

2021 Ordinary General Assembly Minutes

International Mixed Martial Arts Federation Ordinary General Assembly.

Date: 28/01/2022

Location: Abu Dhabi - UAE

Present:

IMMAF Directors:

President Kerrith Brown, Tom Madsen, Wissam Abi Nader, Bertrand Amoussou, Tatiana Klimenko, Victor Frolov, Honorary President August Wallen, Honorary President Vadim Finkelchtein

Invitees:

Guests:

Fouad Darwish His Excellency His Excellency Mohamed Dalmouj Al Dhaheri, Chairman of the UAE MMA Committee
Antonio Donato Milano - GASIF
Mr. Sebastian Moreu - an advisor in France

IMMAF

CEO Densign White, Gosha Malik. Michelle Verroken, Isobel Carwath, Andrew Moshanov, Nick Davies,

IMMAF Federations: Richy Cranny (Australia), Mohamed A. Qamber (Bahrain), Ludo Boulvin (Belgium), Alex Miliakou (Belarus), Stephanos Charalampous (Cyprus), Mindaugas Smirnovas (Lithuania), Vallo Hannus (Estonia), Marc Goddard (England), Heikki Kaijalainen (Finland), Serge Patou (France), Hiro Lamaire (French Polynesia), Clemens Werner (Germany), Dr Sawan Jagnarain (Guyana), Valery Papp (Hungary), Yousef Behtari (Iran) Sharif Babu (India), Raad Jameel Abass (Iraq), John Kavanagh (Ireland), Vito Paollito (Italy), Islam Satarov (Kyrgyzstan), Zhanna Kim (Kazakhstan) Wissam Abi Naddir (Lebanon), Daniel Solrzano (Mexico), Prem Kumar (Malaysia), Ramtohol Goowtamsingh Avinash (Mauritius), Battsetseg Tsogetoo (Mongolia), Terry Hill (New Zealand) Omar Ahmed (Pakistan), Martin Lewandowski (Poland), Orlando Savoie (Puerto Rico), Radmir Gabdullin (Russia) Antonio Garcia (Spain). Babak Ashti (Sweden), Luigi Perillo (Switzerland), Jason Fraser (Trinidad & Tobago), Oner Avara (Turkey), Anton Blank (Ukraine), Mohammed Al Hosani (UAE), Radjabov Muzzafar (Uzbekistan),

Opening of the meeting

Welcome by CEO Densign White (DW).

Introduction by Fouad Darwish His Excellency His Excellency Mohamed Dalmouj Al Dhaheri, Chairman of the UAE MMA Committee

His Excellency Mohammed opening comments “I’m honored for your attendance, we are privileged to have you amongst us in our city, and we thank you from our hearts for all the efforts. Be certain that what we do today will go down in history, thank you so much”. *(Applause)*

CEO Densign White – Welcoming comments: - Thank you all for attending during this challenging period of which is appreciated.

It’s important that we hold these meetings as part of IMMAF’s good governance regulations. We need to demonstrate to the organizations how we manage our business, for example: -

The WADA process was intricate with many challenges. In the past WADA’s concerns was based on how we were testing athletes, managing results and how we delivered education to athletes. The new process was very diverse, including how we were governed. One of the new processes was to complete a governance survey, which required 40 sections of detailed information.

Examples include:-

- How many general assemblies have been held
- How many members
- Composition of the board
- Then gender balance of the board (with details explanation of our strategy in increasing those areas that were lacking, such of female members and lack of leadership roles)
- Transparency – required for all activities

We successfully passed the governance section. They will review the web-site and expect that transparency is clearly demonstrated and aligns with information provided to them.

IMMAF’s transparency on the website is extensive as it includes the board minutes and lots of other information since the re-vamp of the site.

We are aiming to become members of GASF. Holding board meetings is one of the criteria in order to be welcomed as a member as well as good governance, for example, showing the democratic election process; audited accounts.

DW stated that all were invited to view the new website and that it should be duplicated as much as possible as this will be part of IMMAF’s review for WADA membership.

The requirements for the application process included:

- the number of associations
- the number of athletes
- how many clubs, gyms are under individual associations
- the composition of the boards
- the development plans of each federation

It was a challenging task in obtaining the information from federations.

Moving forward, the review of our own governance highlighted the importance of collective data. For example, data to hand should include how many members are in your federation, how many clubs, records of general meetings, accounting records and so forth.

DW stated “We are all one and there is a trickle-down effect, affecting our status, particularly in joining the Olympic family. It’s important that federations are recognized by their Olympic committee’s in the country of operation and the ministry of sport. A lack of data will affect progress. It was stressed that great attention should be directed towards governance. WADA also asked how many international athletes were on record. This was difficult to obtain and required estimates”.

Roll call result:

1. The meeting is quorate with the member national federations are present and when at least **3** different continents are present.
2. Total Member Federations: **120**
3. Full members:**80**
4. Observation Members: **50**, Individual **10**,
5. Federations required for Quorum has been met
6. Full Member federations present: **37** and **34** allowed to vote
7. Number of Continents represented: **5**
8. Number of Federations votes required: **50%** of all present

Adopting of the Agenda

Adopting of the Agenda – Approved.

Welcome to GAISF

DW - It’s welcomed and appreciated for the first time ever, having GASIF in attendance. Welcome, Antonio Donato Milano from GAISF who was asked by the president to attend to observe the general assembly. Mr. Antonio Donato Milano was thanked for taking time out to attend. (Applause)

President’s address

IMMAF President – Kerrith Brown (KB)

KB opened by welcoming everyone for their attendance at the general assembly and stated it is an honour to be present. KB welcomed everyone to the 7th World Championships (Abu Dhabi).

KB also thanked Mohammed Al Hosani – Head UAEMMAF for the time invested to make all this event possible.

KB’s remarks: -

We have been involved in this amazing journey for 10 years. From the interception of building for the next generation of the IMMAF family.

We have been given the task to change the perception, the history of the sport. Everyone has been part of the journey, some pushing and battling, every national Federation to achieve goals to enable the sport to be recognized.

We are still not a sport. You’re all gathered here to try to solve the issues including the political backdrops you’ve been faced within the past 10 years. We are all here for a special reason, we all value the sport, we are all passionate about what we do. When I talk to you all, I see passion, the belief and determination you instill in your federation as part of the development for us to be recognized.

Without you, as the National Federation, we as the International Federation could not exist. It’s through you and your efforts as part of this journey and why we are here today, ensuring we build on the future.

When we hand back to the next generation i.e. the youth, it should be held in high esteem, with integrity, honor and passion that we have brought through this sport.

Towards the end of the year, after six years, we were given the signature from WADA. We wanted to be measured fairly without any political pushback.

For the first time we had a new president in WADA. A lot of the federations work is towards the process of change from the old to the new. Thank you to all who were involved in the process.

Martin Lewandowski from Poland was instrumental in supporting key decisions, held over several meetings. The IMMAF team were also actively involved with the application.

Change is the key process of what we have here and should continue. Now is not the time to take a backward step, we need to keep moving forward, we have to challenge our opponents, we have to keep on pushing the boundaries. We have achieved a lot through adversity, working in communities, some in crime areas working towards the changing perception for the next generation.

Presidents, representatives and coaches. Your athletes will look to you for guidance, you are changing their lives even without the competition element. It's about development, education and empowering the youth. Without you, there is no athlete. It is important that we guide them and ensure we make the best of what we can do as elders to protect them on their journey.

We have all been through this journey. Densign White and I have been to the Olympics, we started at the age of 12. Sport changed our lives and for me I wanted to leave a legacy that would change the lives of other people.

For me, the journey continues with GAISF. Currently, seven years dealing with the application. (KB - Thanked GAISF for their attendance).

First time in seven years, having real engagement at this level. Politics is deep, however it's time for change. We congratulate the new president in his new appointment. However, we wish for change, the same appreciation as we have done with WADA.

We want to be measured by our application of transparency. All federations need to be transparent. What you do reflects internationally.

I feel there is change within GAISF. We don't want to be measured by politics we want to be measured by the work we have done globally. This is important as we are a new sport. We hear on numerous occasions, that we are taking people from other combat sports.

We are all experts in our fields; therefore, all have a part to play. It's you that needs to build the bridges, build the foundation, in order to create wealth and development and the recognition in the sport.

It's important that we learn from each other, we all make mistakes, we are not perfect. Sometimes it's not an ideal circumstance, however, we need to stick together as a family having come this far in 10 years. Here at the world's championships, we are working together. Part and parcel of the journey.

We have had three world championships in Bahrain and many other federations who have contributed with events. We need to continue, plus build on referees, judges, volunteers, everything that is part of the international federation to be able to run the sport.

We have a lot of work to do, we have to get the sport recognized as a priority. This is the time to move forward and build on what we have already achieved. Data is important to demonstrate development not only with the sport but community. We will continue to fight ensuring we have the correct data as proof of our activities, that is evidence based and Governance is good.

The work Michele Verroken (Anti-Doping) has done with WADA was exceptional. Going through hoops to get our signature and it will be the same for GAISF.

This year we will attempt to hold more events. Against the backdrop of Covid it will not be easy. We are still trying to confirm events including the world championships for 2022. We are also discussing, holding our first international training camp.

I'm sure you have ideas which we welcome. We are not just about the board and directors but it's about you, building for the next generation. It's part of the global initiative.

I congratulate you for the work you have done in your country, some have been exceptional in certain areas, which is quite phenomenal. I'd like to see a continuation of this. On social media I see certain presidents working every day, facing challenges. I thank you all for your work.

Thank you for allowing us to continue the good work. We are all one family. I wish you all the best.

Appointment of Scrutineers

Nick Davies - Chief Strategy officer

Mr. Sebastian Moreu. Sebastian has worked in the French ministry and was instrumental in getting MMA recognized in France. Sebastian works as an advisor in France.

Approval of the minutes of the Previous Meetings

- General Assembly minutes - November 2019 - **Approved. 1 abstention.**
- Extraordinary General Assembly minutes - FEBRUARY 2021 (held on-line). - **Approved**

Annual Activity Report

Annual Activity Report September 2020 - September 2021

Presentation highlights by CEO – Densign White: -

DW recommended the use of the booklet for promotional activities. It can be given to your Ministries and Olympic committees.

DW is proud of the remarkable work that was achieved during this period. Some of the highlights during this period include: -

Introduction of the mandatory grading system for youth participation. The world championships which was very successful during the pandemic year. We still managed to increase the number of participants in the system. The numbers recorded in the app are increasing as you will see as outlined in the stats.

Three events were held during this period.

- Russia – Kazan Championships
- Prague - World Cup

Those that weren't able to participate in Russia had another opportunity in the Prague World Cup. More than 200 athletes participated. These events were held during quarters 3 and 4 of 2021.

1. Commissions

New commissions were formed producing good work. There are commissions to help myself and the executives as it's impossible for all the work to be completed with a small team. We also have a new women's commissions in about 8 to 9 countries.

The medical commission have been active providing help with protocols for Covid. Thank you to the medical team for giving us support and expertise on how we should manage during these events keeping our athletes safe. There was very few Covid reports, maybe one or two. The medical team also gave us guidance on the implementation of new procedures.

We want to give the youth as many opportunities to progress, therefore we put them in a pool. Our policy is that each athlete must have a minimum of two contest.

2. Transgender

We have been working on a transgender policy of which every international federation has to address. We are no different, we do have transgender athletes who want to compete; therefore, we are required to ensure equality on this matter. Anti-doping was also a factor within this policy.

Currently transgender people would not be allowed to participate in the current events. We will continue to explore how they can participate in events. We also included the athlete's commission in our consultation which was very important.

3. **The Board**

The board met during March, June and face-to-face in Prague during September. We are trying to space out the board meetings to meet quarterly. The board has met during this week, next meeting will be held April 2022. Most of last year's meetings were held online. In an attempt in keeping costs down we try to coordinate to meet during events where most of the board members are actually in attendance. The Board is working well. There will be an evaluation on the board in February. This will be the start of an annual review.

- Coaching report (page 32)
- The table shows the growth in Coaching. During the pandemic this had moved online.
- There are 245 in the program
- Growth of 795 people in 2 years

In some ways the pandemic has helped us to be more creative and innovative as many organizations. I have moved a lot of things online where possible. Which has allowed us to reach a lot more people and, in a cost, effective way which has helped with member communication. There have been regular meetings with the continents e.g Africa, Pan America i.e. Spanish speaking meetings. This has worked well and has allowed us to get good feedback from you. You have a good idea of the kind of initiatives you want us to move forward on to help you progress at your local level.

Register of users on the APP is increasing. We want to encourage people to use the free of charge app to assist you. It's a fantastic app and we will continue to develop it. Users have increased from 219 to 600+ in 2020 and in 2021 we had 10,000.

Number of grades have increased 2500 in 2022 (see report).

I cannot stress enough the importance of using these tools in your federations. It will help your federations grow. As the president said the focus is on youth development, therefore if you want your federation to grow you need to have youngsters. There is no sports organization that can grow without children- it's a fact.

If you look at any sports federation e.g. Judo - The French Judo Federation has 500,000 plus members. It was 700,000 but they've lost some during the pandemic, however the number remains high. 90% of these members are children. The majority of these children are under the age of 12. Therefore, if you want to build a big federation which will generate revenue, this will not be achieved with adults. The children are the ones that do the grades, the ones that will enter the competitions and buy the merchandise.

The progression scheme is a good motivational tool, it retains the interest of youngsters. The combat sports it's not for everybody. It's like a revolving door, one in one out. Unless you have the tools to keep their interest, the numbers will not increase, it will be a plateau.

Having the retention scheme is critically important and a good safety aspect in terms of what the children are learning. We also have to show that the sport has some education value and it's not just about fighting, brutality, it's about education.

When you can go to your NOC and show them that the sport has educational value and the children are learning something of value you then have a better chance of recognition.

5. **Social Media**

We did very well on the comprehensive media report. I think you will agree the content and our social media sites are good. We have accounts such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

We have signed agreements with 'Inside the Games' magazine, where we have regular reviews published. It's a widely read publication within the Olympic family. Looking towards publicizing to the Olympic family what we do. This is the best channel to achieve this goal.

Activity Report – Approved

DW stated - All can pat themselves on the back as the report was successfully put together with everyone's contribution.

Governance

Presented by Nicolas Davies – Chief Strategy Officer

I will go into some practical details regarding governance and how it can work for you in a practical way. It was part of the governance to secure the gold standard in sport. An independent audit in the summer of 2020 was carried out by Geoff Wilson. Jeff Wilson has worked with FIFA UEFA and is very well known and an expert in his field. The purpose of the audit was to explain what good governance, why it's important is and to highlight the risk of poor governance, for example the reputational and economical damage.

Geoff researched IMMAF's existing policies and procedures, interviewed stakeholders, spoke to members of the board, members of staff, yourselves, federations, and sponsors, basically anyone who is involved in our work.

Following his research, he identified 34 governance-related issues across all the IMMAF's function areas requiring our attention. However, it was noted that our governance was very good but required some attention.

What we did was to identify the areas requiring attention. These were outlined on a spreadsheet divided into color coded themes for example items for the board, General organization etc. We listed what needed attention, when it required attention and who was responsible for delivery. *(Examples shown on screen included a financial issue of distribution of development funds in terms of detection of corruption against bribery, money laundering and whistle blowing).*

Budget development required attention in regards to management of variants, expectations, limitation, we worked in collaboration with the audit commission.

We worked through the action plan and reporting frequency to the IMMAF board. It was a lot of work to get completed. There are five outstanding items which should be resolved within the next three months.

The items should be seen as living, with constant reviews. The key to recognition to the relevant bodies is constant development, of which also assist for sponsorship, for example building a brand as the expectation is a high standard of governance.

ND thank all for their attention.

DW – thanked ND for the hard work and commented that we are now in a strong position in moving forward.

Annual Financial Statements

Annual Financial statements year ending 2019, presented by CEO - DW

- We had a good year in 2019 not as good as 2018 where we made a small profit. There was a small loss in 2019. The loss was contributed to bank charges and exchange rates. We work with lots of different currencies.
- Minus the bank charges it would've been a break-even year.
- The audit highlighted the need to build in a reserve fund. The reserve should be at a level to keep the organization running for at least 12 months.
- Our annual turnover is in the region of US\$2 million. We need to work towards building towards this figure.
- Covid has restricted this reserve fund in terms of a lack of entry fees for competitions.
- One competition was held in 2020 the others were canceled. Therefore, that revenue was lost.
- As I've mentioned previously in regards to competition, it helps us with cash flow, however doesn't give us income. We actually make a loss on every competition. Even when the host federation has picked up cost such as in Bahrain for 3 years. We still incur cost that are not covered.
- We have accumulated losses over a number of years. A position that needs to be reversed.

Vote for approval of Accounts 2019 - Approved.

Annual Financial statements year ending 2020, presented by CEO - DW

- It was agreed at the extra ordinary committee meeting to change auditors.
- PWC are our auditors. They are a large reputable organization. Who can meet our growing needs. It's also good practice to change auditors over a certain period.
- They carried out the 2020 audit in good time
- We made quite a big loss US\$297,512. I understand that there weren't any international federations that had not made a loss during the pandemic. For an organization of our size, this is quite huge loss. However, when we look at what was lost in other international federations, they had lost millions and went back to the international Olympic committee to reach out for support.
- As we start coming out to the pandemic we will get to a good position.
- We have hosting rights coming from the MMA for the world championships and we are working on others deals. UFC is supporting us.

Vote for approval of Accounts 2020 - Approved.

Financial Audit Committee report and the matter of freedom of liability for the Board of Directors and the President

Presented by CEO – DW.

There is a newly created financial reporting mechanism and a comprehensive procedures manual, approved by the board. The Report is independent of IMMAF Financial Committee.

- Dennis Rowan - Chair
- Svetlana Odintsova - IMMAF Director
- Luigi Perillo - Swiss Federation and member of the audit commission -

- Gosha Malik - Staff Liaison for the committee
- Kerrith Brown - President
- Densign White - CEO

Vote for - Audit Report by Audit Commission & freedom of liability for the board of directors and President – Approved.

Approval of Auditors

Vote to continue to work with PWC - Audit Commissioners – Approved.

Suspension or Expulsion of Members

Presented by CEO – Densign White

We have had one case. A comprehensive report was sent to you by the arbitration committee. The board had suspended the US Federation. They wanted to bring a case to the arbitration committee. The arbitration committee ruled in our favor. The result being the board had acted correctly.

We were bringing this issue to the meeting today however since the arbitration, the US Federation resigned their membership. Therefore, they'll be no need for a decision in this meeting.

We are working with other bodies in the United States and I feel we will be in a better situation in the future.

Approval of New Members

Presented by CEO – Densign White

We would like for you to agree for 'observation members to become full members. Please note observation periods are between 1 and 2 years.

They have all been working hard and have developed some good work. We have had feedback on their performance over a period of time.

We very rarely make applicants member from day one. We like to see: -

- how they work over a period of time
- do they have the responsibility for MMA
- if they have the traction within the country
- if there are no conflicts with other bodies
- We want solid federations that can give us more power in more regions.

We feel these people have done good work.

UAE	UAE Jiu-Jitsu and Mixed Martial Arts Federation	H.E Abdulmunem Sayed Mohamed Al Hashmi
Angola	Associação Provincial de MMA de Luanda	Armando Carlos Diogo
Barbados	Barbados Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Paul Forte
Ecuador	Ecuador Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Gorky Esteban Rodriguez Maldonado
France	French Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Dominique Nato
Guyana	Guyana Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Gavin Singh
Israel	Mixed Martial Arts Federation Israel	Ido Pariende
Jamaica	MMA Jamaica Sports Federation	Matthew Colquhoun
Kosovo	Federata Arteve mikse Marciala Kosoves	Besart Berisha
Mongolia	Mongolian Mixed Martial Art Federation	Pantii Gankhuyag
Nigeria	Nigeria Mixed Martial Art Federation	Amb. Henry George Nkoro
Philippines	Philippines Mixed Martial Arts Federation	Alvin Aguilar
Puerto Rico	Federacion Independiente de Artes Marciales Mixtas de	Orlando Sanchez Ruiz
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone Mixed Martial Arts Association	Saidu Sesay
Slovenia	Slovenia MMA Federation	Zlatko Mahich
Turkey	Turkey Combat Mixed Martial Arts Sport Association	Magomedmurad Alibekov
Uruguay	Asociación Liga Uruguay de MMA Amateur y Profesion	Fernando Emilio Degregorio Llugdar
Venezuela	Federación Venezolana de Artes Marciales Mixtas,	Mauricio Alexander Delgado Cartaya
Zambia	Mixed Martial Arts Zambia	Benjamin Bush
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Mixed Martial Arts Association	Felix Munyaradzi Matsitsiro

Vote for federations to become members – Approved.

They are all now full members, congratulations (*applause*).

Closing of the meeting

DW - I want to thank you all for your attendance. For listening and for your support. We could not have achieved any of the things we have without you. You give us the strength and the motivation to try harder and do better.

Final closing remarks from the President- Kerrith Brown.

Congratulations to the new members. Welcome to the family of IMMAF. Congratulations on achieving the work that you have done over the past months and years to ensure you became a member of the IMMAF family. Thank you, the full members for voting them in. It's good to see the support you have given other members on this amazing journey.

Once again I'd like to thank: -

- The host federation for the work and support, along with the challenges
- MMA for giving us the support. We have another competition, the super cup in March in Bahrain. It's a test event and if it all goes well we will want to expand it and ensure it's inclusive for all of our members.
- IMMAF staff for the work and continuous contributions
- Referees and judges. I know how passionate you are about your work and commitment. It's not an easy task ensuring that we meet the high standards
- Each one of the Board of directors for the work you have put in.
- The president and the representatives
- The sponsors. Greenhill for supplying us with equipment on a regular basis
- UFC our partners, they have supported us during the 10 year period



IMMAF

- France was instrumental. Meetings are held on a regular basis every two weeks, grateful for the support to federations

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Good luck to those who have athletes in the final.

I asked that everyone be careful, we are still in a bubble and still need to wear our mask. I would like everyone to return home safely.

I look forward to seeing you at the next event. Congratulations to you all. Thank you all for the support and good luck.

MEETING OFFICIALLY CLOSED