



14TH WORLD RUGBY GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2019

MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE 14th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

WORLD RUGBY

ANA InterContinental Hotel Tokyo, Japan

THURSDAY OCTOBER 31, 2019

PRESENT

Bill Beaumont (Chairman)
Agustin Pichot (Vice-Chairman – Argentina)
John Jeffrey and Mark Dodson (Scotland)
Pat Whelan and John O'Driscoll (Ireland)
Gareth Davies and Anthony Buchanan (Wales)
Jonathan Webb and Stephen Brown (England)
Brett Robinson and Bill Pulver (Australia)
Mark Robinson and Steve Tew (New Zealand)
Mark Alexander and Jurie Roux (South Africa)
Bernard Laporte and Serge Simon (France)
Carlos Araujo (Argentina)
Alfredo Gavazzi and Nino Sacca (Italy)
Pat Parfrey (Canada)
Ichiro Kono (Japan)
George Nijaradze (Georgia)
Alin Petrache (Romania)
Bob Latham (United States of America)
Octavian Morariu (Rugby Europe)
Trevor Gregory (Asia Rugby)
Abdelaziz Bougja (Rugby Africa)
Dennis Dwyer (Rugby Americas North)
Marcello Rodriguez (Sudamerica Rugby)
Richard Sapias (Oceania Rugby)

Brett Gosper (Chief Executive Officer)
Robert Brophy (Head of Finance)
David Carrigy (Head of Development & International Relations)
Mark Egan (Head of Competitions & Performance)
Alan Gilpin (Chief Operating Officer/Head of RWC)
Mark Harrington (Head of Technical Services)
Tom Hill (Head of Commercial)
Alistair Maclean (General Counsel)
Dominic Rumbles (Head of Communications)

UNIONS REPRESENTED

Full Member Unions in Attendance

American Samoa Rugby Football Union
Bahamas Rugby Football Union
Barbados Rugby Football Union
Bermuda Rugby Union
Botswana Rugby Union
Cayman Rugby Union
Česka Rugbyová Unie
Chinese Rugby Football Association
Chinese Taipei Rugby Football Union
Confederação Brasileira de Rugby
Cook Islands Rugby Union
Costa Rica Rugby Union
Dansk Rugby Union
Deutscher Rugby Verband
Eswatini Rugby Union
Federação Portuguesa de Rugby
Federació Andorrana de Rugbi
Federación Colombiana de Rugby
Federación de Rugby de Chile
Federación Española de Rugby
Federación Mexicana de Rugby AC
Federacion Peruana De Rugby
Federación Venezolana de Rugby Amateur
Federatia Romana de Rugbi
Federația Sportivă Națională de Rugby
Fédération Belge de Rugby
Fédération Française de Rugby
Fédération Ivoirienne de Rugby
Fédération Luxembourgeoise de Rugby
Fédération Malagasy de Rugby
Fédération Monégasque de Rugby
Fédération Royale Marocaine de Rugby
Fédération Rwandaise de Rugby
Fédération Sénégalaise de Rugby
Fédération Suisse de Rugby
Fédération Tahitienne de Rugby
Fédération Tunisienne de Rugby
Federazione Italiana Rugby
Fiji Rugby Union
Georgian Rugby Union
Ghana Rugby Union
Guam Rugby Football Union
Guyana Rugby Football Union
Hong Kong Rugby Union
Hrvatski Ragbijaški Savez
Indian Rugby Football Union
Irish Rugby Football Union
Israel Rugby Union
Jamaica Rugby Football Union

14th World Rugby General Assembly Minutes

Japan Rugby Football Union
Kazakhstan Rugby Federation
Kazakhstan Rugby Federation
Kenya Rugby Football Union
Korea Rugby Union
Latvijas Regbija Federacija
Lithuanian Rugby Federation
Magyar Rögbi Szövetség
Malaysia Rugby Union
Malta Rugby Football Union
Namibia Rugby Union
Nederlands Rugby Bond
New Zealand Rugby
Nigeria Rugby Football Federation
Niue Rugby Football Union
Norges Rugby Forbund
Österreichischer Rugby Verband
Pakistan Rugby Union
Papua New Guinea
Persatuan Rugby Union Indonesia
Philippine Rugby Football Union
Polski Związek Rugby
Ragbi Savez Bosne i Hercegovine
Rugby Australia
Rugby Canada
Rugby Football Union
Rugby Union Mauritius
Rugby Union of Russia
Rugby Union of Serbia
Rugby Zveza Slovenije
Samoa Rugby Union
Scottish Rugby Union
Singapore Rugby Union
Slovakia Rugby Union
Solomon Islands Rugby Union Federation
South African Rugby Union
Sri Lanka Rugby Football Union
St. Vincent & The Grenadines Rugby Union
Suomen Rugbyliitto
Svenska Rugby Forbundet
Thai Rugby Union
Tonga Rugby Union
Trinidad & Tobago Rugby Football Union
Uganda Rugby Football Union
Ukraine Rugby Union
Union Argentina de Rugby
Union de Rugby del Paraguay
Union de Rugby del Uruguay
United Arab Emirates Rugby Federation
USA Rugby
Uzbekistan Rugby Union
Vanuatu Rugby Football Union

14th World Rugby General Assembly Minutes

Welsh Rugby Union
Zambia Rugby Football Union
Zimbabwe Rugby Union

Associate Member Unions in Attendance

Algeria Rugby Federation
British Virgin Islands Rugby Union
Brunei Rugby Football Union
Burundi Rugby Union
Cyprus Rugby Union
Fédération Burkinabé de Rugby
Federation Malienne de Rugby
Guatemala Rugby Union
Iran Rugby Federation
Kyrgystan Rugby Union
Lao Rugby Union
Lebanese Rugby Union Federation
Mongolia Rugby Football Union
Slovakia Rugby Union
St. Lucia Rugby Union
Togo Rugby Union

Apologies were received from the following absent Full Member Unions

Bulgarian Rugby Federation
Mauritania Rugby Union

Apologies were received from the following absent Associate Member Unions

Azerbaijan Rugby Union
Tanzania Rugby Union

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman, Sir Bill Beaumont, extended a warm welcome to Mr. Shigetaka Mori, President of the Japan Rugby Football Union and all the delegates on the occasion of the 14th General Assembly of World Rugby in Tokyo, Japan.

The Chairman noted that every branch of the World Rugby Family was represented with almost all of the Unions, Regional Associations, World Rugby Council and World Rugby staff in attendance.

The Chairman recalled that 10 years ago, World Rugby made the brave and historic decision to award Japan the hosting rights for 2019. He noted that the tournament had been emotional and inspirational in equal parts with record breaking TV audiences, sold out stadia, packed fan zones and unprecedented social and digital engagement.

The Chairman also recalled that 10 years ago, the World Rugby General Assembly in Dublin helped create the strategic plan that has guided our path to this magnificent and successful Rugby World Cup. He noted that it was fitting that the Rugby family were gathered again to consider our future direction and develop a new strategic plan that will pave the way for even greater expansion and innovation around the world.

The Chairman thanked the Unions and Regional Associations for the role they have played in the fantastic strides' Rugby had made over the past decade. He added that collectively the game had delivered transformational governance reform, unprecedented growth, greater inclusivity and sustainable development. The Chairman outlined that World Rugby had modernised the global game and the way the sport is governed through bold decision-making and a progressive vision, while keeping Rugby's values at heart.

The Chairman expressed his view that he was certain that together World Rugby can build on this excellent progress as it looks to the future. He noted that as custodians of our sport, World Rugby, the Regional Associations and Unions must lead from the front. He added that the game must be prepared for change if it is to inspire change in others.

The Chairman suggested that World of Rugby has three significant questions to consider when it comes to change, why should Rugby consider change? what needs to change to make a difference and finally how can we achieve progress?

The Chairman noted that Rugby has enjoyed six successful Rugby World Cups over the past 10 years, and he added that Rugby is now an established Olympic sport. The Chairman informed the meeting that Rugby is enjoying record participation and fan growth, with women now making up more than a quarter of the global playing population. The meeting heard that Rugby enjoys financial stability and that World Rugby redistribute more than 90 percent of its revenues across the sport.

The Chairman advised the meeting that World Rugby has revitalised its governance structure with over 33% female representation on Council. The Chairman added that as part of World Rugby's ongoing governance reform that Council had continued to be expanded through the addition of Unions elected to Council with Fiji and Samoa attending their first Council meetings in May of 2019 and Uruguay the latest Union to be elected to Council at the 2019 Interim Meeting of Council. He concluded that the current strategic plan has served the sport well.

The Chairman suggested that success is perhaps the best reason for driving change. The Chairman noted that in a world moving faster than ever, today's success can be a springboard for positive transformation now and in the future. The Chairman stated that Rugby must address challenges head on and adapt to our rapidly changing environment, looking at areas such as:

- The fight to remain relevant – a sport of choice for young people
- The need to make the sport as safe as it can be
- The need to expand and grow beyond our traditional heartlands
- The need to provide a fair competition opportunity for all
- The growth and influence of private equity in our sport
- The need to protect the values that make our sport what it is

The Chairman advised the meeting that if the world of Rugby do not drive this change itself, others will drive it for us. The Chairman noted that World Rugby want to be the leaders of change, not the object of change.

The Chairman advised the delegates that this then poses the question of what to change to make a difference? The Chairman noted that we are living in a fast-changing world, living in a society more fragmented, more individualized, hungrier for entertainment than ever. A society that has no place for complacency. A society that questions everything.

The Chairman advised that for Rugby this means that we must keep young people at the centre of the conversation, we must continue to prioritise player welfare in everything we do, we must redouble our efforts to fight doping and corruption and we must provide greater opportunities for everyone to enjoy the sport in all its forms from fifteens to sevens, touch, tag, beach, XRugby and more.

The Chairman stated that Rugby must innovate, and Rugby must take bold decisions about our investment strategies to ensure a sustainable global game. The Chairman expanded that Rugby must look to new markets and drive even greater gender balance at all levels of our sport. The Chairman added that importantly, Rugby must be authentic in our governance ensuring we govern for all, not just a few. The Chairman outlined that within the strategic planning process, World Rugby are addressing these questions under the all-encompassing topics of sustainability, youth and credibility, and we will continue to strengthen our good governance model across all our decision-making bodies.

The Chairman concluded that this leads the game to the third and most important question – how can we achieve progress? The Chairman stated to achieve a new, strengthened strategic direction for World Rugby, a broad and transparent consultation is required. The Chairman noted that the Strategic Plan is the games and requires a global vision. The Chairman added that in order to grow the global Rugby family and set out a blueprint for best practice, we must set aside our national interests and focus on the big picture. The Chairman stated that our sport is driven by values of passion, respect, integrity, discipline and solidarity which will guide the development of the Strategic Plan. The Chairman thanked the General Assembly delegates for their input in advance.

2. OFFICAL OPENING OF THE 14TH WORLD RUGBY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Chairman, Sir Bill Beaumont, invited Mr. Shigetaka Mori, President of the Japan Rugby Football Union to officially open the 14th World Rugby General Assembly.

Mr Mori extended a warm welcome on behalf of the Japan Rugby Football Union to the delegates on the occasion of their visit to Japan for the World Rugby General Assembly and Rugby World Cup 2019.

Mr. Mori thanked World Rugby for bringing the World Cup to Japan and noted that it had been a great success. Mr. Mori highlighted the values of Rugby and the importance of ensuring that these values are maintained within our game to ensure the continued growth of Rugby.

Mr. Mori concluded that he was looking forward to being part of the World Rugby General Assembly and looked forward to welcoming and meeting as many of the delegates as possible during the World Rugby General Assembly.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Mori for his kind words and made a presentation to Mr. Mori as a token of appreciation of World Rugby for Mr. Mori attending the 14th World Rugby General Assembly.

3. MINUTES OF THE 13TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Minutes of the 13th General Assembly of World Rugby held in London, England in November 13 - 14, 2017 were received and approved. There were no matters arising.

4. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The meeting noted the composition of the Committees of the World Rugby Council.

5. GLOBAL FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR WORLD RUGBY

Following an introduction from Mr. Jurie Roux, Chairman of the World Rugby Budget Advisory Committee the meeting received a presentation as set out in **APPENDIX ONE** from Mr. Robert Brophy, World Rugby Head of Finance on the current position relating to World Rugby Finances.

6. WORLD RUGBY UPDATES

Mr. David Carrigy, World Rugby Head of Development & International Relations provided the General Assembly with a number of updates relevant to the Unions. In particular, Mr. Carrigy reminded Unions of their Eligibility responsibilities under World Rugby Regulation 8. Mr. Carrigy drew the General Assemblies attention to detailed correspondence sent to all Unions in June 2018 which included a number of documents detailing Union's responsibilities together with a Regulation 8 checklist to assist Union. Mr. Carrigy reminded Unions to familiarise themselves with responsibilities. Mr. Carrigy concluded by noting that World Rugby were exploring the development of an eligibility database moving forward.

7. WOMEN IN RUGBY PROGRESS REPORT

Following an introduction by Mr Serge Simon, Chairman of the World Rugby Women's Advisory Committee, the meeting received a presentation from Katie Sadleir, World Rugby General Manager Womens Rugby as set out in **APPENDIX TWO**, detailing the World Rugby Womens Plan progress to date and outlining initiatives to increase female participation in Rugby.

8. PLAYER WELFARE

Following an introduction from Dr. Brett Robinson, World Rugby Executive Committee member, the meeting received a presentation as set out in **APPENDIX THREE** from Dr Martin Raftery, World Rugby Chief Medical Officer, on Player Welfare initiatives. Dr Raftery advised the meeting that Player Welfare is World Rugby's number one priority and highlighted progress in the area of Player Welfare since the 13th General Assembly held in October 2017.

The General Assembly noted an overview of "Tackle Ready" education initiative from Mr. Jock Peggie, World Rugby General Manager – Training & Education, an in-depth, five-stage framework for the tackle to provide a technical understanding and mastery of safe and effective tackle.

The topic was then opened for a question and answer session to the General Assembly.

The Player Welfare session concluded with a presentation from Mr. Dominic Rumbles, World Rugby Head of Communications, on how World Rugby are working to address the perception of player welfare and the risk of injury within Rugby which is set out in **APPENDIX THREE**.

9. WORLD RUGBY PRESENTATION

Mr. Brett Gosper, CEO/Secretary General of World Rugby welcomed the delegates to the 14th World Rugby General Assembly.

Mr. Gosper noted that the General Assembly represents the present and future of the game and by working together in full partnership, the game can ensure that Rugby grows on every front. Mr. Gosper added that though World Rugby is a federation, it should be more thought of as a movement with a purpose that is believed in by an increasing number of people which is a status most modern organisations seek.

Mr. Gosper noted that Japan 2019 has been a resounding success on every level. Mr. Gosper congratulated the Japanese Rugby Football Union and the Japan 2019 organising committee on converting a dream of hosting a great Rugby World Cup into a reality. Mr. Gosper also thanked and congratulated Alan Gilpin and the RWC team for providing the critical leadership that has ensured the organizing committee performs to its full potential over the last decade of meticulous preparation.

Mr. Gosper informed the General Assembly that a Rugby World Cup is more than just a contest to find a World Champion, it is a globally visible test for an entire sport, for World Rugby and for its member Unions. Mr. Gosper added that this edition, has excelled on all criteria:

Performance

For the first time a team from Asia reached the quarterfinals. Mr. Gosper noted that the Brave Blossoms' exceptional performance had dominated the local and international media narrative throughout the tournament and in Japan their performance has achieved sweeping coverage within newspapers with a combined circulation of 50

Mr. Gosper noted that similar to previous World Cups World Rugby achieved our objective of reducing winning margins by 6 Nations and The Rugby Championship teams over the other 10 to a little over 30 points.

Popularity

Mr. Gosper advised the General Assembly that the Rugby World Cup is the ultimate test as to how attractive our sport is to men and women, girls and boys, players, stakeholders and commercial partners. Mr. Gosper highlighted that Rugby World Cup 2019 achieved:

- A record 99% of all tickets sold – over 1.8 million.
- A record one million visitors to fanzones.
- A record domestic television audience in Japan in excess of 50 million doubling the record set in 2015.
- More than 200,000 Japan jerseys sold in the first three weeks within a record licensing programme.
- A record 400,000 international visitors.
- A digital and social media presence that not only blows away past Rugby World Cups, but past Olympic Games as well with more than 1.7 billion video views.
- More than 4,000 accredited media – the biggest ever.

Impact

Mr. Gosper noted that Rugby World Cup 2019 had also been the most impactful tournament with:

- A record four billion dollars in economic activity generated for Japan.
- More than one billion video views across our social and digital channels.
- Record commercial revenues that overtook England 2015.
- More than £2 million raised for Childfund Pass It Back, the most successful CSR programme in the history of Rugby World Cup.
- More than 1.8 million new participants in Asia, including more than 770,000 in Japan the most successful legacy programme ever

Mr. Gosper further noted that World Rugby ran programmes with International Gay Rugby and the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation, highlighting the inclusivity and diversity of our sport to a wider audience.

Mr. Gosper stated that the bold decision to bring a World Cup to Asia and Japan for the first time has proven to be one of the great decisions. Mr. Gosper noted that the ground-breaking Asian context had spiked interest in Rugby in that part of the world, while the fascinating cultural and historical back drop of the world's third largest economy had projected an unquestionably global sport to sporting audiences around the world. Mr. Gosper added that the Brave Blossoms' heroics had ignited not only a Rugby passion, but they had become inspirational challengers of change. Mr. Gosper noted that as a beacon of diversity, the Brave Blossoms are challenging the norm in Japan and have attracted widespread praise.

Mr. Gosper informed the General Assembly that the mission of World Rugby is to grow the global game. Mr. Gosper noted that many of those in attendance had heard him in the past talk about how the rebranding from IRB had helped reposition the organisation as a fan engaging movement rather than just a regulatory body. Mr. Gosper added that the important brand is not World Rugby, however it is Rugby itself. Mr. Gosper highlighted that World Rugby is the global voice of brand Rugby, and that the Unions and Regions, are the vital local voice that helps drive the brand forward around the world.

Mr. Gosper highlighted that World Rugby, Unions and Regions are all seeking to grow the global game by:

- Increasing awareness of Rugby.
- Increasing interest in the sport.
- Increasing fan following of the sport.
- Increasing trial and regular participation in all forms of the sport.
- Increasing access to meaningful and genuine competition opportunities.

Mr. Gosper informed the General Assembly that World Rugby use research to understand the dynamics of our market and the perceptions of key audiences. Mr. Gosper note that there are nine million participants world-wide, of which almost a third are registered players. Mr. Gosper added that around 30% of the global playing population are women.

Mr. Gosper outlined that research commissioned annually through Nielsen confirms Rugby had 344 million fans around the world and that two events significantly grow that universe, the Rugby World Cup and the Olympic Games. Mr. Gosper highlighted to the General Assembly that since 2017:

- The number of fans (interested or very interested) has increased by 2% (338m to 344m).
- The number of avid fans (very interested) has increased by 5% (103m to 108m).
- The total number of fans has seen a slight increase (just shy of a million).

Mr. Gosper continued that the more pleasing results from the research are that female fans have been the key driver of global fan growth showing 6% growth over the past two years whilst male figures have held steady. Mr. Gosper added that these female fans are

predominantly under 24 and are from emerging Rugby markets such as India, Brazil, Mexico and Germany where digital access to sevens is the entry point to the sport

The General Assembly further noted that the current perceptions are also very interesting and can help World Rugby inform its strategy. Mr. Gosper noted in particular that fans almost universally see the sport as more exciting than it was five years ago and that fans and the general population feel that player welfare should be our number one priority and that the sport is safer than it was five years ago.

Mr. Gosper advised the General Assembly that Player welfare is World Rugby's number one priority. Indeed, it is the greatest potential barrier and enabler to participation on a global scale. Mr. Gosper informed the General Assembly that Rugby must and are challenging and changing the perception that Rugby is a dangerous sport.

Mr. Gosper noted that concussion is at the heart of such perceptions. Mr. Gosper informed the General Assembly that thanks to the great work led by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Martin Raftery and the Technical Services department, Rugby has been at the forefront of concussion awareness, education and management and that our HIA protocol is being followed by other contact and semi contact sports and leagues around the world.

Mr. Gosper highlighted that HIA is the accepted gold standard in concussion injury management that has evolved in many ways through research, evidence and the application of video technology. Mr. Gosper added that the management of concussion will continue to evolve as we learn more about its management. Mr. Gosper noted that in 2018, for the first time, concussion has declined across the elite game, which is testament to World Rugby injury management protocols.

The General Assembly heard that after setting a base with education and management, World Rugby are now actively pursuing injury prevention. Mr. Gosper advised the General Assembly that this pursuit is being driven by the most comprehensive analysis of concussion events ever undertaken in elite Rugby to determine concussion cause and inform with evidence how we can reduce occurrence.

Mr. Gosper advised the General Assembly that another major player welfare initiative in 2019 was the first ever laws and injury-prevention conference at Marcoussis in Paris. The General Assembly heard that the objective was to create laws for trial that seek to drive a reduction in injury rates. Mr. Gosper added that usually Rugby makes law changes to simplify the game or make it more attractive while ensuring there are no unintended consequences for player welfare.

Mr. Gosper noted that all key stakeholders were together for the first time, IRP, Professional Club Leagues and competitions, Unions, Coaches, Medics and all took part with an open mind. Mr. Gosper confirmed that the conference would become an annual event due to the success and ongoing importance of its outcomes.

Mr. Gosper outlined to the General Assembly that fan acquisition, experience and engagement is a focus area of the strategic reserve's deployment. Mr. Gosper added that the objective is to accelerate the attraction, conversion and retention of new fans in emerging and established markets.

The General Assembly heard that funding in this area allow World Rugby to become the destination for all matters Rugby as we market the global game of Rugby. Mr. Gosper added that the investment will enable World Rugby to upgrade platform related technology and explore opportunities related to direct to consumer broadcast which in turn will lead to greater visibility of Rugby in places where the sport struggles to develop due to lack of visibility.

Mr. Gosper noted that while this content will be centrally organised, World Rugby see this as a partnership with Unions, Regions, media and fans, creating, syndicating and sharing on a local level. Mr. Gosper added that the World Rugby content creation will help offset the creative costs of local unions and regions, and the platform licenses will be scalable and accessible to them as well.

Mr. Gosper outlined that another area that the Executive Committee has supplemented with reserves funds is turbocharging the implementation of the Women's Plan, which is designed to accelerate the global development of women in all aspects of Rugby. The General Assembly noted that World Rugby are two years into the eight-year strategy and much progress has been made. Mr. Gosper outlined that the investment will be in high performance initiatives like developing and agreeing an international calendar and investment in international competitions through to 2025.

Mr. Gosper informed the General Assembly that in 2019 World Rugby had delivered a 51% increase in fixtures compared to 2018 which demonstrates World Rugby's commitment to growing and advancing the women's game at all levels, particularly internationally.

Mr. Gosper noted that Women's Rugby is one of sport's great success stories, experiencing unprecedented growth around the world. Mr. Gosper added that participation levels are at an all-time high with 2.7 million players globally – making up more than a quarter of the global playing population with a 28% increase in registered players since 2017.

Mr. Gosper informed the General Assembly that for the second year running, more young girls have got into Rugby globally than boys and more than 40% of Rugby's 400 million fanbase are female.

The General Assembly heard that in order to maximise the growth in the Women's game World Rugby launched the "Try and Stop Us" global marketing campaign, which has achieved phenomenal visibility and results and is driving new interest and participation. Mr. Gosper added that from an engagement and exposure perspective, the campaign has already exceeded World Rugby's expectations with over 10m video views, extensive media coverage and unprecedented involvement from unions and regional associations to amplify the messages.

Mr. Gosper noted that in addition, funds are being invested in leadership programs aimed at supporting and increasing the numbers of women in High Performance Coaching and Union management, as well as investment in specific targeted marketing and stand-alone commercial revenue generation for major women's properties such as Rugby World Cup 2021 in New Zealand.

Mr. Gosper outlined to the General Assembly that the final strategic area to receive supplementary reserves funding is Competition enhancement and High-Performance investment. Mr. Gosper detailed that in the 15s game the objective is to continue as in previous Rugby World Cup, to improve the High-Performance outcomes of Tier Two Unions at RWC 2023. Mr. Gosper noted that this means reviewing World Rugby's current high performance tournament portfolio and regional tournament strategies to provide a more meaningful, consistent and engaging commercial product.

The General Assembly noted that World Rugby are also seeking to create more international depth to the Sevens game by providing a more competitive cross regional Sevens' competition platform for non-World Series core teams, through the introduction in 2020 of the Challenger Series.

Mr. Gosper noted that as the game looks ahead to a new decade, it must have an open mind. Mr. Gosper added that Rugby must prioritise the collective over the individual and

must grow together, not apart. Mr. Gosper noted the need to harmonise the sports efforts in participation, competition and fan engagement.

Mr. Gosper concluded that Rugby, together, has all the ingredients. Mr. Gosper added that together we are better, stronger and more impactful. Mr. Gosper noted that through investments and the Union's vision, we can ensure that Rugby is not just a great sport in the next decade, but the standard-bearer in welfare, entertainment, inclusivity and commercial success.

Mr Gosper thanked the General Assembly delegates and their Unions for the incredible work they do every day to grow Rugby and promote its values worldwide and added he looked forward to sharing many more successes with them in 2020.

10. **STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION ONE – THE FUTURE OF OUR FANTASTIC GAME**

Following the presentation on the process of determining the next World Rugby Strategic Plan, Mr. Mihir Warty, World Rugby Director of Strategy introduced Workshop One – how do we want the game to evolve.

Mr. Warty advised the delegates that the General Assembly would work at their tables as facilitated workshops to consider the questions as set out in **APPENDIX FOUR**. Mr. Warty noted that the General Assembly feedback would be consolidated into the draft Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025.

11. **A Strategic Planning Session TWO – What more can World Rugby do for our game?**

Following a presentation exploring "*what more can World Rugby do for our game?*", by Mr. Mihir Warty, World Rugby Director of Strategy introduced Workshop Two.

Mr. Warty advised the delegates that the General Assembly would work at their tables as facilitated workshops to consider the questions as set out in **APPENDIX FIVE**. Mr. Warty noted that the General Assembly feedback would be consolidated into the draft Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025.

Mr. Warty concluded by thanking the General Assembly Delegates for their input into the development of the new World Rugby Strategic plan.

12. **Sponsorship and Commercial Panel**

An interactive Forum on Sponsorship and Commercial was hosted by Mr. Tom Hill, World Rugby's Chief Commercial Officer. Mr. Hill was joined on the panel by:

- Michael Robichaud – Senior VP Global Sponsorships, Mastercard
- Fiona Taag – Head of Global Partnerships and Europe Marketing and Communications, DHL
- Hans Erik Tuijt – Director of Global Sponsorship, Heineken International

The panel discussed in detail their experience of being involved as sponsors and commercial partners of World Rugby and Unions globally. The Panel provided the General Assembly with an insight of potential sponsors expectations before entering into commercial arrangements.

The topic was then opened for a question and answer session to the General Assembly.

13. RWC 2019 LEGACY

Asia Rugby

The meeting received a presentation from Aga Hussain, President of Asia Rugby a copy of which is set out in **APPENDIX SIX**, outlining the successful Asia Rugby Impact Beyond Legacy Programme undertaken across the Region to maximise the exposure from the first Rugby World Cup hosted in Asia. Mr. Hussain noted in particular that the programme had welcomed one million new participants into the game between 2016 and 2019.

Mr. Hussain concluded that RWC 2019 had been the most impactful tournament in the history of the game and had left a lasting legacy across the whole of Asia.

Japanese Rugby Football Union

The meeting received a presentation from Kensuke Iwabuchi, Chairman of the Japanese Rugby Football Union, a copy of which is set out in **APPENDIX SEVEN**, outlining the successful Japan Rugby Football Union Legacy Programme undertaken across Japan to maximise the hosting of the Rugby World Cup.

Mr. Iwabuchi highlighted the increased awareness and deeper engagement with the Japanese public as a lasting legacy of hosting the Rugby World Cup. Mr. Iwabuchi outlined to the General Assembly that the Japanese Rugby Football Union will build on this engagement to continue growing participation in Japan.

Mr. Iwabuchi concluded that RWC 2019 had been the most successful tournament in the history of the game and had left a lasting effect and love for the game across the whole of Japan.

14. CLOSURE

In formally closing the 14th General Assembly the Mr. Bill Beaumont, Chairman of World Rugby, highlighted the key points of the General Assembly programme. The Chairman expressed the thanks and appreciation of World Rugby for the attendance and constructive participation of all delegates throughout the day. The Chairman further thanked the presenters and panellists for their engaging content.

The Chairman spoke about the importance of the input provided by the Unions and Regional Associations during the General Assembly into the development of the new World Rugby Strategic Plan. The Chairman informed the delegates that the new Strategic Plan will provide a road map to allow World Rugby and Unions to continue growing participation at all levels of the game. He added that Rugby has never been so strong with thriving Men's and Women's tournaments and increased participation which are being driven by the World Rugby investment strategy. The Chairman emphasised the importance of ensuring that Player Welfare continues to be the number one priority at all levels of the Game.

The Chairman congratulated the Japan Rugby Football Union for hosting an outstanding, successful and inspiring Rugby World Cup and sent his best wishes to the four remaining teams playing in the Bronze Final and Rugby World Cup Final.

In conclusion, the Chairman noted that a conference like the General Assembly took a lot of organisation and he thanked those who had contributed to the General Assembly, World Rugby Staff, Interpreters and Hotel Staff for all their hard work in ensuring its success.

Sir Bill Beaumont CBE DL
Chairman
World Rugby

October 31, 2019