

Extraordinary Meeting Minutes April 3 2022 IPhO

The extraordinary meeting was held as an online Zoom meeting, and all country leaders from IPhO 2021 were invited to participate. The meeting participants were informed in advance of some ground rules:

1. As all members of IPhO International Board are aware of the situation in region, the Extraordinary Meeting will focus on decision related to the holding of IPhO2022 in Belarus or not, which will be the first agenda item for discussion and voting.
2. No political discussion will be allowed, and we shall focus on IPhO related issues only.
3. Next agenda items or discussion will be based on the outcome of the first agenda item.
4. We must have a quorum for the validity of this meeting and then majority must vote in favor for any proposal to pass. These rules will be re-explained on the meeting day.

It was determined that a quorum was present.

President Rajdeep Rawat invited people to speak. The comments below are not attributed to specific speakers, and are identified by generic “speaker”, unless by context the speaker is responding to a concrete question. On the question of considering a change in the in 2022 Physics Olympiad, which is to be hosted by Belarus.

1. Speaker: it is not appropriate, it would be good to move to a different location.
2. Speaker: attended IPhO 97 Canada; couldn't hear clearly; the jist seemed to be that this is a powerful, good event, and important for our students. The high school students are not leaders, they aren't voters, they are not in control. Hopes IPhO still happens.
3. Speaker: connection broken, so speaker not heard.
4. Speaker: asking about Belarus organization, and organization in the future; so if postponed or canceled, what will happen in the future.
5. President Rawat replied: asked same question, filled in the details from the recent meeting on the five questions.
6. Belarus: provided an update of progress, discussed completion of the experimental exam, is ready; things are ready to mail; finishing the theoretical problems. We are ready, we are not in a position to change the schedule. Recognizing the swift system money switching system will be more difficult. Having difficulty getting OLY exams from the Swiss colleagues; so this is a problem. Our programmers are working on developing something like OLY exams. So all is in accordance with our general plan.
7. Speaker: having IPhO in Belarus this year is a political statement; we would be anomaly to hold it. This won't be a full IPhO, many countries won't participate, many countries can't participate. This situation is extraordinary, this is not a precedent. The situation is beyond political.
8. Speaker: having the IPhO in Belarus would split the community; hence we should try and change the venue.
9. Speaker: we have spent half an hour to decide first item. Time to step forward.
10. Belarus: what will happen? Let us know how to plan for the future.

President Rawat called for the first vote, which was whether or not the IPhO International Board should consider a change in the 2022 IPhO?

Vote one: Can we consider the first proposal to cancel the 2022 IPhO?

Vote passes, 79 in favor, out of 109 eligible voters

President Rawat then reminded the IB that for the next three years hosts can't move forward; the changing of the timing of those hosts had already been impacted by the CoViD shifting of IPhO 2020 into 2021 for Lithuania.

President Rawat called for the second vote regarding the actual cancellation of IPhO 2022.

Vote two: Should IPhO 2022 be cancelled?

Vote passes, with 68 in favor of canceling, out of 109 eligible voters.

There was then a general discussion.

1. Belarus: can Belarus go in the future?
2. President Rawat replied: not in the next couple of years, but in theory, it could occur in the future. A time frame is difficult. Invite Japan and Iran to speak.
3. Japan: Not possible to change, will do 2023
4. Iran: Prepared for 2024, do not wish to move it, but we could ask the minister.
5. Speaker: propose that we do not have a vote, as we aren't in a position to decide positively, and if we voted now, many countries would be forced to say no; we should wait until the conditions improve.
6. Speaker: our task this year is to see if we can have an olympiad this year. This is what what we should be worrying about.
7. Speaker: we only voted to cancel this year; there is no need to have another vote.
8. Speaker: this is not the moment to vote.
9. President Rawat: what will we do for the IPhO this year? Nobody can move forward. Discussing budget and design. Not likely that someone would be able to do this. Shared the stats from Lithuania, as well as the logistic challenges. Welcome if someone would come forward; negotiating with Huawei that has given \$30K, maybe could give more.
10. Speaker: Have organized 2 EuPhO online, with virtual experiments, contestants were mostly satisfied; cuts down the cost dramatically. Gives more time to prepare, if we do a virtual experiment. We can find people to write the code and do the marking. Participation fees are very low. Jaan could help.
11. Switzerland: OLYExams is willing to help with an online format; and Swiss is willing to help, to the tune of \$30K. Willing to help, but not to organize.
12. Speaker: What about the student? A once-in-a-lifetime event? I want there to be another competition. Asking if the EuPhO can delay?
13. Slovenia: EuPhO will be live; it is not possible to move the EuPhO.
14. Switzerland: We have some volunteers. Could there be a group of individuals? Distributed?
15. President Rawat: Need a clear-cut leadership, how it will be financed, and who will take responsibility? We must have someone come forward! We would need to approve of any changes to the statutes that constrain the IPhO.
16. Speaker: many of our colleagues would be willing to help, perhaps we could get an organizing committee to start to look into this? Perhaps we just need to vote to get a country to come forward?
17. President Rawat: we need to have a legal entity to sign a contract to get money from Hauwei, etc.
18. Speaker: impossible to organize during this meeting. Maybe we only need to have just a vote that it is okay to have it online if someone came forward.
19. President Rawat: asks the leaders to speak to their countries to see if someone will take the lead.
20. Speaker: pointed out that we can't change things at this short notice; also the invitations needed to be sent out well in advance.
21. President Rawat: worried that in the future, this can happen again; this is a tricky precedent. We are pushing the bounds of the statutes as it is.
22. Speaker: it is possible to have alternates to IPhO; anybody can do that.
23. President Rawat: we have a strong reputation, we must be cautious that we don't dilute the level of the competition in any sense. Do we have any leads? Please raise your hands if you are willing to explore.
24. Switzerland can help; Slovenia can also help.
25. President Rawat: worried about simulation experiments

26. Speaker: you can download the simulations from EuPhO and see what it might be like.
27. President Rawat: could there be a workshop to see simulation style?
28. Speaker: yes!
29. Speaker: supporting online concepts. Can be done with applets. Can also be a video of an experiment being done, and the student can make measurements from the video.
30. Speaker: this is too technical, we don't need to do this here.

President Rawat called for a vote on a third proposal.

Proposal: The Secretariat will work with Switzerland to explore a possible online, with virtual experiment.

Vote held, 94 in favor, so the motion passes.

President Rawat stated that he will start working on this.

President Rawat asked if there was any other business.

1. Speaker: all participants need to have same interface for the ipho, even if there are people who are grouped together.
2. Speaker: would like to raise the issue of removing Belarus and Russia from the IPhO.
3. President Rawat responded that this was not a time to have this decision.
4. Speaker: we need to do what the other olympiads have done; we need to show the same level of response.
5. President Rawat responded that it doesn't make sense to discuss this now, as we don't even have an IPhO scheduled. He then added that some of the facts that are being shared aren't quite right.
6. Speaker: we've reached a good result. We cannot ignore the situation, let us make this an agenda item for the next meeting.
7. Speaker: in many countries, collaborations with Russia and Belarus are forbidden. We need to reach a conclusion soon.
8. Speaker: finish for now; we can discuss this later. We need to make sure that we are aware of the consequences, and we should finish the meeting.
9. Speaker: there have been different opinions, and there should be a vote to have a vote.
10. Speaker: we should vote now, and whether we should exclude them from the international board.
11. President Rawat: We will decide on this question later.

President Rawat adjourned the meeting.