



**First ITF Women's Conference**  
**Phuket, Thailand**  
**30 March 2014**



**REPORT**

The Conference was opened by the Honourable ITF President Prof Chang Ung, and Member of the International Olympic Committee. Professor Chang outlined the key items discussed at the Executive Board meeting the day before and possible future directions for the ITF Women's Committee. The main issues were:

1. The evolution of competition rules and possible changes which could affect women's participation in competition. The final changes have not yet been decided and are subject to further discussion.
2. The need for ITF to move towards gender equality. The International Olympic Committee has requested 25% women representation on Executive Boards in order for the sport to be part of the Olympic Games. Women Committees are being introduced to all sports.
3. Women's activities in ITF need to be protected and the Women's Committee needs to work towards protecting these activities.
4. The need for women to be represented on National Taekwon-Do Associations. Women need to seek representation on NGBs and build up support for women within each Association.
5. 2014 is the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ITF and special events are planned.
6. The ITF relationship with the IOC is very good. There will be a wait but not too long. It is important for the ITF to pursue admittance to the Olympic Games so that it can attract political and financial support.
7. The relationship with WTF is improving. They are negotiating with each other and working together on how to get into the Olympic Games.
8. There is a request that ITF remains a martial art as the founder, General Choi, requested. In a martial art, there is no competition and participants love each other. ITF needs a sport component, but it should be 70% martial art and 30% sport. If ITF

changes too much away from a martial art it will lose its population. Mothers and good fathers like to keep their children good and protect them from things like drugs etc. It is important to teach moral culture in the dojang, not just kicking and punching.

9. The international Sports Accord needs to be recognised by the organisation and then it will be admitted to the Olympic Games.
10. Every federation has difficulties and problems. It is important to recognise these and not hide them away. Some people leave and some come back. Each situation will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Following his welcome speech, Professor Chang presented the ITF Outstanding Instructor Medal to Rachana Rajendran of India for her outstanding achievements with the Indian Taekwon-Do Association.

### **Welcome by Senior Master Linda Low, VIIIth Dan, Member International TKD Federation Executive Board, Chair ITF Women's Committee and Vice President All Australia ITF.**

SM Low welcomed delegates from DPR Korea, South Africa, Canada, Malaysia, Russia, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Peru, Argentina, Thailand, India and Australia. She thanked everyone for coming and for their dedication and commitment.

SM Low emphasised the importance of having the ITF Women's Committee and the Women's Conference to enable the ITF to move forward. There is a fundamental difference between the way that men and women organise. Men form hierarchies and women form circles. Women have been slow to make their way up the ITF organisational ladder. This is because of the organisation's roots in an Asian, male dominated culture; there has been a lack of female role models and women have other life commitments that tend to take them away for the sport for extended periods.

The situation is slowly changing and women are moving up through the ITF organisation. Women are starting to influence ITF and through this make the ITF stronger. It is important to raise the awareness of women in ITF.

More women need to be active on NGBs. There are unique ways for women to raise their profile including:

- self-defence training
- alternatives to violence programs
- work in community programs

Other initiatives such as regional women's tournaments are also a possibility.

### **Country Reports**

**Chen Weiling, President of the Singapore Taekwon Do Association** – Elected to the position on 1 January 2014 following the death of Mr Michael Pang. He left a huge legacy of well-trained, very committed Black Belts. Classes are running well and students have adapted well to the new instructors. The ITF has been very supportive and a grading is planned for May. The focus at the moment is on growing the Singapore school. It is being marketed as an alternative to WTF and this approach is having some success. A lot remains to be done, however the Association is getting lots of support.

**Master Valerie Forget, Canada** – has seen the growth of women in Taekwon Do as instructors and referees. There are a few centre referees and they are now judging at Black Belt competitions. Canada is open on the subject, nothing is written down as policy, but women are always in events and progress is encouraging. Master Forget is on the Director's Board and is taking over the national umpires' training. She is giving the responsibility for organising tournaments to younger juniors and she also tries to go into the ring.

**Lee Sock Chang, Malaysia** – In the past 48 years of ITF in Malaysia, there had not been any women on the NGB. Last year Ms Chang was elected to the NGB and is now organising women's events.

**ITF Vice President Judge Annili Basson** – A majority of women were elected on the South Africa NGB last year. Women are actively encouraged to referee, organise and run tournaments. They are making a lot of progress.

**Master Hwang Yong Mi, Chief Coach and Deputy Head of National Team DPR Korea** – extended her thanks for organising the first women's conference to discuss issues and roles of women in ITF. Women are half the population and they are important for the advancement of the community. In DPR Korea women have gender equality in political, economic, social, cultural and sports areas thanks to the great respect held for women in Korea. In the 1980s, Master Hwang won 11 gold medals at World Championships. She then devoted her energy to developing Taekwon Do in Korea and began working with the national team. As President and Coach over the following years the team won 98 gold, 15 silver and 2 bronze medals. She was named as the People's Hero and received an apartment and luxury car. She was very happy to be attending the 1<sup>st</sup> Women's Conference.

Music is often used in TKD training for warming up exercises and in special technical sessions. TKD is part of the national schools program from primary school to college.

**Rachana Rajendran, India** – is a VIth Degree Black Belt, has been doing Taekwon Do for 35 years. ITF is doing very well in India. There are 186 schools in Delhi and 150 instructors on a salary every month. There are 1000s of schools across India with 25 states affiliated to ITF. As a young girl, she came to Delhi with \$4 and started training because of General Choi. She is now the only 6<sup>th</sup> Degree in India. At the moment, they are offering special self defence classes for women free of charge. This is following the violence against women which has been happening in India. Sabum Rajendran requested everyone do something for females in their local community.

**Paloma Hakkunen , Peru** – is Secretary General of the Peruvian NGB and works in the administration. Peru has been going through the development process and globalisation. However, it is still a very traditional society. Previously, there were 5% women, now things are changing and there are 25% women. Increasing violence, drugs and the need for self defence are increasing the willingness of women to go into classes. Teaching programs are being developed specifically directed at women. They are working hard to create a national TKD Women’s committee

**Jennifer Nsunta, UK** – There are 13 separate TKD groups in the UK and a lot of associated politics. There are no female members on the NGB. There is a new scheme to increase participation called “Touch Gloves”. Within Europe females are well represented however there are not many senior females in the UK. Two have been promoted to 5<sup>th</sup> Dan however there is a big gap between males and females. Masters and Senior Masters are very encouraging. A home international is held annually. Two years ago it was a male only competition, then 1 female was introduced. Last year there were two females and now moving to male and female teams. On an international front, female numbers are dropping and this needs to be addressed. Female training sessions have been held for the first time with success.

**SM Linda Low, Australia** – TKD practitioners are small in number in comparison to India and UK. The AAITF has approximately 40 clubs in Western Australia and the Eastern States though many cities, especially Perth, are quite isolated. We have State, National and Invitational championships in which women are well represented as both competitors and umpires. Self defence classes are run regularly in schools, women’s refuges and community centres. There is a reasonable amount of equality in Australia but there is also a long way to go for this to be fully achieved.

### **Women Participation Statistics**

**DPRKorea – 40%**

**Canada – 40%**

**Thailand – 70%**

**Australia – 40%**

## Conference Recommendations

### Public Image in Competition

- Professional presentation of male and female competitors is important for the public image of Taekwon Do
- Different techniques are required for competitors in sparring and patterns
- Instructors need to teach students and officials what is expected of competitors
- A set of standards with illustrated examples should be developed and posted on the ITF website as a reference

### General Discussion

- Interruption to TKD practice through pregnancy and child rearing is the biggest hindrance to women's continued progress in TKD.
- An online forum should be established for women TKD practitioners to facilitate networking and the exchange of information.
- The establishment and promotion of self defence classes for women should be encouraged under the ITF banner to encourage more women into the martial art.
- Women should be educated about personal power as well as their limitations. They should be given the skills to recognise a situation and react appropriately.
- Women should be given information about alternatives to violence and this could be facilitated by ITF Taekwon-do
- Education programs for males about self-control should be developed.
- Women should be encouraged to be involved to bring about change.
- Situations should be developed to allow women to gain experience in a home supported environment.
- Specific targets should be set for the number of women referees in competition at all levels
- Promotion of female success to encourage others in ITF
- Promotion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Women's Conference to all NGBs to highlight women's issues in Taekwon do and the progress being made
- Photographs of women in action in competition and as officials be used to promote women in ITF
- A sexual harassment procedure should be prepared for use by students and instructors. Students should have guidelines for approaching coaches and instructors, and instructors should be able to approach the ITF Women's Committee and the Ethics and Discipline Committee.

### Future Direction

- Goals should be set for female membership and participation in Taekwon-do
- Goals should be set for the number of women in NGBs
- Quotas should be set in NGBs for female umpires

- Self defence classes for women should be advertised under the ITF banner
- Increase the awareness of the interests of women
- Increase female representation on organising bodies
- Secretary General of ITF appointment proposed for SM Linda Low to be nominated
- Recognition outside of ITF through the promotion of the achievements of women
- Each NGB should be asked to organise a Women's Committee
- Younger participation in Taekwon-do be encouraged with modified children's programs (for example, Dragons and Tigers or Little Champs junior programs)
- Strongly recommend that Women's Committee and the Women's Conference do not agree with the suggestion of 5 special techniques for men and 3 special techniques for women in world championship competition. It should be the same for each gender.
- Suggested time saving techniques for world championships are to present the medals in a separate area during the competition, and increase the number of rings.

#### Next Conference

- The next International Women's Conference is proposed for July 2015 in India. The Indian NGB has offered to provide one day to the participants. It was suggested that the Conference by 1 ½ days with 1 day for the Conference and ½ day training with some self defence training, workshops and opportunities for exchange between participants.

#### Papers presented to the Conference as follows:

1. Master Valerie Forget (Canada) presented "Anatomical and Physiological Differences between Genders. A stake for training methods?" A comprehensive study of the different training needs of males and females and the training of athletes according to their capacity. Notes on circuit training, interval training, flexibility and plyometric training were extremely helpful.
2. Master Hwang Yong Mi (DPRK) "Some Experiences and Points of Training for the Women" – outlined her outstanding career as a gold medallist athlete, Labour Hero of 2005 and deputy head coach of the Korean National Team.
3. SM Dr Linda Low (Australia) "Fuelling the Body: Nourishing the Mind – a Naturopathic Perspective for Optimal training" – a power point presentation on foods to eat and foods to avoid for maximum energy and health for athletes. Using Ayurvedic science and mindful eating to nourish the mind. Reminder that Aloe Vera Australia is a major sponsor of the ITF giving 30% of their profits to us.
4. ITF Vice President Annili Basson (South Africa) – presenting Ms Ronel Rust's findings on "Survey of Female Veterans" – highlighted difficulties balancing time and work commitments, developing confidence to compete. There is not enough attention generally given to veteran females and this could improve.

5. Ms Cathy Cox (Australia) “Get Fit, Visit Exotic Countries, Meet Interesting People: the benefits of TKD Competition for Women of all ages” – power point images of experiences as a female veteran in training and competing. The benefits to individuals and also TKD communities.
6. Ms Rachanok Moulden (Thailand) – “Thailand – a Cultural Challenge” – the problems of teaching in a new country and the gender differences where girls are more likely to risk the rigours of training than boys.
7. General Discussion on “Public Image in TKD Competition” – discussed personal presentation as professional athletes. Focussed on our President’s concerns about keeping the hair off the face when competing. Images and suggestions offered by delegates to be circulated to NGBs.
8. Ms Lee Sock Cheng (Malaysia) – “Problems facing Women Instructors” – potential problems were listed: gender barriers; socio-cultural barriers; intra-personal barriers; inter-personal barriers; resource barriers.
9. A brainstorming session with all delegates discussing the above problems. Suggestions and recommendations are included in “General Discussion” (above).
10. Future Direction for ITF Women’s Committee (above)
11. Ms Valerie Forget was appointed Vice Chairperson of the Women’s Committee.
12. A brief training session was conducted by SM Low, Master Forget and Ms Lee. Non-violent solutions were found, novel ways of training pattern, and plyometric warm-ups were put to the test.
13. Dinner, photographs and an enormous thank you to our President Prof. Chang Ung for his overwhelming generosity. The Conference was a huge success and has created an unstoppable tide of women power!!