



# ANOCA NEWSLETTER



INTERNATIONAL  
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COMMITTEE

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## *Mustapha* **BERRAF**

**“In Africa, women  
and sport give real  
meaning to life and  
development.”**

Exclusive interview with ANOCA President and IOC Member, Mustapha Berraf, who has made women's empowerment within sports governing bodies a priority.



### **Women Sports Africa: What are your ambitions for African sport?**

**MUSTAPHA BERRAF:** Promoting African athletes is our core activity. African athletes are integral to our ambitions. Our 2020-2024 strategic plan therefore seeks to promote our competitors and foster the emergence of budding talents, with a view to ensuring continuity. It targets mainly athletes. To implement this plan, we receive invaluable support from the IOC's Olympic Solidarity. My sincere gratitude to Dr Thomas BACH for his unflinching and multifaceted support to the African Olympic and Sports Movement. There are multiple actions that promote athlete development in Africa, including the creation of an ANOCA Athletes' Commission, Olympic scholarships, doping control, the African Athletes' Forum and the establishment of Olympafrika centres in line with Olympafrika's 2021-2025 strategic plan, as well as the construction of NOC headquarters. We aim to highlight athletes' roles and responsibilities in a bid to secure a bright future for African sports.

In the next two years, we intend to increase our contribution to Africa's development, and this inevitably involves elite sports. We therefore urge African states to further commit themselves because, together, we are stronger and more efficient. A lot of changes are currently taking place in African sports.



We will therefore go even further in building infrastructure, organising major competitions, participating in global sports events and ensuring that our valiant athletes emerge victorious. At ANOCA, all our efforts are geared towards making this dream a reality.

**WSA: Which events have marked and will mark 2023?**

**MB:** The African Athletes’ Forum, which was organised on 11 and 12 March 2023 in Algiers is the first memorable event that drew global attention. It brought together athletes from all 54 African NOCs to discuss the major issues they are facing, including their career, training, funding for athletes’ management for improved performance, and ensuring a peaceful life after many years of practising elite sports.

During this high-level meeting, ANOCA athlete representatives were also elected and Athletes’ Commissions established in all African NOCs as set out in the ANOCA 2020-2024 strategic plan.



**“ Promoting African athletes is our core activity ”**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> African Beach Games which were organised from 23 to 30 June in Hammamet, Tunisia, were a historic event.

Over 1,000 athletes from 53 African competed in 15 sports disciplines. On the eve of the Games, that is, on 22 June, ANOCA convened its 21st ordinary General Assembly. The GA deliberations helped assess our preparation for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The Gender Equality Forum that took place this same year in Cape Verde marked another very critical gender mainstreaming milestone within the African Olympic and Sports Movement. The gender approach is an integral part of our strategy. Gender equality in sport is no longer a matter for debate.

## **WSA: How is ANOCA preparing African Athletes for the 2024 Olympics?**

**MB:** African NOCs are working closely with international federations. ANOCA has set up a well-structured high-level sports project with the aim of achieving results with substantial material and human resources. Olympic scholarships awarded to athletes through NOCs are intended to enhance the quality of sports preparation. We are convinced that Africa will keep its Olympic flame burning at Paris 2024. We are going there to achieve great performances. The ANOCA Athletes' Support Programme is an effective response to the needs of young African athletes.

We call on NOCs to play their full part in implementing this strategy. We are grateful that IOC's Olympic Solidarity is standing with us.



**WSA: What is your appraisal of the current situation of women's sport in Africa?**

**MB:** In Africa, women and sport give real meaning to life and development. I would like to pay tribute to all the women who hold leadership positions, whatever the level of responsibility, and I would also like to encourage all those who are planning to contribute to sports projects in Africa. There are many outstanding women. They are a true inspiration to young girls who aspire to develop great careers in elite sports. Coordinated by ANOCA Vice President Matlohang Moiloa-Ramoqopo enjoys a great deal of support.

We call on African governments to fully commit to supporting women in sport. Women athletes, coaches, officials and administrators all make a significant contribution to the furtherance of sport and Olympic values.

**WSA: Are there regional disparities in this regard across the continent?**

**MB:** We are fully aware that the level of country commitments differs depending on various realities, but all African countries, even the most conservative, are recognising the need for women to take part in sport. Today, we have female athletes from all 54 African nations. The inclusive nature of sport now breaks all barriers, however hostile they may be.

**“ The inclusive nature of sport now breaks all barriers, however hostile they may be. ”**

## **WSA: Are the main obstacles to women's sport cultural or infrastructural?**

**MB:** Both aspects that you mentioned need to be considered. However, many barriers are being lifted as we work with different countries. The cultural progress is such that all countries are now organising local sports competitions where young women can display their talent. This is an ongoing commitment, which we are following up very closely. Huge strides have been made. Over the years, an increasing number of sports facilities have been built in Africa, and they are open to women without discrimination.

The IOC is making efforts to raise public and political awareness of gender equality with a highly ambitious contemporary and gender equality programme.

Women play an incredible role in our societies. Our female athletes are eagerly awaited in upcoming competitions such as the Paris 2024 Olympic Games just as was the case at this year's 2023 African Beach Games in Hammamet, Tunisia.

In the past, they made their mark by bringing honour to sport and the African Olympic Movement.





**WSA: Is access to high-level sport at ‘the same level’ for men and women on the continent?**

**MB:** There’s no comparison to be made here. All the sports bodies on the African continent put women and men at the same level. The perception of gender has changed considerably and our sports management has taken on board these issues, which in my view are no longer an obstacle to women competing at the elite level. Women are subject to the same rules and procedures of the universal World Sports Charter.

The sports rights and obligations of female and male athletes are protected at the same level in Africa and across the world. In terms of performance, we are fully satisfied with the output of our female athletes. We are proud of and honoured by their performance.

**WSA: Are there any ‘women only’ competitions organised by the African Olympic Movement? How does ANOCA view such competitions?**

**MB:** These are concepts that we hold in high esteem in view of their strong ideological dimension. However, we believe that it is better to encourage healthy female and male competition within the African Olympic and Sports Movement. We are advocating genuine gender equality, not organisations that might encourage divisive attitudes. African sport is one and indivisible. We are faithful to the Olympic values of Solidarity, Love, Sharing and Fair Play that urge us to reject discrimination.



**WSA: How many African NOCS are headed by women?**

**MB:** There are four women NOC Presidents (Burundi, Djibouti, Rwanda and Gambia). Several other women hold top positions of responsibility within NOCs and ANOCA, some as vice-presidents and others as commission chairpersons. We laud the excellent and outstanding work that these women undertake every day to ensure the success of sport in Africa. Their efforts and contributions help drive the inclusive ideal that we are forging together.

**WSA: What is the proportion of women in NOC management bodies?**

**MB:** This currently stands at 30%. In our 2020-2024 strategic plan, we have made a commitment to promote women to senior positions. An ANOCA circular urges all NOCs to comply with the minimum quota of 30%. An increasing number of women are involved in sports governance. Diversification is a reality. The value of women is enhanced.



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