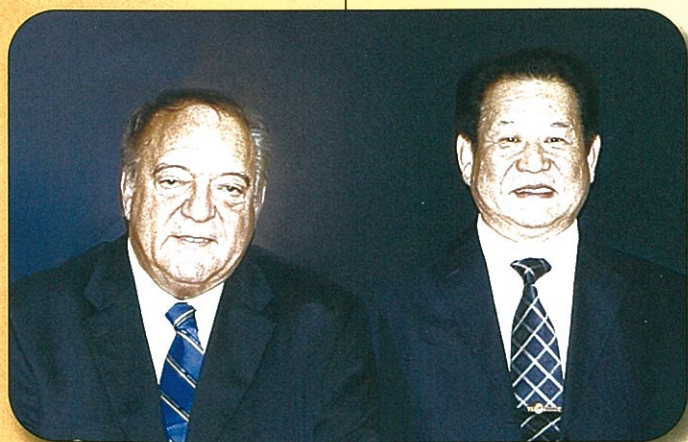


# ASHTON

Dear Readers,  
dear Friends,



Time flies, we are writing 2012 and we are back into an Olympic year. The great Games have returned to Europe after having been to Asia last time. Recalling the Beijing 2008 Olympics, it was absolutely fantastic from the point of view of weightlifting. It is a fact that one of the focal points of the Beijing Games was the competition in weightlifting. The main reason for that was that weightlifting is a very strong sport in Chi-

na; furthermore because the organisation was perfect; but most importantly because the host country won eight Olympic gold medals. If that happens it is bound to provoke amplified interest in our sport – an impact we could sense throughout the 2008 Summer Games. Also from the point of view of television weightlifting scored a significant success: ours was the second most-watched sport; it was a runner up also in terms of



London prepares for great Olympics in 2012



The IWF President with the newly elected Pan-American Federation Board  
(Photo by Éva Moska)

broadcast time. As for veiwng hours only track and field 'beat' us, whereas weightlifting out-classed even table tennis, a sport that counts as a national sport in China. No wonder the Canadian President of the International Table Tennis Federation, Adham Shahara came up to me and asked me in total amazement: "Tamas, how did you do that? What was your secret?" Well, I said, and I was happy to state there and then, it was because the weightlifting event was very well organised, the competitions were outstanding, and last but not least, the Chinese team was extremely successful. Beyond that, however, spectator interest was high from all over the world.

At this point, let me return to the World Championships last November in Paris, an event that was truly spectacular. Recently, I had a visit by the President of the French Weightlifting Federation, Jean-Paul Bulgaridhes, the Technical Director, Lionel Gondran and the Administrative Director, Alexandra Vigoureux, and they told me the budget of the 2011 Paris WWC was 3.6 million Euros. This figure is quite astonishing and it is only one of the data about that World Championship which can, however, gie us an idea about the scale of that organisation.

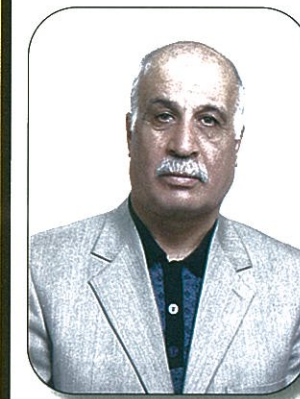
But that is also the past now and we are deeply into 2012. I think we are on time and, time-proportionnally, the International Weightlifting Federation is duly advanced with the preparations of the Olympic Games. We have excellent cooperation with LOCOG, the Organising Committee of the London Games. The Olympic weightlifting competitions have an outstanding Manager with Matthew Curtain who is very active and efficient. Matthew has lots of experience: he was, among others, Weightlifting Director of the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and worked for many years at Federation level as well. We enjoy a permanent and productive collaboration. By the way, Matthew and four other

members of LOCOG were invited to the Paris World Championships as observers, including the official in charge of broadcasting. Ma Wenguang, General Secretary and I are realists and we believe that since British weightlifting is much weaker than the Chinese, a high-level organisation and spectacular elements in the competitions should be instrumental instead in an attempt to captivate the audience in the venue and keep them put in front of the television sets in their homes when weightlifting is on. The IWF Technical Delegates, Sam Coffa and Attila Ádámfi have also been working hard and adding their expertise to staging singular events in the Excel, the Olympic weightlifting venue. Our two main Olympic Qualification events, the Antalya (2010) and Paris (2011) World Championships are over. In 2012 we have another five competitions, the Continental Qualification Championships. These will be held as pearls on a string: starting with the African Qualification in Nairobi, Kenya in March, followed in April by the European in Antalya, Turkey and the Asian in South Korea. The Pan-American Qualification event has the speciality of being held in May in conjunction with our Junior World Championships in Guatemala, and I am sure this combined event will draw high participation from both the Continent and the world. At the end of May, the Oceanian Qualification rounds up this important series in Samoa. By the end of May we shall thus know which nations have obtained team quota for London. Then, the two World Championships, the five Continental Qualification Championships and the selected Qualification events (like IWF Grand Prix held in 2010 and 2011) will produce the Qualification World Ranking List allowing individual qualification for athletes with no NOC quota and finishing in the top 15 for men or the top 10 for women. The Tripartite Invitations (under their popular name

'Wild Cards') allocated on the IOC's initiative make the Olympic participation complete. A somewhat complicated procedure, I admit, but the only way to fulfil our aims to keep a healthy balance between the top and the weaker countries, between the continents, to let both quality and quantity characterize our competitions and to maintain weightlifting's global feature at the Olympic Games. I expect the presence of 80-82 countries, a number we traditionally have at the Games and which gives a testimony of how wide-spread and popular weightlifting is all over the world. At Paris 23 countries shared the medals: another proof that our sport is not centered around one or just a few nations. I would reckon that 22-24 countries will be able to take Olympic medals in London. Looking even further ahead in 2012, we have some other important tasks on our agenda. Challenges facing the IWF include the modification of our Constitution and Rules to be approved by the Congress in December. The Olympic year, additionally, includes elections in some of the Continental Federations. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate our colleague, Willian Ozuna (Dominican Republic) on his reelection as President of the Pan-American Federation, and wish him and the other elected PAWF officials another four successful years. Last but not least, I would like to point out that – as usual prior to the Games, and as in previous years – anti-doping controls will be extensive and intensive in 2012, both in and out of competitions. There is no stopping here: we continue our fight and our education as an important part of our duties in the sport.

Dr. Tamás Aján  
IWF President

Ma Wenguang  
General Secretary IWF



## Obituary

The IWF and weightlifting mourns the loss of Dr. Asghar Shahabi. After a lengthy and serious illness, Dr. Asghar Shahabi died in January in his home town, Tabriz, Iran, shortly before his 70th birthday. A Member of the IWF Medical Committee since 1988, as an orthopaedic surgeon, Head of his clinic, Dr. Shahabi was a renowned and enthusiastic expert; Iran's team and Olympic Committee doctor; a doctor on duty at Olympic and Asian Games, World and Asian Championships and an array of other events. As a Chairman of the AWF Medical Committee and an expert in weightlifting, he served the sport in many courses and events. Dr. Shahabi was not only a central figure of the sport but as a kind, gentle and helpful person he also made himself indispensable and a great friend of many people all over the world. He leaves a great void in the sport and in our hearts. He was a person who will be remembered.