



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

THE

HONOURABLE AGNES BASILLA TJONGARERO

**WADA VIRTUAL FORUM WITH MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR
SPORT IN AFRICA**

24 FEBRUARY 2022

Mr. Witold Banka, WADA President

Mrs. Yang Yang, WADA Vice President

Honorable Ministers, and WADA representatives

Good day,

It is an honor for me to take the floor during this insightful and empowering information-sharing and consultative forum.

The unseen enemy has torn us in various ways that has even impacted our activities beyond our imagination. I therefore wish to extend my appreciation to the regions and my personal, appreciation for the efforts the leadership of WADA has undertaken in ensuring that we are well informed as Ministers responsible for Sport and anti-doping.

As a former WADA Foundation Board member representing our beautiful continent, I have taken good note of the expectations and requirements the UNESCO Convention and the Code places on us as governments. The tasks are daunting, and the responsibilities are huge. As governments, and as Sports Ministers, we are responsible to ensure that we provide the best possible safeguards for the well-being of our athletes; to protect them from sports corruption, doping, abuse, mismanagement and all the evils besetting sport. It is our mandate which requires diligence and above all leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In Africa we pride ourselves on our ability to rise above adversity. African sport is rising. We don't stand back for anybody. Our athletes are determined, ambitious and represent us with pride.

It is for this reason that Africa must be fully committed to ensure that our anti-doping programs are functional and sustainable and that we implement our responsibilities under the Code and the UNESCO International Anti-Doping Convention with absolute belief and conviction that it is the right thing to do. Our commitment should not stop at lip service or rhetoric, but must be tangible, visible, and sincere.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Yes, for many African countries, and others in different parts of the world, the availability of resources for sport and anti-doping remains a challenge. I am therefore very happy to note WADA's commitment to find resources to assist regions such as ours to further develop our capacities and programs. However, as a region we fully understand the need for our commitment to unequivocally support the work that WADA is doing.

I am very aware that many of our African countries are not paying their annual dues to WADA. These are minimal amounts, in the bigger scheme of things, and we should all be encouraging our Ministers to make good on this obligation and ensure that the annual WADA contributions are paid in a timely manner. This has

been and continues to be a major challenge for the region and at every meeting of WADA's governance structures, the level of payment dues to WADA remains a blemish on our proud traditions as Africans.

Ladies and gentleman,

The African Union Commission is working on a revised regional share-split for WADA contributions for the region. It is hoped that this revised formula will be agreed to at the upcoming African Union Ministers of Sport meeting, once confirmed. The adoption of such a revised share-split will hopefully set a new course for the region's response, and I urge you as my fellow African Ministers of Sport to support the initiative during our discussion at that meeting with the African Union.

Adequate National Anti-Doping Organizations in Africa remains to be a challenge taking into account that they should be sustainable, relevant, and independent. My own country, Namibia, is one of those 44 African countries who have benefitted greatly from the Regional Anti-Doping Organizations, or "RADO's" as they are known. WADA facilitated the creation of the RADO's and continues to support them, so that each member country is then assisted. We thank WADA for this valuable support and to inform the delegates that Namibia is ready to start the process to establish, through legislation, a NADO that is independent and relevant to the needs of our country. Allow me to extend my gratitude to the WADA Africa Office for their continuous support in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a region we must heed the call to be proactive, supportive, and more involved in terms of the global anti-doping program. We are part of the system and benefit greatly from it and should therefore contribute to its strengthening. It is vital! Africa is not a distant planet, operating in a vacuum, but is an integral part of the anti-doping landscape you so eloquently described earlier, President Banka. We must contribute and I urge you, fellow Ministers, to not just pay lip service to matters of anti-doping but in concrete terms to develop, assist and support your national anti-doping programs.

The pen is in our hands...let us write a script and a narrative that future generations of African athletes can judge us by. One that says “we care about our national sporting assets; we care about their well-being and the integrity of the system in which they participate in, and we care about ensuring that sport, as we know it, can continue to be the gel that binds our communities.

In conclusion, Honourable members, allow me to once again thank WADA for their leadership. It is not always a smooth ride, the challenges arise from time to time; there are those who selfishly refuse to see the forest and only see their own individual tree, who constantly forgets that the world is not only North America and Europe. I can go on, but WADA should remain steadfast in ensuring that the interests of athletes remain front, back and centre of our collective efforts, and that all countries and our people, continue to receive the support of WADA and in return support the work of WADA as best as possible.

The tasks are huge, but together we can accomplish much.

I thank you!