Dear BISFed Member,

Once again, I am pleased to report that boccia and BISFed have had a very successful year. In November, we held our bi-annual General Assembly in Portugal where I gave an update to those present on progress we have made, concentrating on the following areas:

- **Competitions**: we have delivered a full programme of events in 2019, including the important Regional Championships. Preparations for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games are proceeding well
- **Membership**: which continues to grow steadily
- **Technology**: our systems are now fully operational and we plan to refresh our website in 2020
- **BISFed Operations**: our new staff team is making a real difference to our ability to deliver services to our Members.

**Competitions**

BISFed has managed very significant growth in the number of sanctioned competitions during the last 7 years. We now deliver 10 times as many events per Paralympic Cycle compared with the numbers prior to the London Games. By this measure, boccia is the fastest-growing Paralympic sport. I want to thank all the competition Hosts who have made it possible to maintain this growth. In 2019 we held three very successful Regional Championships, which boasted an outstanding level of competition, and provided qualification slots to Tokyo for Gold Medal winners. All the competitions have been fiercely contested as athletes attempt to gain qualification for Tokyo.

Preparations for Tokyo are proceeding very well: the venue (which will accommodate 12,000 spectators - more than any previous boccia venue) is complete; we will have one extra day’s competition and 8 more athlete slots than in Rio. Many of the innovations we have introduced during this quadrennial will be seen in Tokyo; for example, there will be live broadcast of boccia for the first time, and we will have overhead camera positions on every court. Looking even further ahead, we have started preliminary discussions with Paris for the Games in 2024 and have agreed an excellent centrally located venue.

**Membership**

Our Membership continues to grow and in 2019 we welcomed Cameroon and Uruguay as Members. BISFed currently has 72 Members in good standing and a small number whose Membership dues remain unpaid. Our target remains 80 BISFed Members by Tokyo 2020. On an administrative matter, it is important that Members pay all the bank charges when making payments either to BISFed or Host Organising Committees. From 2020, we will not permit attendance at competitions if bank charges have not been paid in full.

**Technology**

BISFed has built its business model on the basis that we will use technology whenever feasible to make our operations as efficient as possible. In addition to the Sport:80 platform which we have been using for several years for managing our interaction with Members as well as competition entries, we have now completed work on the ‘Boccia Competition Management System’ (BCMS) which is used at all BISFed events. The automated World Ranking System is updated shortly after each competition, and an on-line Classification database allows Classifiers to record classification information in a secure and timely way. We plan to update the BISFed website starting in early 2020.

**BISFed’s Operations**

In accordance with BISFed’s Articles of Association, the Board appointed a new Board Member in 2019, Mr Sunghee Kang who is also the President of the Korean Boccia Federation. Mr Kang will bring additional
commercial expertise as well as access to technology insights. BISFed’s Board meets 4 – 5 times a year. Meetings are held by telephone conference call and Committee Chairs are invited to observe the meetings (also by conference call) and to give their reports. Since the appointment of BISFed’s first Athlete Representative in 2018, the Representative is also invited to ensure we have the athletes’ perspective in Board discussions. Every year the Board attempts to hold one face-to-face meeting and in 2019 we were grateful to be hosted by Korean Boccia Federation during the Asia Regional Championships in Seoul.

Two new members have recently joined our Staff Team: Katie Ribeiro (General manager) and Gustavo Alvarim (Competitions Manager) and together with Dom Tremblay they make an excellent team. We are now able to cover all aspects of the Federation’s work. We hold a weekly call with the Staff Team to make sure we are dealing with day-to-day matters, and a representative of the Board travels to each competition to provide a point of contact for Members and to represent the Federation at these important events.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Board members and our Staff Team for their dedication and support to your Federation.

Committees

- **Competitions Committee:** The Committee is responsible for allocating slots to all BISFed competitions in accordance with our protocols; calling for bids to host events; evaluating the bids and managing the contracts with each HOC. In addition, the Committee has been very active in reviewing the Competition System for 2021 – 4. (A recommendation has been presented to the Board and has now been shared and discussed with Members present at the General Assembly).

- **Rules Committee:** The Committee reviewed the Boccia Rules following the Rio Games, and several significant changes have been introduced: The target box (for penalties); introduction of a new ‘Roll Test’ for boccia balls; removal of Rule 3.2; and the outlawing of ‘sticky substances’ being applied to boccia balls. The Committee will again review the Rules in late 2020 with a view to introducing any changes in time for the start of competition in 2021.

- **Referees Committee:** The Committee is responsible for recommending International Referees for all events. They are also responsible for training and evaluation of International Referees and have developed an excellent course which has been delivered multiple times in the last two years. The Committee has trained 49 new International Referees since 2017.

- **Development Committee:** The Committee has completed a major project to design a standard ‘Level 1 Coaching Course’. This has now been tested and delivered to over 70 people during the last 18 months and is available to all BISFed Members. We believe this course will go a long way towards helping boccia to grow and will help ensure that game is played in a consistent way around the world.

- **Classification Committee:** In addition to all of its work classifying athletes at competitions, the Committee has helped develop our new on-line Classification Database which allows direct and secure entry of all classification data onto the database; in addition, the previous paper-based records have been added to the database. The Committee has also trained 111 National and 8 International Classifiers.

- **Anti-Doping Committee:** The Committee has worked hard to respond to a negative WADA review of our procedures in 2017. We are happy to report that BISFed is now fully compliant with the WADA Code. In 2018, we introduced an Anti-Doping education opportunity for all athletes and coaches who attended the World Championships. Following on from this, BISFed made it a requirement for all athletes who participate in a BISFed competition to undertake part on of WADA’s Anti-Doping e-Learning programme (ADEL). At the present time, BISFed has more athletes trained to this level than
any other Paralympic sport. Lastly, we have introduced a Registered Testing Pool in 2019, with 8 athletes in the pool. In-and out-of-competition testing is carried out at all sanctioned events.

Other Matters of Interest

It is worth noting that over the last two years we have had some success in attracting revenues from outside sources, notably from Media Rights deals and a sponsorship arrangement with a floor supplier, Gerflor who provide the playing surface for the Word Championships and Paralympic Games as well as several other competitions. We continue to benefit from our relationship with Hogan Lovells (a major legal firm) and of course from several of our Members, for which we are most grateful.

The Board has taken the view that it will be increasingly important to protect our brand and intellectual property, and we have therefore sought and obtained a Trademark for our logo and ‘BISFed’ and we own the ‘World Boccia’ domain names. I want to thank our Treasurer Jon Morgan for his work in ensuring that BISFed remains financially stable through prudent financial control.

Future Priorities

In addition to all our ongoing work, I would like to outline a small number of important priorities on which the Board will focus in 2020:

- **Growth**: We want to increase our Membership and will continue to support the growth of boccia with particular emphasis on Africa, the Caribbean and Oceania.

- **Greater female participation in boccia**: we have already achieved a marked improvement in gender balance by requiring at least one female athlete as part of each Team and Pair. As we review the Competition System for 2021 – 24, we expect to make further progress on gender balance.

- **Sport Presentation**: as we strive to attract more commercial sponsorship, we will need to find new ways to make boccia even more exciting for spectators and the media.

- **Commercial revenue**: we believe the time has come to leverage our brand and to try to find new external sources of revenue which will allow us to do even more for our Members.

Lastly, I want to thank all our Members and of course our wonderful volunteers (especially our Technical Delegates, Referees and Classifiers) who give their time so generously to support the athletes.

I wish you all the best over the festive season, and every success in 2020.

With kind regards

David Hadfield

*President*

*December 2019*