had the opportunity to cast their vote he again opposed in a very rude way.

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<sup>2</sup> 2. The PAC may accept associations as Aspirant member which are Aspirant member of IFSC.

a. Aspirant members are entitled to participate in all climbing competitions organized by the IFSC, according to the relevant regulations and fee system.

b. Aspirant members are exempt from paying the annual membership fee.

I do not think that he understood his observer and support role to the assembly which would be to observe, provide support or recommendations without interfering in the democratic process and report back any issues or problems he considers necessary.

I have noted that for some reason, some staff members seem to think that they have authority over elected board members and tend to try to impose their view or understanding on items that belong to elected board members to decide and this is a problem. It is something to provide needed information and support. It is something different to interfere, oppose and contradict elected officials exerting their mandate and refuse to collaborate.

The PAC board feels that there has been and still is for some staff members a systematic negative bias towards Panam requests that leads to a lack of will and a lack of support.

Here are some examples:

- Panam board members not receiving any response from IFSC staff when addressing a request or receiving inappropriate responses.
- Panam representatives not receiving important information that is sent to NF
- Lack of will to provide needed information: (membership payment info, info and support requested to finalize membership invoicing, lists of contacts...)
- Discriminatory actions not treating our council in the same way as others
- Countries that are in very precarious situations that call out for help are ignored or instead of receiving support they receive invoices and blame.
- Discriminatory observations and statements about our board and south American countries not recognizing any of the efforts made and the lack of resources available to accomplish some of the needed tasks.

It is not because you are not wealthy that you should not be considered important.

This behaviour has not only been tolerated I feel like it has been at some point encouraged for some time.

This has attained its maximum magnitude in the past months with allegations being shared with individuals outside board members, political interference, malicious insinuations intended to harm reputations, aggressive and unappropriated responses and denial of support.

I've requested help at many occasions, presented projects and have felt ignored. We have heard many times a lot of blame but not a lot of support offered.

I must say that some slight changes have happened in the past weeks but not necessarily at all levels after in my sense going much too far. And I definitely think the general director has crossed important lines during our assembly.

This might be the result of unclear responsibilities, a misunderstanding of roles and a lack of ethical guidelines.

This needs to be addressed and corrected in order to make sure that a climate of collaboration and a clear comprehension of roles is established and understood by all.

I understand this will take some time but goodwill and effort needs to start now.

For the time being we need to finalize the regulations approval process and launch the next Pan-American call for candidates and elections.

I here request that IFSC board:

- Validates all votes casted by the Pan-American NF recognizing that there were only 13 countries that could count towards quorum as four of them had their membership suspended by the IFSC board vote.
- Approves as were voted the new regulations of the Pan-American council as stated in *Bye-law to Article 32 Continental Councils Statutes and Regulations: "The Executive Board approval process will be limited to verify the compliance of the Continental Council Statutes and Regulations with the IFSC Statutes, Bye-laws and Regulations."*

I understand that the IFSC lawyer might need to be consulted and asked to offer a legal advice, recommendation or opinion based on his interpretation of some unclear impacts of clauses. If any objection to one or several articles of PAC regulations voted is raised based on a potential conflict with IFSC statutes, a formal explanation and demonstration on the reason and way of noncompliance and effective impact of the article with formal reference to the specific article of IFSC statutes or bylaws that is in cause should be provided so the board members are able to decide on the best decision to take based on clear information.

- Requests IFSC office staff to provide support in sending the official calling notice to Pan-American general assembly and elections and support the organization of it in respect of Panam new regulations.
- In collaboration of the ethic commission addresses the different issues concerning the behaviour of the general director during the assembly and mandates the ethics commission to develop a board and staff ethic guidelines for the future.

I must say that last months have drained a lot of my energy and I'm a little bit worried about all that needs to be accomplished in the coming months.

I hope that we will be able to put the efforts and energy in the right places and get to this next step to have a new board elected making sure that that our continent is represented and considered as it deserves.

I will until September 10<sup>th</sup> do my best to prepare this transition. This new elected board will then have a lot of challenges ahead with all the coming and needed changes and all the coming multi sport events that will take place.

Maria Izquierdo

President of the Pan-American Council