

ICHA, 3 October 2011

Closing remarks by Louis Romanet, IFHA Chairman

Today **50** countries were represented compared to 56 last year, which clearly shows the economic difficulties that Racing Authorities are facing around the world.

But in this difficult times what are the principal conclusions of today's Conference and other meetings organised during the previous week ?

A. General Assembly and Regulatory Issues

1. Review of the Executive Office of IFHA :

After the implementation of the new organisation of IFHA in 2010, the Executive Council will have to review the structure of the Executive Office and prepare the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen for the period of October 2012 to October 2015.

Besides the financial aspects, an increase of the Regional input at technical level from the four principal parts of the world will be necessary to achieve the objectives of IFHA.

This includes the new European and Mediterranean Horseracing Federation who has not yet taken the necessary leadership.

2. Progress Report about Developing countries :

As Björn EKLUND said, the EMHF is still young, includes a big number of countries and has a lot to achieve.

However, racing and betting information has been exchanged, and a successful Handicappers meeting has been organised.

Concerning the Asian Racing Federation, the development of an Action Plan concentrated on two areas was agreed to start : it includes on one side Arabian countries (Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar) and on the other side, Vietnam with offers of cross-border assistance.

Next steps will be taken at the ARF Conference in Turkey in July 2012.

3. Committee Reports :

3.1.- International Stud Book Committee chaired by Paul Greeves

With the approval of the Uzbekistan Stud Book, there is now 68 approved Stud-Books around the world :

- 33 Europe and Mediterranean countries
- 13 Asia
- 9 North and Central America and the Caribbean
- 9 South America
- 2 Southern Africa
- 2 Australia and New Zealand

The Committee has commissioned work to develop Web based procedures which will allow remote training and education of emerging Stud Books and supervision of existing Approved Stud Books.

It should take at least two years to complete but it is very important to prepare the future.

3.2.- TAC chaired by Andrew Harding

There were 25 items on the busy Agenda of the TAC meeting which shows how important is this annual rendez-vous of our Technical experts who are permanently reviewing our International Agreement.

They have agreed on a draft article dealing with the definition and criteria of “A Recognised Racing Authority” that could be applied worldwide and will be discussed at the Executive Council tomorrow before being sent to all to you.

3.3.- IRPAC chaired by Carl Hamilton

3 races from Qatar have been promoted from Part III to Part II recognising the great efforts made by the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club to improve the quality of its thoroughbred racing.

IRPAC will be finalising for next year the very important review of the Guidelines applicable for promotion and demotion of Group and Graded races to different parts of the International Cataloguing Standards Booklet.

Significant progress has been achieved in South America in order to establish a centralised handicapping system and to comply with international standards for quality control of Graded races by the end of next year.

3.4.- International Agreement and Medication Issues

The Introduction and the Preamble have been modified and replaced by Objectives and Race Horse Welfare minimal requirements which have to be accepted by all signatories to any part of the Agreement.

A new draft of Article 6 has been distributed and will be discussed by all Committees concerned before a final version is presented to you next year.

It concerns ethic considerations, prohibited substances, prohibited practices, genetic manipulations and medication in training.

Professor Houghton has been updating us on the harmonization of International Screening Limits and Detection Times which are very important issues for owners as the Aga Khan told you earlier this afternoon.

He has also announced you the dates of the next ICRAV meeting which will be held in September 2012 and we encourage you to send your analysts and veterinarians as it is the most important conference to discuss between experts how to make progress for the welfare of the horse and the integrity of racing.

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B. Open Forum

1. Presentation of countries

1.1.- Mauritius Turf Club

The Mauritius Turf Club will celebrate its bicentenary next year and we have been listening to its Chairman, Gavin Glover, explaining us that they are facing big challenges.

I was delighted to hear that they have received last Saturday the authorization to commingle pools at national and international levels.

I wish them also good luck to take the right decision for the future of the Champ de Mars.

1.2.- Jockey Club of Belgium

Thierry Lohest has presented to us the difficulties which Belgium has been facing and the new betting Law that has just been implemented. We hope it will be a new start for his country.

2. Update on Topics

We have been updated on 2010 topics in USA, Australia and France.

2.1. - Alex Waldrop has told us that the US horseracing industry may lose its exclusive right to conduct Internet based pari-mutuel wagering but will then negotiate to obtain reasonable compensation.

2.2. – Andrew Harding gave us the results of the Racefields court case in Australia.

2.3. – Hubert Monzat explained that betting on horseracing in France has been very resistant to maintain its market share against sports and poker betting with an increase of 4.5 % this year. However, there are still several challenges to overcome, especially with the European Union, in order to obtain the guarantee of a fair return for the racing industry.

3. Economic trends

You have all received a month ago the excellent Annual Report of IFHA for 2010 prepared by Aki Akitani who has summarized today the economic trends of last year.

The number of foals has declined by 7% with Australia being the only one to register a growth (+ 6.7 %) and Ireland decreasing by 29 %.

The number of races has been decreasing by 3% and prize money by 1.6 % in local currencies.

Total betting turnover has been decreasing by 1.4 %.

European countries severely suffered with the exception of France who had a small increase (+ 0.4 %). Japan was down by 6 %.

Sales figures were bottoming out as we can see from the first yearling auctions organised this year.

Aki told you how to predict the future trend of the turnover in your country and if you want more help from him please do not hesitate to contact him as he is always having a very realistic approach.

3.1. – Asian Racing Conference in 2012

The next Asian Racing Conference will be organised in Istanbul in July 2012.

C. Afternoon Session

His Highness the Aga Khan has explained you that Regulators should become facilitators and innovators in the future.

He has presented to us six areas of concern to work on : educational institutions, financing mechanisms, insurance protection, business information, racing facilities and the control of therapeutic substances.

He has been asking the Regulators to ensure that all the key players benefit from the best of science, embodied in a global set of fair, well-communicated and transparent standards.

Our approach towards International Screening Limits and Detection Times is going the right way but we still have a lot of work to achieve to satisfy the global racing community.

1. Future role of Racing Authorities

1.1.- Brian Kavanagh was the moderator of this session.

1.2.- Charles Hayward

Charles Hayward has been presenting us the bright future of NYRA.

The new Casinos that will replace Aqueduct Racetrack should generate around 100 Million dollars in 2012 for NYRA and the thoroughbred industry from which 50 % will go to purses and breeders' fund.

1.3.- Juan Carlos CAPELLI

As one of the most international sponsors, Juan Carlos CAPELLI, Vice President of Longines, told us that we should :

- Promote the image of horseracing as a full fledged sporting discipline
- Go beyond the gambling aspect
- Reinforce the notion of time.

2. Future challenges in racing

2.1.- Winfried ENGELBRECHT-BRESGES

As Winfried ENGELBRECHT-BRESGES told us, racing has to be more outside-in than inside-out when examining our issues and future options to prepare the best offerings for our customers.

2.2.- Jim GAGLIANO

We had a very impressive presentation by Jim GAGLIANO of the current state and prospective future of thoroughbred breeding and racing in North America.

The US Jockey Club and MacKinsey have collaborated to make a deep review of the present situation in order to identify the main issues facing racing and to define a growth strategy for thoroughbred racing.

They have identified nine initiatives which should be carefully studied by all of us as some of them would certainly directly apply to other countries around the world.

Congratulations for this excellent work and good luck for your ambitious plan and for your battle against medication.

2.3.- Leading Journalists perspectives

To conclude we had very interesting presentations of three well known international journalists.

2.3.1. – Howard Wright

Howard Wright who makes every year the best possible coverage of our Conference in the Racing Post on its website, gave us recommendations on how to treat the media.

He also encouraged us to use the new media considering that Twitter is overtaking the internet as the fastest service of information.

2.3.2. – Steve Crist

Steve Crist made three recommendations to us :

- We should offer the best possible racing product
- We must generate public confidence in the betting market and reasonable levels of takeout
- Annual welfare should be one of our top priorities with more funding for veterinary research and retirement programs.

2.3.3. – *Steve Moran*

Steve Moran told us we should RE-INVENT, RE-ESTABLISH and RE-ENGAGE.

Steve thinks that :

- We should educate racing enthusiasts to increase our customer base and encourage stable membership as fans through social media
- We should re-establish the sport as mainstream via the media
- We should increase the level of information available on course
- We should have an International Racing Website with live vision of major races and form guides

Steve is also dreaming of an international raceday in both hemispheres with a dozen Group 1 races at six different venues around the globe with riders wearing national colours.

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Here are my principal conclusions from this very interesting day and I would like now to thank especially :

- ☞ France Galop for its hospitality at dinner on Saturday and at its headquarters today.
- ☞ All the speakers and moderators who gave us their time to prepare such interesting presentations and especially our keynote speaker HH the Aga Khan (a memory stick is available for you outside this door)
- ☞ My three Vice-Chairmen and the Chairmen of all our Committees
- ☞ All ExCo members
- ☞ Dominique de Wenden and Aki Akitani

- ☞ All the technical teams of France Galop and Leo Production
- ☞ All the interpreters.

Thank you for your attention and have a good trip back home.

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