



## STEP BY STEP

Preparatory work continued throughout 2009 on the VISION 2012 project to establish a single International Federation governing DanceSport. Two vital meetings contemplated the issue: the Annual General Meeting of the International DanceSport Federation in Macau, CHN, and the first meeting of the IDSF VISION 2012 Working Group in Sant Cugat, ESP.

Contemplation is, according to the dictionaries, a process of looking at something thoughtfully, of considering it as a possibility, and of thinking about it intently and at length.

The purpose of this (lengthy) article is to involve YOU in the process so that you can help the development from the outset.

*“Changes tend to produce uncertainty in those abandoning the status quo,”* the delegates in Macau were told by the IDSF Presidium. *“A well contemplated change is all about benefits.”*

VISION 2012 is the most ambitious project ever taken on by this governing body to define its mission further, to unite and serve the broadest constituent base, and to evolve – in due course – into the World DanceSport Federation. VISION 2012 was first presented to the 2007 Annual General Meeting in Barcelona. At that time, it appeared that many delegates considered the project with scepticism, partly because of its timing. The five-year projection was imposed on the IDSF vision with the intention of speeding up the preparatory work. The actual timeline for the process can only be established once the project has started, and only through democratic consensus between all the different parties involved.

### Step Back – In Time

The primary focus of the IDSF Forum held prior to the 2009 Annual General Meeting was on VISION 2012.

*“VISION 2012 would not be a viable proposition without us completing this retrospective first,”* President Freitag told the delegates. *“You have to know where you come from before you can know where you are going.”*

Indeed, by the time it was able to celebrate its golden jubilee – in 2007 – IDSF had grown to 84 National Member Bodies representing all continents – 59 of them were recognised by their National Olympic Committees. Furthermore, two international organisations had joined the federation as Associate Members in recent years, testifying to the fact that DanceSport is decidedly more than ten dances divided in two disciplines. The way IDSF has conducted its business thus far has earned praise from the authorities in world sports.



To summarise the content of the most pertinent slides which President Freitag presented to the delegates at the Forum, IDSF had – to date – succeeded in:

1. Securing the wide acceptance of DanceSport as a global sport, with growing participation on all continents;
2. Providing the only platform for DanceSport to operate under the governance of a competent and ethically irreproachable International Federation;
3. Offering athletes in DanceSport a progressive competition structure for the different age grades;
4. Developing standardised rules which hold up to scrutiny and guarantee the unbiased judging of an artistic sport.

This was achieved through vision, strategy and determination of an ever growing number of people committed to contribute their time and expertise to the continued development of DanceSport.

In the effort to bring more unity to DanceSport, to update some of the criteria in the governance of the sport, and to generally prepare to take on the challenges of modern times, the IDSF Presidium set out to work on the VISION 2012 programme.

To quote President Freitag: *“At the core of our vision is the holistic view on DanceSport. It is to become the single and encompassing brand uniting all the different forms of dance practised as sport. Even though we have kept the focus of IDSF exclusively on Latin and Standard for several decades, our more recent decisions to admit international organisations as Associate Members were based on the judgment that other disciplines fall under the genus name too. This view and the logic behind it were readily adopted by the world sports movement as well as by the public at large.”*

From this view and its logic derived the actual plan for IDSF to evolve into a new governing body, the World DanceSport Federation (WDSF), with four well defined aims:

1. To establish WDSF as the cohesive force between all stakeholders in all sporting activities which involve dance;
2. To improve DanceSport further through the synergies resulting from the combined knowledge base and expertise of the WDSF stakeholders;
3. To promote DanceSport on the strengths of a greater constituency, of the broadest demographic appeal, and of all the benefits arising from economy of scale;



4. To make DanceSport even more global, more ageless, more accessible, and more relevant for all.

Four main pillars to WDSF had been sketched out by the Presidium over the past two years:

1. Clear definitions and a consistent nomenclature are required for the proper governance of a newly united DanceSport.
2. The mission and vision statements as well as the statutory objectives for WDSF need to be brought in line with the new definitions and be approved by the stakeholders from the early stages.
3. A democratic and federalist structure of WDSF is the other overriding prerequisite.
4. The WDSF Statutes make IDSF and its Associate Members joint stakeholders in the body that is to govern the new DanceSport, allowing for all parties to adhere to their proven best practice standards while uniting in the pursuit of common goals

A considerable amount of work had already gone into the draft blueprints. They were presented to the Forum as the basis for further study and deliberation on agreeing principles. After all, it was an approval *“in principle”* of the VISION 2012 concept, and an explicit mandate to pursue its development further, which the Presidium sought to obtain from the delegates in Macau.

The ensuing debate made it all the more obvious that VISION 2012 is an evolutionary process which will need to shift a number of paradigms and, therefore, will likely extend over a number of years.

Discussions were less about the fundamentals of VISION 2012 and more about problems associated with its implementation. The minutes of the 2009 IDSF Annual General Meeting reflect the most important concerns brought up in the discussions – and they lists those answers to the *“delegates’ robust questioning”* which the Presidium was able to provide at this early stage.

*“All structural changes as well as changes to statutes, rules and regulations will all need to be approved by the Annual General Meetings over the years to come, before IDSF can evolve into WDSF,”* the delegates were assured by President Freitag. *“The IDSF members can thus ensure that the pace of change is measured and in accordance with their and DanceSport’s best interests.”*

## **Step Forward – In Concept**

The day after the Forum debate a first motion concerning VISION 2012 was passed unanimously by the 2009 IDSF Annual General Meeting. The motion presented by Germany and Russia called for the delegates to endorse the continued development of the VISION 2012 concept by the IDSF Presidium, and the creation of a working group composed of representatives of National



Member Bodies, of Associate Members and of other organisations governing DanceSport disciplines at the world level.

*“A few of our Member Bodies have first-hand experience with all aspects of assembling the many different disciplines of DanceSport in a well-functioning national federation,”* President Freitag had pointed out to the delegates earlier. *“It would be of great interest to hear from them as we discuss the new world governing body now and in the future – until WDSF emerges.”*

Fortunately, the National Member Bodies of France, Germany and Italy agreed to contribute with their expertise to the refinement of the VISION 2012 concept, and to collaborate in preparing concrete proposals to future IDSF Annual General Meetings. The IDSF Associate Members, too, accepted to join the VISION 2012 Working Group, committing to bring their perspective to a process which ultimately aims at their complete integration into the new world governing body for DanceSport.

### **Another Step Forward**

The IDSF VISION 2012 Working Group held its first meeting on 25 October 2009 in Sant Cugat, near Barcelona. 19 people representing ten different organisations attended.

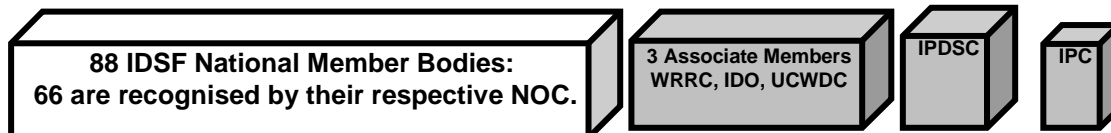
- IDSF Presidium Members Freitag, Hinder, Sietas and Tay
- French DanceSport Federation President Marty
- German DanceSport Federation President Allert
- Italian DanceSport Federation President Galvagno and Technical Secretary Valeri
- World Rock ‘n’ Roll Confederation President Kerpan-Izak and Secretary General Herrmann
- International Dance Organization Senior Vice-President Storbratten
- International Professional DanceSport Council President Tondon
- International Paralympic Committee Wheelchair DanceSport Manager Charitaki and IPC Wheelchair DanceSport Committee Chair Andersen
- United Western Country Dance Council – International Affairs President Bartholomew
- International Cheer Union Secretary General Olson and Adviser Jacki
- IDSF Advisers Bunn and Hilfiker

Expectations and objectives for the Working Group meeting were defined by the IDSF President at the start of the deliberations. A first consensus paper or joint statement was to be drafted between all attendees, and each organisation present was to make a separate summary declaration regarding VISION 2012 and the outcome of the meeting. Eight hours were allocated for the discussions.

Again, VISION 2012 – at its June 2009 state of development – was presented to the Working Group.



Particular emphasis was put on a thorough analysis of the status quo in the structure of IDSF – above all, the need for greater cohesion between the different parties making up the federation.



## International DanceSport Federation

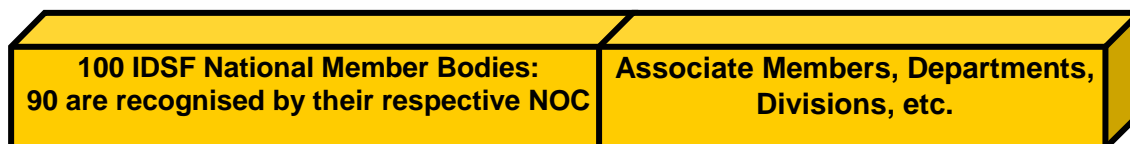
Acronyms: National Olympic Committee (NOC); World Rock 'n' Roll Confederation (WRRC); International Dance Organisation (IDO); United Country Western Dance Council (UCWDC); International Professional DanceSport Council (IPDSC); International Paralympic Committee (IPC)

The development of greater cohesion would reinforce the status of IDSF as an International Olympic Committee (IOC) Recognised Federation held since 1997 – which is up for periodic review in 2011!

After having submitted a 185-page questionnaire in 2007, IDSF will again have to report to the IOC Sports Department, providing detailed information on DanceSport and its governance. In 2011, the compliance of IDSF with seven criteria – which are defined by the Olympic Charter Rule 26 – will need to be confirmed once more.

A more cohesive structure of IDSF and its governance of DanceSport would not only benefit the reporting to the IOC, it would also be the appropriate point of departure for VISION 2012 to be implemented.

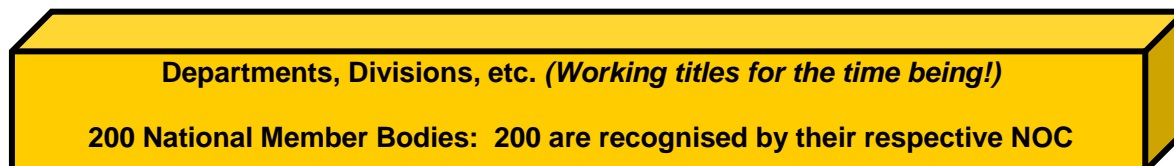
Implementation of VISION 2012 could start out by IDSF simply drawing its Associate Members and other allies closer than is currently the case. Applying certain optimism to the developments in the short-term future, IDSF could look like this by 2011:



## International DanceSport Federation



In due time, with the evolutionary process concluded and even more commitment applied, WDSF could and should be structured like this:



## World DanceSport Federation

All the disciplines are united in the new body which administers them through its departments or divisions, and which thrives on the combined strengths of the newly defined DanceSport and a much broader scope of direct governance.

As Ferruccio Calvagno, President of the Italian Federation, pointed out to the Working Group, the new definition for DanceSport would need to be all-embracing and consistent with those used by the United Nations, the Council of Europe and other international bodies.

Drafts for such a definition – as well as for the WDSF vision and mission statements – were presented to the IDSF Forum in June.

The Working Group discussed them at great length together with the other conditions essential to the emergence of WDSF, It goes without saying that answers to the many questions raised by the delegates to the 2009 Forum could not be provided at this point, and that the list of open questions was only expanded further. However, a presentation by Athena Charitaki, IPC Wheelchair DanceSport Manager, on how her organisation manages the technical supervision of several entirely different sports and provides centralised services to all of them inspired the group. It brought even more experienced insights to the discussions.

There was no debate on the many benefits for all constituents in WDSF: the win-win is all too obvious – and probably best exemplified by joint medical and anti-doping commissions set up between all parties from the earliest stages. But major concerns remain: how is the transition to be financed, how is the definite structure to be defined, considering all legal and political aspects of the status quo?

It was agreed between all organisations present in Sant Cugat that the mandate of the Working Group needs to be defined further in order for it to address the following problems:

- Compliance with anti-doping rules and regulations
- Potential membership conflicts
- Differences of culture within and between each organisation
- Financial matters



- Loss of current political powers
- Loss of individual identities
- Consistency in defining sporting criteria
- Legal matters
- Commercial and legal implications of centralising rights
- Other points raised by each organisation as the process continues

The Working Group must also obtain additional, pertinent and extensive information, regarding the governance of the different disciplines by each organisation. A profile for each organisation – i.e. Associate Member and ally in the VISION 2012 concept – will need to be established, taking account of the current organisational structures, financial management and best practice standards. And, importantly, the statutes of all organisations will have to be scrutinised further to rule out possible conflicts with those of IDSF at this stage.

Refinements to the composition of the VISION 2012 Working Group were also discussed to ensure maximum efficiency in dealing with the issues in hand. One dissenting voice was recorded when it came to a five-member representation of IDSF in the group. It was suggested by the International Dance Organisation that all organisations should have an equal number of representatives at future meetings. Given the fact that VISION 2012 is an IDSF project– initiated and paid for by IDSF up to this point – and considering that three IDSF National Member Bodies can contribute significantly to its development, the number of IDSF representatives seemed well justified.

It was also emphasised by the IDSF President that the Working Group – even though spearheading VISION 2012 on behalf of IDSF, the Associate Members and the allies – would never resort to a vote on the issues it discusses. It would rather seek to find the total consensus between all parties. Voting on VISION 2012, Carlos Freitag said, remains the privilege of the Annual General Meetings held by each organisation separately. At least until such time as the vision turns into reality and WDSF is finally established!

### **The Decisive Step – In Unity**

At the conclusion of the first meeting of the VISION 2012 Working Group on 25 October 2009, the attendees drafted the following joint statement:

One can rightfully consider the brief text to be the crucial step towards full implementation of the ambitious VISION 2012 project: it is the first **CONSENSUS** paper drawn up **BETWEEN ALL PARTIES** who pursue **IDENTICAL IDEALS AND OBJECTIVES** in promoting dance as sport. No doubt, a new DanceSport structure had started to emerge before this statement was released, but **UNITY** was hardly the word most commonly associated with it in the past. Even if the text falls short of outlining the sequence of steps required to bring about significant change and greater unity, it affirms the commitment of all prospective WDSF constituents to continue their work in achieving both.



As agreed, each organisation was also able to make its independent views on the outcome of the meeting known:

*“The expectations for this meeting have been fulfilled. The idea of WDSF has been accepted. A step-by-step approach must be applied.”*

International DanceSport Federation

*“The meeting showed a willingness within DanceSport to work together. The challenge will be to promote the sport disciplines and not the federation ... Athletes must be put above everything else.”*

IDSF Member Body for France

*“By bringing all parties together a common process will be developed in the interests of all.”*

IDSF Member Body for Germany

*“The outcome of the meeting was very positive ... DanceSport needs the WDSF, and in the spirit of democracy all opinions should be obtained.”*

IDSF Member Body for Italy

*“A number of vital questions have been answered and the vision has become clear. The way forward can only be through a step-by-step approach – recognising and managing potential obstacles.”*

World Rock ‘n’ Roll Confederation

*“A common belief in the project has been demonstrated. There is strength in unity.”*

International Dance Organisation

*“There is full support for the project which will benefit the new Professional Division.”*

International Professional DanceSport Council

*“The meeting has enabled the position of IDSF to be fully understood. The necessary steps to move forward have been identified.”*

International Paralympic Committee

*“The meeting has given a clearer vision of WDSF and the planned organisational structure. This will aid in migrating the United Country Western Dance Council into the WDSF.”*

United Country Western Dance Council

*“The most positive aspect was the opportunity to make new contacts. There is a strong belief that all parties have a common objective.”*

International Cheer Union

## **Leave Your Footprint Too!**



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Immediately following the meeting of the Working Group, a full report on the outcome was circulated to all organisations. This WDSM article plus two dedicated websites – [www.worlddancesportfederation.org](http://www.worlddancesportfederation.org) and [www.dancesporttotal.blogspot.com](http://www.dancesporttotal.blogspot.com) – take up on the report and on VISION 2012 in general. As a process requiring continuous dialogue between the different parties, VISION 2012 needs to be based on state-of-the-art communications. The dancesporttotal blog “With a View to the Future!” is the platform where YOU, TOO, can contribute with your views and suggestions to make YOUR DanceSport more unified, global, ageless and accessible.