

Appendix to Annex 72

African Chess Union Report – November 2008 FIDE Congress (Dresden – Germany)

1. PREAMBLE

Since the Continental Assembly held in Namibia in September 2007 there has been a number of developments worth reporting on. Whilst there are few successes, Africa continues to lag behind on chess development in comparison with other continents. Indeed money could be the major challenge in some instances but even where funds are available there are issues of lack of initiative. This is demonstrated by the failure to use its allocation (the largest share) from CACDEC.

2. ACU MEMBERSHIP

It is pleasing to report on the expansion of the ACU family with the provisional acceptance (subject to ratification by the Dresden General Assembly) of the following members:

Sao Tome and Principe
Cameroon Chess Federation
Congo Chess Federation
Gabon Chess Federation

Efforts by FIDE Vice President Lewis Ncube in visiting some of the countries are appreciated. Suffice to mention that more visits are planned to the rest of Africa, with the idea to register as many countries as possible.

Whilst this is an exciting development, the fact that a number of African countries are temporary excluded is very disturbing. Currently the following are excluded:

Burkina-Fasso
Djibouti
Gambia
Mali
Mauritania
Senegal
Tanzania

3. CHESS IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Efforts by member federations to engage authorities for inclusion of chess as part of the curriculum were noted. Somali needs to be commended for incorporation of chess in the school curriculum. In spite of the absence of a central government for over a decade, the Somali Chess Federation is doing a commendable job.

4. CHESS EVENTS

4.1 Africa Youth Championship

There was a lot of excitement regarding the prospect of the first ever continental youth chess games, which was to take place in South Africa in July 2008. Owing to a few challenges, South Africa called off the event but has made a bid to host the event in 2009. Dates and other details on the event are still to be confirmed by Chess South Africa.

4.2 Zone 4.3 Team Championship

Mozambique hosted the Zone 4.3 Team Chess Championship-2008 for men. The Championships took place over the period 13 July (arrival) to 19 July 2008 (departure) at “Joaquim Chissano Palace”, in Maputo, Mozambique. This was the first time the zone held a team event, following Individual championship held in the past. This was a good start and therefore other zones should follow suit.

Hosting of the event followed recommendations from the ACU Generally Meeting held in Namibia, which emphasised the need to increase events beyond the All Africa Games, Individual Championship and Junior events.

4.3 Africa Junior Chess Championship

The 2007 edition of the African Junior Chess Championship took place in Malawi over the period 28 December to 6 January 2008. The open section was won by Kareim Wagein from Egypt while the girl’s section was won by South Africa’s Wiid Darleen. Malawi Chess Federation has to be congratulated for hosting a successful event at short notice following last minute withdrawal by Uganda.

South Africa is hosting the 2008 African Junior Chess Championship, over the same period as last year - from 28 December 2008 to 6 January 2009. Preparations for the event are on track.

4.4 Chess in Schools Tour of Africa

A delegation of three, comprising CACDEC Chairperson Allan Herbert, Continental President for the Americas Gorge Vega and the Chess in Schools Chairperson Professor Uvencio Blanco visited South Africa and Botswana in September 2008. The main purpose of the trip was to again insight on the ground regarding chess development in Africa. A second lap of the mission will cover North and West Africa most probably early in 2009.

4.5 Zone 4.3 Training of Arbiters

Botswana hosted the Zone 4.3 training for arbiters in August 2008 as part of the capacity building initiative. A setback was the mobilisation by the host to have many countries participating.

5. CHALLENGES

5.1 CACDEC Capacity Building

The continent failed to use the 2007 budget allocation to support training of trainers and with 2008 coming to a close it is very likely that the provision for training of arbiters will not be used. As part of capacity building effort each zone was allocated seed money amounting to \$10 000 to cover fees for trainers, travel and accommodation. There have been repeated appeals to the zone to make use of such funds without success. This trend makes it difficult to justify increased funding for the continent under CACDEC.

5.2 Tournaments and Events

The African Junior continues to be the only perennial event for the continent. Recognising the lack of tournaments in the continent, the General Assembly in Namibia resolved that there should be zonal individual and team championships interspersing the All Africa Games. A year has since passed without any pledges, save for Mozambique which held the Zone 4.3 team championships for men in 2008. There is need for zonal structures to take the initiative if the resolution is to be realised.

5.3 Registration for Olympiad

Registration for the Dresden Olympiad proved to be a serious challenge for many African countries and this need to be noted for the record and as an important learning for future Olympiads. Whilst it should be acknowledged that managing an event of the magnitude of the Chess Olympiad is a mammoth task, there were instances where the organisers left too much to be desired. Communication between federations and the organisers often proved a serious challenge. The tendency to be too mechanical in dealing with federations rather than treating each case on its merits made matters even worse.

5.4 Visa Applications

Visa applications for many African Countries proved to be a very serious problem in the light of the very stringent requirements for Schengen states. To the extent that players and officials from Africa were denied visas because they did not have a job or their bank balances were not healthy is very sad. This goes against the spirit of inclusivity as enshrined in the FIDE Slogan of 'Gen una Sumas'. In voting for bids for hosting future Chess Olympiads, there is need to have bidders make a commitment in writing vouching for the ease of securing visa.

6. ACU Financial Report

The financial report for 2008 is herewith attached. It would be noted that there is generally no inflow, in the absence of event entry fees. There is therefore a long way to go before the continent is financially independent. Suffice to note that currently travel costs by the ACU President are covered directly from FIDE.