

**ITTF Pan American Women's Forum
26 & 27 September 2008
Buenos Aires, Argentina**

**GENERATING PROJECTS
How to Initiate Sports Projects for Women**

Enthusiastic, untiring, thirst for knowledge and information – these are words that could characterise the ITTF Pan American women's forum that was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 26th and 27th September 2008. Two days were insufficient, two weeks would not have been sufficient to cater to the demand for information, interaction, discussion and exchange of ideas that the participants craved for. Around 70 participants from several Latin American countries (Argentina, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay, Brazil, Cuba Paraguay, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia) and Canada for North America were present, including the Continental Vice-Presidents for Latin America (Melecio Rivera) and North America (Bruce Burton). There were also women from other sport federations in Argentina. The meeting was facilitated by Alejandra Gabaglio, Development Director of the Americas Para Table Tennis Committee and ITTF coach and Lilamani de Soysa, ITTF Project Manager.



On day one, speakers from the CENARD (National Sports and Education Centre of Argentina) spoke on leadership (Prof. Ruben Barral) and sport psychology (Prof. Nelly Giscafne). Alejandra Gabaglio, spoke on how to introduce table tennis for women with a disability. She was followed by interviews with several sports women involved in the disabled movement.



The Executive Secretary of the Argentina NOC, Silvia Beatriz Dalotto gave a talk about women and the Olympic Movement. Prof. Guillermo Pablo Rossi spoke about the development and positioning of new sport enterprises and the added value of being a woman. Lila de Soysa, Project Manager of the ITTF, presented the ITTF women's programme and the progress report of the work undertaken within the ITTF for developing and encouraging more women to participate in table tennis as players, leaders, administrators, officials, and volunteers. She was followed by an exposé by Claude Bergeret, Executive Vice-President of the ITTF, entitled "What the ITTF expects from you?".

On day two, the participants worked in groups on issues such as "Creating and maintaining a women's working group", "Creating a Women's Development Programme for the ITTF", "Putting together a one day tournament for women" and "Creating table tennis programmes for women with a disability". Several main recommendations were derived from the discussions and the **Pan American Strategy** was drawn up (see attachment). One of the main recommendations applauded by all was to follow the ITTF example and create a post for a woman within the Latin American Executive Committee.



Several other immediate actions were also taken. The Brighton Declaration was signed by the Continental Vice-Presidents under the watchful eyes of the Executive Vice-President, as a pledge to ensure that the forum recommendations would be implemented in their Continents.



In the largest daily newspaper of the day (the OLE), it was noticed that there was not one article on women's sport or one picture of a female athlete. The participants decided to write a letter (signed by all) to the Newspaper to report this issue and to encourage them to include more articles and pictures of female athletes in the newspaper. The Continental Vice-Presidents also accepted the recommendation of giving an annual scholarship to a woman to attend the AISTS Sport Management Seminar in Lausanne, Switzerland from Latin America and North America on a rotational basis.



Our thanks to Alejandra Gabaglio for her commitment and hard work in putting the forum together, with the help of Estella Mafio. Thank you to the Argentina Table Tennis Federation for their hospitality and thank you to the Continental Vice-Presidents for their presence and input.

Lila de Soysa, ITTF Project Manager
30th September 2008