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## **Chairman's Report October 2011**

The situation between SANEF, the SAEC and SASCOC has been volatile and changed almost on a daily basis, making reporting difficult.

It appears as if finally some stability and normality has returned so I would like to give you information as to the status quo.

Since my last report in July, the SAEC met at their AGM, and Mr. Tony Lewis was suspended as a member of the SAEC subject to an investigation, pursuant to a motion made by one of the other constituent members of the SAEC. Ms Lisa Tait was elected as the Chairman.

However, after an appeal to SASCOC by Mr. Lewis an independent Committee was set up by SASCOC. They ruled that the process to remove Mr. Lewis was flawed as it was based on a constitution which itself was flawed and did not subscribe to a proper disciplinary process.

The whole of the SAEC including its constituent members (of which SANEF is one) were suspended, with an instruction to agree to a new constitution. We were assured that our athletes would not be compromised during this period.

A draft of the constitution was circulated, and there were a number of issues which affected SANEF and its position going forward. Government has given the international mandate for all international sport to the SAEC. This included SANEF relinquishing its membership of the FEI (which it has held since 1949) in favour of the SAEC which will now become the South African Equestrian Federation, as well as SANEF losing its status of a Federation and becoming an Association.

A meeting was called for by SASCOC to establish the SAEF constitution. All role players including SANEF Technical Discipline committees were invited.

SANEF Manco, Council and representatives of the National Technical Committees held an emergency meeting, and it was unanimously agreed that the disciplines would stand together and provide a united front for the upcoming meeting.



A number of changes to the draft were proposed, although not much time was available to distribute and study the draft before it had to be returned.

Representatives of all the disciplines (apart from Driving who had given written support), plus two members of SANEF Manco attended the meeting with SASCOC on the 8<sup>th</sup> October, together with representatives from the other equestrian codes (except for Racing, who resigned from the SAEC).

We were seriously admonished and criticized for not wrapping up the Commission of Inquiry timeously, as well as for the lack of transformation in our sport. We are guilty of both.

We were also told that unless we complied with handing over our membership of the FEI, our athletes would also be suspended.

It was agreed that all of our disciplines would remain under SANEF except for Reining, which has no option but to now form part of a new Western Association directly under the SAEC.

Straight after the constitution was adopted Mr. Lewis was re-instated by SASCOC as President. Deon Augustyn who has been SANEF's representative was voted in as Vice President, Dewald Viljoen as Treasurer and Lisa Tait as Secretary General. The fact that a SANEF representative received unanimous support into the position of vice bears testament to how far we have come in mending bridges with the other constituent members.

We are waiting for confirmation that Mr. Reddy has ratified the constitution. One of the major changes is that SANEF will now only have one vote, a principle welcomed by the SANEF Council and the new SANEF Management committee. For too long the SAEC was manipulated by SANEF for its own benefit – a cause of major discontent (and rightly so) from the other Equestrian codes.

We have a lot of work to do – both with regaining our credibility as well as refocusing our energy on administering our sport. Much has been neglected whilst putting out fires, and we now must concentrate on the work at hand.

We will re-brand, re-name and re-build – an exercise we all have been committed to since 2010. This is an opportunity to exorcise the ghosts of our past, and we must learn from past mistakes.

I wish to thank everyone who has been involved in this monumental quest for our survival. Let us now stand together once again in sorting out our future.

**ERIC BIANCHI**

