

Dear Chairs, Members of Merit, Honorary Members and Committee members,

I would like to inform you personally of a decision I have taken with mixed feelings. After just over four years, I will step down as Chair of the KNCB at the upcoming General Assembly in April. Last Friday it was announced that I have been appointed Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the OECD. This means that, starting this summer, I will relocate to Paris with my family for a period of four years.

Combining this position with the chairmanship of the KNCB is neither workable nor, more importantly, desirable for Dutch cricket. Especially now that the organisation has reached a phase of significantly improved organisational and financial stability, the KNCB deserves a chair who can be fully and closely present to lead the next phase of growth and professionalisation.

When Marc Asselbergs, former Chair of the KNCB and at the time Chair of the Board Committee appointed by the General Assembly, approached me during a period when the association was facing severe challenges and the General Assembly had dismissed the then board, several clear objectives were set: restore calm and stability; grow participation in cricket; build structural and diversified income streams — particularly alongside ICC funding — and lay a solid foundation for high performance, enabling sustainable sporting success.

Together with an almost entirely new Board and a new CEO, we started work in an extremely turbulent period. In the years that followed, significant effort was invested in realising these ambitions, sometimes with changing compositions within both the Board and the organisation. From the outset, there was a conscious focus on professionalisation: investing in player contracts, introducing a renewed competition structure, appointing regional developers to support cricket development, and strengthening the financial base by attracting new sponsors. As is often the case with major change, this process was not always smooth, as became particularly evident during the financially turbulent year of 2025.

Where do we stand today? The KNCB is organisationally and financially far more stable than it was four years ago. Since 2021, the number of cricket clubs has grown from 45 to 51 (+13%), while total membership has increased by 23%. These figures demonstrate clearly that cricket in the Netherlands has strengthened and broadened in recent years.

Over the same period, the national men's team qualified for three consecutive World Cups — an achievement of the players and the technical and support staff, led by Ryan Cook. The women's team regained ODI status in 2022 through strong performances, has continued to develop well, and under the leadership of head coach Neil McRae will make a serious attempt in January in Nepal to qualify for a T20 World Cup; they started very well this week.

In 2023, the men also qualified for the 50-over World Cup through an exceptionally strong qualifying tournament, in which even two-time world champions West Indies were eliminated. At the World Cup itself, the Netherlands defeated both South Africa and

Bangladesh — remarkable achievements that made headlines worldwide. Truly unprecedented, and a magnificent accomplishment by the players and staff.

All of this has been made possible through the commitment of many, including the Board and the KNCB office — a team of dedicated and professional people. I am deeply grateful to my fellow Board members: Jacques, Willemijn, Rashid, Nitin, Sybrand, Reinout and Mudi. I would also like to express my great appreciation for the players, the technical staff and support staff, the employees of the KNCB office, and interim director Lucas Hendrikse.

With the Board and the new CEO, Huib van Walsem, there is an excellent team in place to continue building the future of Dutch cricket. *The world turns orange* — increasingly so with players developed through our own youth pathways.

I am sincerely thankful to the clubs, their chairs, the members of merit and honorary members, the KNCB office, all volunteers within our cricket family, our friends at the ICC, our partner cricket nations and our sponsors for their engagement and for the — sometimes critical, but above all constructive — cooperation and advice. That spirit has made it possible to build, together, a strong association and to further develop our beloved sport in the Netherlands.

The chairmanship demands many hours, but I have carried out this role with great pleasure — and I will truly miss it. In the coming months, I will of course remain fully committed to a careful and orderly transition. After that, I am sure I will see you again somewhere along the boundary.

With kind regards,

Guido Landheer
Chair KNCB