



Working trip of the FIDE President to South Korea and Global Peace Festival

Hyun Jin Moon

November 28, 2011



A Step Closer to the Olympic Movement

On 28th November, FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov led a 6-man delegation to the Press Center Building in Seoul, South Korea. There, the delegation called on Mr Jin Sun Kim, President & CEO of the PyeongChang Organising Committee for the 2018 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games.

The FIDE delegation included FIDE General Secretary Ignatius Leong, FIDE Presidential Assistant Berik Balgabaev, Korea Chess Federation President Hyun In-Suk, KCF Member Song Jin Woo and Hon. Venerable Wol Myung who helped arrange the meeting.

President Ilyumzhinov gave a thorough introduction of FIDE to Mr Jin; including the Chess in Schools program and FIDE's continued aim to get Chess into part of the Olympic movement. He added that already more than 30 National Olympic Committees have written to the International Olympic Committee requesting to include Chess in the Winter Olympics. President Ilyumzhinov informed Mr Jin that already the 2014 Winter Olympic organisers of Sochi have asked for proposals from FIDE on the format for Chess if it is to be included as demonstration sport there.

Mr Leong & Mr Balgabaev also took the opportunities to inform Mr Jin that several multisport games across the world have already Chess in their program. Mr Leong highlighted that the traditional sport of Tae KwanDo was introduced by Korea in the 1988 Olympic Games and this saw the subsequent popularity of the sport. He reminded that it was the Executive Board Meeting held in Seoul in 1999 whereby FIDE was approved as an international sport federation.

President Ilyumzhinov said that this is again Korea's chance to assist Chess and the inclusion in its 2018 edition will also be an opportunity to have their traditional sport, "GO", introduced as part of our discipline. Mr Jin concluded that the meeting was very enlightening and that he will give due consideration to the proposal for Chess in PyeongChang 2018.

FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov led a delegation comprising General Secretary Ignatius Leong and President's Assistant Berik Balgabaev on a working trip to South Korea. President Ilyumzhinov met the President of Korea Chess Federation who gave an update on the progress of chess development in Korea since she was elected the President in 2007.

The unification of 5 chess groups in South Korea had been positive. The situation among the five "rival" groups has stabilized since the organization of its first Seoul International Open and the visit of then Women's World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk to Korea in 2008. KCF has embarked on its own chess in schools program and Ms. Hyun is glad to inform that about 500,000 young children are learning the game. Baduk (or GO) is a traditional board game in Korea and it is very popular among the older generation. However, despite this strong competition, Chess has gained popularity and more children are taking to Chess compared to "GO". They even plan to organize local competitions which would involve the family nucleus. Ms. Hyun reiterated that the momentum is slow but right. Korea has slightly more than 100 rated players. She is confident that when their structure and management are better placed, they will be able to start to organise FIDE competitions and more international competitions.

President Ilyumzhinov is glad to note that several parties are working to use Chess as a catalyst towards re-unification process of the two Koreas. He suggested and Ms. Hyun agreed to put up a unified team representing the Korean peninsula for the Istanbul Olympiad. President Ilyumzhinov meanwhile assigned General Secretary Leong to make contacts and visits to North Korea. The plan would be to hold a 100-

board match between the two neighbours.

President Ilyumzhinov also met Hon. Venerable Wol Myung at the Wol Myung Temple. The latter is highly regarded among politicians who regularly seek his advice. Hon. Wol Myung agrees that chess helps in the building of character especially among the young. He endeavoured to campaign support for the development and promotion of Chess.

On the occasion of the **Global Peace Convention** held in Seoul, President Ilyumzhinov will receive an award for his peace efforts through culture and sports. In his meeting with the organizer, the **Global Peace Festival Foundation**, the latter had agreed to work hand-in-hand with FIDE to promote peace through Chess as a form of culture, sport and education. General Secretary Leong had a fruitful meeting with its Vice-President (Strategic Partnerships) Mr. David Caprara. Mr. Caprara promised Mr. Leong that a MOU will be forthcoming. The Foundation will help open its doors to FIDE.



Meeting with Ms. Hyun in Korea Chess Federation



FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and FIDE General Secretary Ignatius Leong



Ilyumzhinov visiting the Buddhist temple



In the Buddhist Wol Myung Temple



Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and Hon. Venerable Wol Myung



Meeting with Mr. Jin Sun Kim



FIDE President accompanied by Mr. Ignatius Leong



Mr. Jin Sun Kim - President and Chief Executive Officer of the PyeongChang Organizing Committee for the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

