

*14th ITF Congress Meeting
Warsaw, Poland - June 13th, 2003*



*Speaking Notes for Master Trần Triều Quân
Newly-elected ITF President*

Working Together for a Great Future for the ITF

Distinguished guests, Delegates, Grand Masters, Masters,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to accept the position of President of the International Taekwon-Do Federation. I am particularly pleased that my election was unanimous and wish to thank all of you who have decided to put the future of the ITF ahead of your personal ambitions and to work together to solidify the unity of our large ITF family. I promise to prove myself worthy of your trust, always working to the best of my ability and in the best interests of the ITF members.

Democracy and Unity in the ITF

It is regrettable that we do not have representation from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at this 14th Congress Meeting and that some of our other members are also not represented. Unfortunately, their decision not to attend is the expression of a fundamental divergence of opinion. The group in question had tried to impose their will on the ITF by overriding the democratic process, but we have remained true to our value system. History teaches us that democracy is the only way to ensure the long-term development of our organisation. Depriving people of their democratic rights is like navigating against the current; you don't get anywhere in the long run. It is just a matter of time before this issue will be completely resolved.

As we know, each ITF Taekwon-Do practitioner swears an oath that includes these words:

I shall be the champion of justice and freedom.

I shall build a better and peaceful world.

A key principle of the ITF is that the Federation belongs to its members; it must work for its members and with its members. To do this, we must all respect the authentic philosophy of ITF Taekwon-Do as laid out by General Choi in the Encyclopedia of TKD and confirmed in our constitution. We must act in accordance with the democratic way that ITF Taekwon-Do leads us to strive for peace, justice, and freedom.

Congratulations to all of you for choosing the democratic way.

Our Founder, General Choi Hong Hi is no longer with us. He had accomplished his mission; now it is our mission to ensure that the ITF continues to grow and prosper. To do this, we need a structured organisation operating efficiently and in a business-like manner. The operations of the ITF will be modernized and restructured so that we will be able to provide the services our members need and want. The administration intends to work with the member countries in harmony, searching for consensus rather than conflict in all matters.

Vision of ITF Taekwon-Do

ITF Taekwon-Do is a sport, a martial art, a way of life, and a tool for social development. How can we work together for progress on all four facets?

A Sport

To develop ITF Taekwon-Do as a sport and encourage greater participation in competitions, major changes will be made to tournament rules, to the competition calendar, and to the qualification process. Training for umpires will be upgraded, and we will investigate the use of a computerized scoring system. Competitors will be happier and motivated to continue when our competitions are safer and scoring is more precise and reliable. Competitions held in well-known locations around the globe will focus attention on the ITF and will result in greater visibility.

A Martial Art

To improve ITF Taekwon-Do as a martial art, there will be increased emphasis on the traditional core values and protocol. The teaching of self-defence - our *raison d'être* - will be improved. We will use seminars, documentation, videos, and other means of communication to spread knowledge of ITF Taekwon-Do, reaching out to new markets and to new participants, particularly women.

A Way of Life

To demonstrate the value of ITF Taekwon-Do as a way of life, we must teach all facets of ITF Taekwon-Do, including the Do. I can tell you that General Choi's true last wish and words of guidance for us for the future are found in the introduction to his last book, «Moral Culture». The General had come to realize that most of the emphasis had been placed on the teaching of the technical aspects of ITF Taekwon-Do. He felt it would be up to the next generation to give equal importance to the teaching of the Do.

We have already started working on a Code of Ethics based on the Do. In future, we will use all the resources available to us to teach the whole ITF Taekwon-Do: the techniques and the Do. By studying the Do, our students will grow in understanding of the "why", not only the "how".

The ultimate purpose of life is the search for happiness. Many people suffer because they do not have the proper value system that leads to a balanced life and happiness. We have a solid philosophy and the tools to apply it in our lives. Now we must put in place a structure to teach the mental and spiritual aspects of ITF Taekwon-Do to our students so that they will be able to achieve a balanced life and happiness.

I have been teaching ITF Taekwon-Do as a way of life for many years and I believe we can help people to find a balance between family life, school or work, and ITF Taekwon-Do. Teaching this approach will open many doors to us.

A Tool for Social Development

To use ITF Taekwon-Do as a tool for social development, we must practice Taekwon-Do not just for ourselves, but also to improve life in our communities. ITF Taekwon-Do can be a powerful tool to help solve social problems such as drug abuse and juvenile delinquency, providing structure, discipline, and self-confidence that carry over into all aspects of life.

We hear a lot about efforts to reduce poverty in the world. By educating people with ITF Taekwon-Do values and practices, and by showing them that there is hope of improving their quality of life, we will be making an important contribution.

The ITF can develop programmes such as intensive instructor training for the unemployed and ITF Taekwon-Do courses offered at affordable prices. Starting with small-scale projects, our success will attract the attention and support of international development agencies and governments around the world. In Canada, we have had excellent results with this type of programme, and we will assist you to implant pilot projects in your countries.

There is a lot of work to be done in this area, but there is also an enormous potential for improvement.

Guiding Principles

The ITF belongs to its members; it must work **for** its members and **with** its members to provide the services they need and want.

The ITF and its affiliated organisations are always open to suggestions from members and encourage innovative ideas.

The ITF and its affiliated organisations are and must remain free of all political influence.

All decisions made by the administrators of the ITF and its affiliated organisations must be fair, impartial, and justified.

The ITF must play a proactive role in strategic areas such as communications and the development of ITF Taekwon-Do according to the four facets mentioned above.

The ITF and its affiliated organisations must put maximum on-going efforts into building and maintaining an efficient structure and professional operations.

The key to the future development of the ITF and its affiliated organisations is our core group of masters and instructors.

The ITF and its affiliated organisations will work to improve and ensure the quality of the teaching of ITF Taekwon-Do by our masters and instructors.

All qualifications and promotions within the ITF and its affiliated organisations will be attributed according to merit and in conformity with well-established criteria. This will result in increased credibility for the ITF with our members, in the martial arts world, and with the public.

Organisation and Projects

The Board of Directors will develop by-laws, policies, and procedures, all based on the ITF constitution. The ITF will then use these tools to provide management that is consistent and transparent.

Objectives, action plans, and priorities will be set only after wide-ranging consultation with you and, through you, with our members. The emphasis will be on structured planning, with short-, medium-, and long-term objectives. We also intend to implement a structured and transparent financial management system, starting with the budget for 2004.

The Board of Directors will decide all important issues as a team. Each member of the Board will be expected to be an active contributor to the success of the organisation. Chairpersons of the Standing Committees will be selected by the Board, based on their experience and abilities; they will be given specific responsibilities as well as the resources necessary to realize their mandates.

The ITF will ensure that the constitution and the by-laws, as well as policies and procedures, are respected. It will delegate the realisation and coordination of activities to the Continental Federations. The ITF and the Continental Federations will assist each National Association to develop a more efficient structure and organize activities. The role of the National Governing Bodies will be clearly defined. For more stability, the ITF representative in each country will be a structured organisation, rather than one individual. Frequent visits from ITF and your Continental Federation will support you in your development efforts.

Grand Masters, Masters, and International Instructors will be invited to participate in an Annual Technical Conference where they will be able to train together, express freely their concerns, and make suggestions.

Up-to-date technology will be used to facilitate communications with members. The ITF Web site will be updated. We will work for increased visibility for ITF Taekwon-Do in the world of martial arts and with the general public.

Strategic Development Programme

Our goal is to make ITF Taekwon-Do known around the globe by helping your organisations to progress in the countries you represent and by expanding to more countries, tailoring our approach to the local circumstances.

We will look for partnerships with various educational, community, and military organisations in order to expand the teaching of ITF Taekwon-Do. Strategic partnerships with private companies could be a source of increased revenues, allowing us to realize our projects.

Business Development Programme

Our instructors in all countries need guidance in how to become entrepreneurs: how to plan, how to manage and expand a business. The result will be more students, a better retention rate, increased income, and consequently a better quality of life. We have already started research into how we could provide this type of support to you.

Another possibility is that ITF could create a type of placement agency to help instructors to find jobs in ITF Taekwon-Do schools or to open new ITF taekwon-Do schools in other countries.

Conclusion

In order to succeed, we must work as a team, and I can assure you that each one of you will be able to find your place in our ITF. We will be counting on you for feedback and for follow-up actions. By working together in harmony, we will become worthy heirs – the “next generation” General Choi wrote about – who will continue his legacy.

Once again, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve the ITF and all its members. I invite each one of you to meet with me and with the members of our new Board of Directors while we are here in Warsaw to discuss your priorities and the great future of the ITF.