



International Play Association: Promoting the Child's Right to Play
Association Internationale pour le Jeu: Promotion du Droit au Jeu de l'Enfant
Internationale Vereinigung für Spiel: Fördert das Recht des Kindes zu Spielen
Asociación Internacional de Juego: Promoviendo el Derecho del Niño a Jugar

Constitutional Review: information for members

The new 'case for change' and proposed structure

January 2010

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1. Process

- General Meeting Berlin 2005: approval given for a systematic review of the constitution
- General Meeting Hong Kong 2008: approval given for a transition to a revised constitution encompassing a simplified structure
- Special working group to complete the necessary changes ready for a Special General Meeting
- The Board undertakes the task of completing these changes following invitations to general membership to become involved
- IPA Board meeting October 2009 arrives at final stages of defining these changes and forming a proposition to go to the Special General Meeting
- The proposal for the structure attempts to achieve a 'simplified structure' that supports valued elements and the operation of IPA
- The Special General Meeting to be held on the 30th September 2010 in Karlstad, Sweden
- This process meets the requirements laid out in the current IPA Constitution (Clauses 13 and 19).

What happens next?

In order to make the proposed changes to IPA's structure, IPA needs to adopt a revised Constitution.

A proposition has been submitted to the Secretary of IPA. This proposition is now following the procedure laid out in our Constitution as follows:

- Circulate the proposition to all members with the agenda for the meeting 7 months before Special General Meeting
- Members are able to propose amendments to be received by Secretary 4 months before SGM
- Secretary to circulate any amendments at least 90 days before SGM
- Voting to take place Karlstad, Sweden, 30th September 2010
- All members (except 'benefactors') are entitled to vote

Note: Two propositions to update Standing Orders have also been submitted. Standing Orders can be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members at the meeting (rather than requiring a postal vote). Should the proposal for revising the Constitution be approved it will be necessary to adopt revised Standing Orders which correlate correctly with it. If the proposition for revising the Constitution is **not** approved, the meeting may vote on the final proposition which, if approved, will update the Standing Orders only.

2. A new structure

We believe the new structure proposed below is more streamlined and functional for IPA in the years to come. It was arrived at having thoroughly considered the pros and cons of the existing structure and a 'single tier' structure and by keeping a clear direction of a simplified structure and its purposes in mind.

The task of completing the 'necessary changes' to support a simplified structure took into account changes in the context of IPA which have emerged clearly over the last few years. In particular these are: the IPA policy of strategic planning; incorporating modern technology into our ways of working.

In arriving at the proposal for a new structure a number of points were taken into account:

- A revised structure should incorporate the most valued parts of the existing structure and the potentially positive aspects of a 'simplified structure'.
- A new structure should not replicate negative aspects of the current structure or introduce new negative or weak points.
- The intentions of the 2008 proposal should be met.
- Modern technology has already transformed the way we are able to communicate and work within IPA (using teleconferencing, email, members-only section of the website, virtual office etc)

We sought a structure:

- that supports country groups/branches;
- that encourages membership to grow;
- that accommodates the strategic planning as a method of operating;
- that supports the sustainable development of IPA;
- in which decision-making processes are clear.

The proposed new structure

The Membership: Open to all who subscribe to IPA's purpose and objectives and in accordance with the categories of membership defined from time to time by the membership committee. The membership will come together periodically at General Meetings, where every member will be eligible to vote. **The membership drives the strategic direction of IPA.**

Council of Representatives made up of National Representatives, responsible for making **policy** decisions, based upon the strategic direction given by members. It will work in close conjunction with the Board.

- The Council of Representatives will be convened by the 2nd Vice-President in order to create a strong link between the Council and Board and to support the development of the Council as the 'engine' of IPA.
- Regional Groups may be established within the Council for purposes such as promoting membership, regional events, sharing language or other resources.
- We aim for a much greater sense of the Council as the 'engine' of IPA as a policy-making body rather than a channel for communication with members (although it will still have that function too)

Board of Directors, directly elected from the membership for their individual ability to fulfil key functions required for the organisation to operate successfully. The Board will be made up of:

- President
- Vice-President
- Second Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Communications Officer
- Membership Officer
- Development Officer
- Other member(s) co-opted at the discretion of the Board.

The Board is responsible for making **operational decisions**, based upon the policy decisions made by the Council of Representatives. It will work in close conjunction with the Council of Representatives. One Board member (the Second Vice-President) will have the specific responsibility to convene the Council; regular, formal communication systems between the Board and Council of Representatives will be developed. Key functions of the Board would be backed by Standing Committees

Notes:

- Formal, clear lines of communication will be established

(continued)

- Each member of the Board of Directors will have a clear job description and be elected on the basis of their ability to fulfil a particular function
- Representation of those countries which do not have branch/national group status will be established through mechanisms established by the Council of Representatives
- Development towards branch status will be encouraged and supported by the Board
- Working Groups can be convened by the Board of Directors or the Council of Representatives from time to time to deal with specific tasks. Members of working groups may come from the Board of Directors, the Council of Representatives or the general membership.
- Clearer distinctions will be made between the policy and operational levels in the organisation, though the Board and Council will be expected to work closely together. The priorities and concerns of members will help to drive strategic direction.
- The model encompasses strategic planning as a method of operation as determined by Council at the 2008 meeting in Hong Kong.
- The Council of Representatives will be asked to approve strategic plans and monitor their implementation.

A note on modern technology and its potential for supporting IPA ways of working

IPA members already communicate and network using email, teleconferencing, social networking sites and 'skype' etc and this has opened up previously unimaginable opportunities for us to work together across continents and time-zones.

The Board for example is able to 'meet' using free technology for teleconferencing to make important decisions or to discuss emerging issues without having to wait for the annual Board meeting to come around. (Safe-guards have been put in place with protocols regarding decision-making.)

The Global Consultation Steering Group meets regularly despite being based in Vancouver, New York, Edinburgh and The Hague allowing it to maintain momentum on the project and take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Our Standing Committees and Working Groups talk via skype and use email to share dialogue and documents.

As technology advances other new possibilities will rise. A new focus on the development of the Council as the 'engine' of IPA can be supported through use of these technologies. New technology does not replace meeting in person but should support greater continuity of action and more frequent and effective communication. With responsibility for convening the Council assigned to a specific Board member we hope to achieve a much greater sense of the Council as a policy-making body rather than a channel for communication although this will still an important function.

Appendix 1:

The positives and negatives of the existing and single tier structures

The following positives and negatives were identified for the existing IPA structure and the previously proposed 'single tier' model. They are listed in the order in which they were recorded and not necessarily in any order of importance.

Existing IPA structure: Positive (Pros)	Negative (Cons)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows flexibility in finances due to [low] numbers for Board meeting attendance. • At any one time there will always be at least one RVP attending [board meetings] • Built-in layer of representation in decision making • Built-in visible participation in the structure of the organisation • By having Council it provides an arena for executive and representative to meet and creates a bridge to individual countries (social, linguistic, cultural) • Gives Council members a role/status for their countries • Supports branches • Gives IPA a voice in each country • Gives potential for growth in countries because the National Representative is not alone • Enables regional autonomy • Council Members-at-Large can enrich • Large pool 'workforce' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication of membership. Board and Council representatives are overlapped. Double decision making • Not a cost-effective management system. Insufficient resources to bring Council members to meetings. • Only those Council members who can afford to attend can join the Council meetings. • Inconsistent attendance and results of Council meetings (see above) • The position of National Correspondents is questioned in Council • Time consuming system leading to duplication in the decision making process • Meeting frequency does not match those required for the effective operation of the management system. Board should meet at least annually, Council should meet at least every 18 months. • Council has been variable in performing the functions laid down in the constitution • The terms of office of National Representatives are not consistent with those of the Board (3 years).
Single-tier proposal: Positive (Pros)	Single-tier Negative (Cons)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified system • Direct democracy • Potential for effective, efficient decision making processes • Clear where decisions are made; single decision making body • If it was fundable participation does not rely on the means of individuals • Image presented to the outside world of a worldwide organisation • Easier in practical ways, e.g. organisation of meetings • Potential to dovetail the structure with the strategic planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative Attributes • Does not connect to structures (strategic planning process) • Too many members for an executive body • There may be more regions than the model caters for • May lose regional representation • Cost prohibitive to bring together a board of this size for face to face meetings • Not easy to identify where the checks and balances are • Tension between operational function and representation • No clear communication line to/from members (would need new systems) • Difficulty in assigning roles and at the same time covering geographical representation • May fall into two tiers (replicating a weakness of

	<p>the current structure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk that decision making of the executive would not be representative of the intentions of members• The branch setup / National Representative system is not recognised in this system.• Operation and policy all dealt with by one group
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Appendix 2: Brief analysis of the proposed new structure

The following is a record of checking the proposed new structure against what we hoped to achieve

IPA seeks a structure:

- that supports country groups/branches,
 - *national representation is catered for on the Council of Representatives*
 - *regional or sub-national groups are accommodated.*
- that encourages membership to grow,
 - *a Membership Officer, with an attendant Membership Committee, would encourage growth,*
 - *countries without national branches are encouraged to achieve national branch status, and aided by the Membership Committee to ensure that their national membership grows.*
- that accommodates the strategic planning process as a method of operating,
 - *the roles within the new structure match the strategic planning process, with the accountability and decision making in the right places.*
- that supports the sustainable development of IPA,
 - *the structure is affordable. An increase in national groups does not automatically lead to an increase in the cost of maintaining the executive body.*
 - *the fundraising function is at the executive body level.*
- in which decision-making processes are clear.
 - *there are distinct decision types (strategic direction, policy, operational) that will be made in three distinct places (strategic direction from the membership, policy - Council of Representatives, operational – Board of Directors).*

Appendix 3: Constitutional process (in summary)

The constitution of the International Play Association: Promoting the Child's Right to Play has been considered for some time to be contradictory in places and in need of updating.

The General Meeting in Berlin in 2005 approved '**a systematic and comprehensive review of the Constitution, based upon the fullest possible participation**'

The outcome of the review was that IPA members favoured a simplified organisational structure.

In order to ensure a smooth transition from one model of working to another it was proposed that a working group would be formed to complete the necessary changes to the constitution that could be accepted by the membership during a Special General Meeting in 2010, before final implementation at the General Meeting in 2011. This process meets the requirements of the current constitution.

This was approved by the General Meeting in Hong Kong 2008.

Attempts were made to engage more widely with the general membership on this issue and the Board ensured the task of completing '**the necessary changes to the Constitution**' was carried out.

The Board has also worked with IPA Sweden to create an opportunity for the Special General Meeting to be held within an IPA event. We are grateful to IPA Sweden for hosting the SGM within its Karlstad conference, 30th September 2010

Completing the necessary changes

This took place during the Board's annual meeting in October 2009.

The whole Board including the Regional Vice Presidents had been involved in preliminary email and teleconferencing discussions via Skype.

All Council members were sent an email with updates and invitations to send their views/ask for more information. IPA Japan, IPA Scotland and IPA Sweden responded to the email.

Discussions took full account of the review from 2005 onwards that led to the 2008 proposition and in particular made reference to 'the case for change' supporting document that has been available throughout on the IPA website.

(It should be noted the original intention was that a special work group take up this task. For a number of reasons this did not function effectively and therefore the Board ensured the task was completed. All documentation has been available on the IPA website throughout and a number of communications have been made to members through the Council and through PlayRights magazine)