Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa
ACNOA - ANOCA

ACNOA MAGAZINE

REVIEW OF AFRICAN OLYMPISM



5TH CONTINENTAL ATHLETES' FORUM

Windhoek 2025

EMPOWERING AFRICAN ATHLETES TO SUCCEED AND ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS WITH ANOCA!

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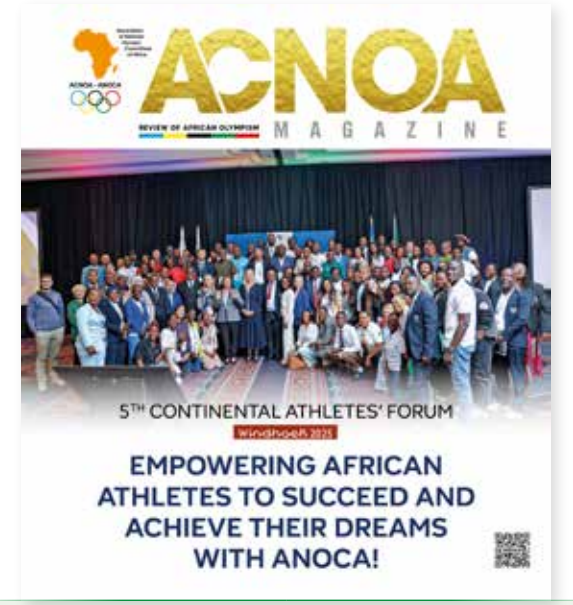
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THEY ARE OUR FLAME, OUR VOICE, OUR FUTURE



Dear friends of the African Olympic and Sports Movement,

Some moments go beyond a mere sports calendar to become defining moments in the history of a continent.

The 5th Continental Athletes' Forum that held from 4 to 6 April 2025, was most certainly one of those remarkable moments.

By bringing together in Windhoek, Namibia, our elite champions from all 54 African countries, the Continental Athletes' Forum clearly showcased a sporting Africa that is asserting itself, uniting and taking its Olympic destiny into its own hands with determination and dignity.

One voice, a continental force

As I listened to the passionate speeches of our athletes during this historic Forum, I deeply felt the power of this new generation of young African athletes, who are determined to achieve many successes with sheer will and courage.



These men and women, who fly our colours on international podiums, are not only outstanding competitors; they are ambassadors of an Africa on the move, an Africa of young people who reject preconceived narratives and is shaping its own history.

These men and women, who fly our colours on international podiums, are not only outstanding competitors; they are ambassadors of an Africa on the move, an Africa of young people who reject preconceived narratives and is shaping its own history.

As our Athletes' Commission so rightly pointed out in plenary, "*the African athlete enjoys a special audience across all social categories*." Our champions now shoulder this exceptional responsibility with a high sense of awareness of their transformative role.

From words to tangible actions

This 5th Forum was not just about wonderful statements. It also undertook tangible commitments that will sustainably transform the African sports ecosystem:


CHAD



Unanimous adoption of the African Athlete's Charter, a founding document that now guarantees continental standards for support, protection and promotion of our athletes.

The creation of the Pan-African Excellence Centre for Career Transition, which will ensure that our champions have something to hold on to after retiring from active sports.

The launch of the "*Voices of Africa*" programme, which will athletes to take Olympic values to schools across the continent, reaching more than one million young people by 2028.

The creation of the Solidarity Fund for African Athletes - an innovative mechanism for pooling resources that will complement existing mechanisms.

These are concrete achievements that reflect our collective desire to move from mere participation to structural excellence - an essential paradigm shift for African sport in the 21st century.

Athletes at the heart of our vision

ANOCA has always had the enduring conviction that athletes are not mere addresses of our policies; they are the source, the inspiration and the ultimate goal.

Every initiative we undertake, every resource we mobilise, every partnership we build is only meaningful if it helps to create the best conditions for our talents to thrive.

This is why, with the ANOCA Executive Committee, I wished that this Forum be a real think tank where athletes could freely express their views on the challenges they face and the solutions they recommend. The ensuing recommendations will henceforth guide our action for the years to come, in a resolutely participatory approach.



I would like to thank Olympic Solidarity, whose collaboration with ANOCA helped bring together athlete leaders to promote unity, development and collaboration in African sport. I would also like to thank the ANOCA Athletes' Commission, which works hard with exemplary wisdom in promoting African athletes.

I would also urge African NOCs and National Federations to place athletes at the heart of everything they do.

How can we afford not to mention the work of the International Olympic Committee with my friend Dr Thomas BACH, who has ended a highly commendable tenure and, then, IOC President-elect, Kirsty COVENTRY, who reminds us that the Olympic Movement is based on two major pillars: the Olympic Games and elite athletes, and our responsibility towards our communities.

We must continue to support athlete training programmes through grants and scholarships

to prepare them for competitions and foster a stimulating, high-performance, athlete-centred environment.

Legacy for future generations

"*African athletes must consider themselves as ambassadors of African sport*." Culled from the deliberations of our Forum, this sentence sounds like a manifesto for our collective action.

Indeed, beyond the medals and records, our champions bear a tremendous responsibility: that of embodying and passing on values that go beyond sport: discipline, resilience, fair play and excellence. These values, which are instilled by elite sport, are precisely what our societies need to rise to today's challenges.

ANOCA, therefore, solemnly undertakes to implement all the recommendations adopted at this Forum. Our 2025-2028 action plan, endorsed at our recent General Assembly in Algiers, already incorporates these major guidelines, and will mobilise all our resources for their effective implementation.

United for Los Angeles 2028 and beyond

Barely three years away from the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028, the Forum also provided an opportunity to lay the foundations for forward-looking and coordinated Olympic preparations in Africa, including major competitions such as the Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026 and continental competitions such as the African Games, the African Beach Games and the Maiden African School Games.

The "*Road to LA28*" programme we have launched together will ensure a coherent continental approach, maximising our athletes' chances of shining on the Olympic stage.

It will be no easy road, but our determination is unshakeable, for, as our motto so rightly proclaims: "Africa, united in its diversity, excels through sport.

But our vision extends far beyond 2028. By laying the foundations today for a resilient, high-performance African sports ecosystem, we are paving the way for a generation of athletes who will revolutionise Africa's place on the international sports stage.

It will be no easy road, but our determination is unshakeable, for, as our motto so rightly proclaims: "*Africa, united in its diversity, excels through sport.*"

To all our athletes, to all stakeholders of the African Olympic and Sports Movement, I would like to express my pride and gratitude for your unflagging commitment. Together, we are writing a glorious new page in the sports history of our beloved continent.

My warmest regards and my unwavering commitment.

Mustapha Berraf

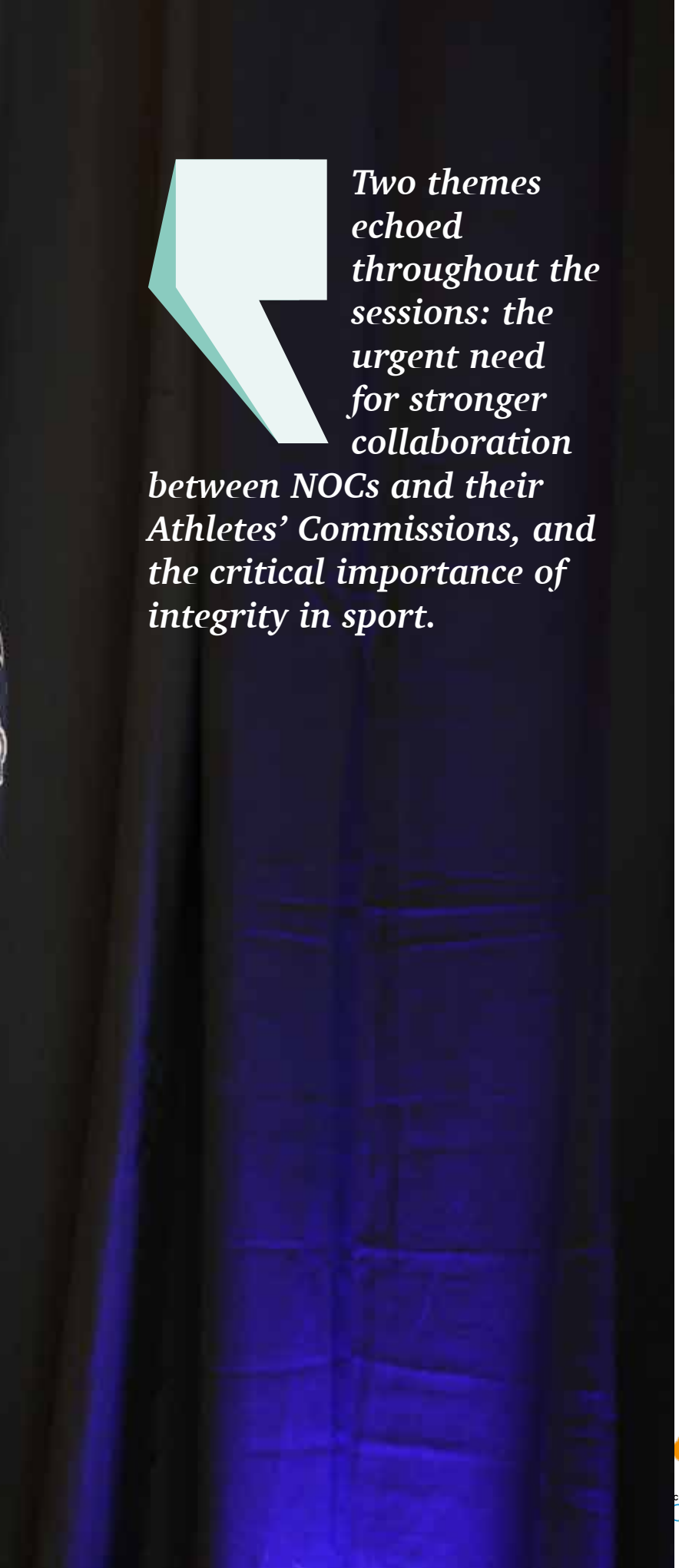
ANOCA President
IOC Member
ANOC Vice President
President of the Olympafrica Foundation

REFLECTIONS ON A DEFINING MOMENT FOR AFRICAN ATHLETES

By **GABY AHRENS**

Chair of ANOCA Athletes' Commission
Three-time Olympian
IOC AC Liaison.





Two themes echoed throughout the sessions: the urgent need for stronger collaboration between NOCs and their Athletes' Commissions, and the critical importance of integrity in sport.

Hosting the 5th ANOCA Athletes' Forum in my home country, Namibia was more than an honour -it was a deeply personal and symbolic milestone. For three days, Windhoek became a vibrant hub of athlete advocacy, unity, and hope. Over 100 athlete representatives from across Africa gathered not just to speak, but to be heard.

This Forum was a powerful reminder that we, as African athletes, are part of a global movement -but with a unique identity and shared purpose rooted in resilience, determination, and pride. We danced, we debated, we dreamed - and we strategised for impact.

COLLABORATION AND INTEGRITY AT THE CORE

Two themes echoed throughout the sessions: the urgent need for stronger collaboration between NOCs and their Athletes' Commissions, and the critical importance of integrity in sport. In a region where many athletes face socio-economic challenges, the risk of competition manipulation is real. We heard powerful testimonies, including from Believe in Sport Ambassador, Mweetwa NCHIMUNYA that highlighted how vital education and proactive safeguarding are.

LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT FROM THE TOP

The presence of IOC AC Chair Emma TERHO and IOC President-Elect Kirsty COVENTRY added tremendous value. They listened. They connected. They reminded us that African voices matter in global rooms - and that we must keep showing up. It was especially meaningful to have Kirsty, a fellow African Olympian, present at her first official engagement since her election. Her words and presence inspired us all.

Thanks to the support of Olympic Solidarity, ANOCA and WADA, we were able to provide practical sessions on everything from anti-doping and safeguarding to career transition and funding opportunities.

TOOLS, RESOURCES AND MOMENTUM

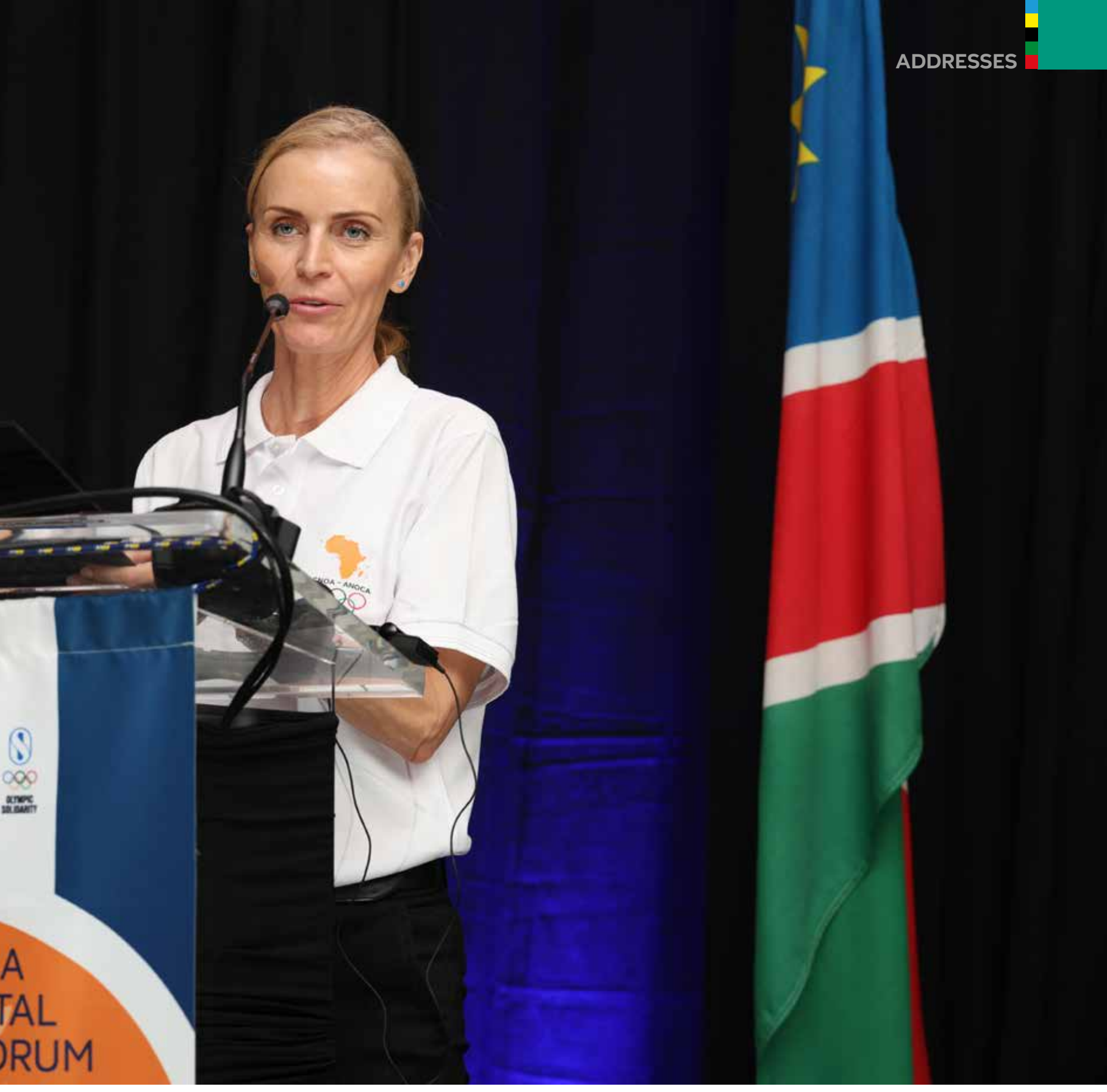
Thanks to the support of Olympic Solidarity, ANOCA and WADA, we were able to provide practical sessions on everything from anti-doping and safeguarding to career transition and funding opportunities. We also focused on effective stakeholder engagement, ensuring our athlete reps go back better equipped to make a difference in their communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

As a former athlete who has walked the path, I know how tough it can be. My motivation has always been to ease that path for the next generation. Forums like these are not just talk shops - they are launching pads. My hope is that the energy, tools and unity we built in Windhoek will fuel stronger athlete representation, and that more athlete leaders will rise to serve on NOC boards and within key decision-making spaces.

The future is African.





5TH CONTINENTAL ATHLETES' FORUM

ADDRESS BY IOC PRESIDENT -ELECT,KIRSTY COVENTRY







The IOC members that are here,

The IOC team from Lausanne,

The WADA team that are all here and to all of you, our dear African Representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen and the media that are here,

It's really a huge honour for me to stand here before you my Africa athletes, my fellow African athletes, my fellow Olympians as the President-Elect of the IOC. I met with a few of you at breakfast and those of you that were in Zimbabwe for our first African Athletes' Forum. I can see a few heads nodding in agreement...

At the end of that Forum, it was a Friday and a Friday afternoon and I turned to the team and said to them: "*Right, we've hosted a successful Athletes' Forum. Let's go have lunch*".

And at that lunch, we were sitting there and, all of a sudden, my phone and my husband's phone starts ringing and ringing and ringing and we were like '*What is going on?*' And at the same time, I am at the lunch but I am also on the phone on a call with the Executive Board, as at the time I was the Athletes' Commission Chair for the IOC. And my husband starts signing to me to say, '*You*'ve been appointed Minister'. I'm like, '*What? He*'s like, '*You're a Minister*'. I'm like '*Whooo!*' He's like, '*Yes*'.

So, it's bringing back some interesting memories from the last Forum, where I was chair and was host and had been appointed a Minister and was just newly pregnant with my first child. And along this journey, people have reminded me that when you're pregnant, and especially when you're pregnant with baby girls, they bring you good luck. My second daughter is 5 months old, and she brought me good luck a few weeks ago in Greece. I told my husband that, sadly, he will be surrounded by strong women for the rest of his life and he'll just have to deal with us.

But it really is a huge significance for me that we chose this event as my first event as the Present-Elect of the IOC to be here with you all. It was an extraordinary honour for me to be a part of the community that served as Athletes' representatives at highest level at the IOC from 2013 until 2021. So, the fact that I get to come and be here with all of you over the next two days is a huge honour for me and I'm really excited to have those conversations with you.

Most of you that know me know that I am a proud Zimbabwean and a proud African. And the fact that our Movement has recognised the importance of showing that we a truly global by electing the first woman and first African, it makes me extremely proud to ensure that I will represent all of you to the best of my ability at our international and global community.

You know that athletes will always remain at the heart of everything I do, being an Olympian. Once an Olympian, always an Olympian. And I'm already having conversations over the last six months during the campaign with the IOC members. We had many conversations around how we can better support our athletes and some of what I would be interested to hear from you. When I was swimming, which was a long time ago, the hardest part of the journey was becoming an Olympian. I was on the road to making that Olympic Games. On the road to winning those Olympic medals. Once I won my first medal, so many



more opportunities opened up to me. So many more opportunities for sponsorship. And what I would like to have some feedback from all of you today, is how you think we can better support athletes on their journey to becoming Olympians.

I am not the biggest fan of prize money at the Olympic Games because I think we can spend the money in a better way before you get to the Games to help you to get to the Olympic Games. And so, over these next two days, if you have any ideas on how you think we could, in the future, look at what that support would look like, please, come and share with me, as it really would be a big focus for me in the next stages of my presidency.

As Africa, we had 39 Olympic medals from Paris and I want to say congratulations to every National Olympic Committee. We are slowly and surely getting better and better and having more and more medals won and we will remain committed to ensuring that we continue in that path.



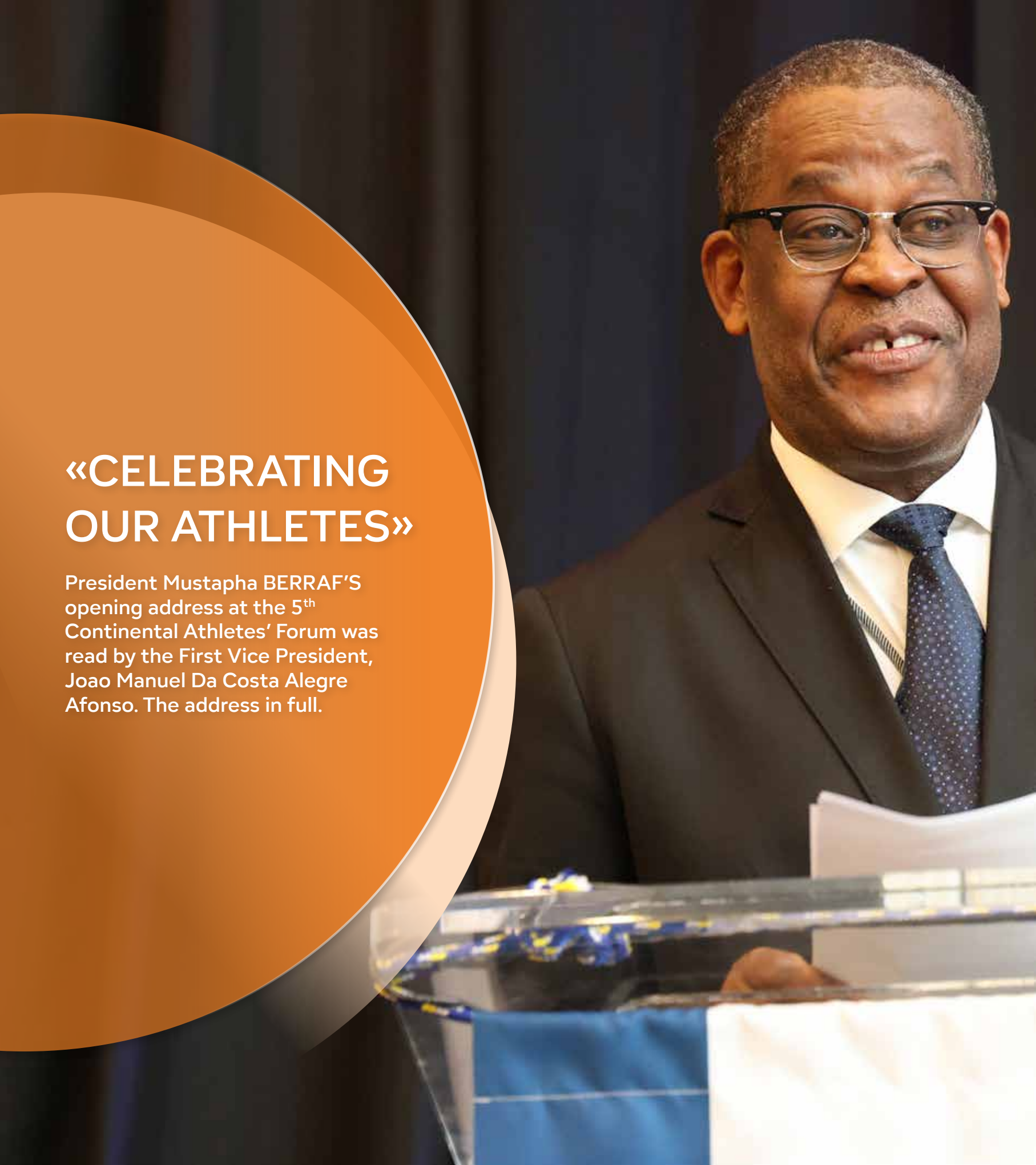


As Africa, we had 39 Olympic medals from Paris and I want to say congratulations to every National Olympic Committee. We are slowly and surely getting better and better and having more and more medals won and we will remain committed to ensuring that we continue in that path.

We have the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Senegal. Where are our Senegalese athlete representatives? There they are. Hi. So, if you want to know anything, speak to them. We are very excited. I have been chairing the Dakar 2026. Sadly, I will have to pass that chairmanship over, but I'm very excited that I will be President of the IOC for the first time when the Olympic Games come to Africa. Dakar is doing a wonderful job and I'm really looking forward to sharing our African spirit with the world.

We also have LA28 coming up and it's very soon. And I'm looking forward to working more closely through ANOCA to understand how best we can better support our African athletes to ensure that we bring back more than 39 medals. Right? That's the goal. More than 39 medals. At this Forum, as Emma had said, please take the time to really spend with each other, talking and sharing ideas. Sharing best practices, things that are working for you as athletes' representatives at home. Challenges that you may face, because, a lot of the time, the same challenges that you are facing are the same challenges your neighbour is facing. So, make sure that you are communicating and you are talking and you are sharing all those ideas with each other.

I would like to thank everyone for participating. Because that's the first thing. It's getting here, and taking part and getting to learn. If this is your first Forum and your first time to come together with other athletes[...]. To everyone, take the most of the opportunity to ask as many questions as you can, because this is a valuable opportunity to get answers to your questions [...].



«CELEBRATING OUR ATHLETES»

President Mustapha BERRAF'S opening address at the 5th Continental Athletes' Forum was read by the First Vice President, Joao Manuel Da Costa Alegre Afonso. The address in full.



Athletes are the heart of all our initiatives, breathing a new lease of life into the Athletes' Commission, where their concerns are listened to with keen attention and considered in our governance, elevating them to an absolute priority.



The Honourable Minister of Education and Sport, your Excellency,

Honourable Kirsty COVENTRY, IOC President-Elect, your Excellency,

The President of the Namibia Olympic Committee, Dear Colleague,

The Chairlady of the IOC Athletes' Commission,

Dear Gaby, Chairlady of the ANOCA Athletes' Commission,

Distinguished Guests, all protocol respected,

Dear African Athletes,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am indeed honoured to welcome you to the 5th African Athletes' Forum, on behalf of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) and its President, Mustapha BERRAF.

This Continental Athletes' Forum focuses on sports excellence and athletes' development in Africa.

This is a critical moment to build the skills, resources and networks of our athletes, while enhancing their central role in the sports ecosystem.

This forum affords a unique opportunity for all of you, participants, to share your valuable experiences, propose innovative solutions and actively contribute to the development of more inclusive and effective continental sports policies.



Here, we celebrate the talent, passion and determination that drive our athletes to shine on the global sports stage.

ANOCA and President Mustapha BERRAF see this event as a vital step in giving African athletes a stronger voice, ensuring that their views and needs are at the heart of the decisions that shape the future of sport on our continent.

The ANOCA President is resolutely committed to strengthening the achievements already made in protecting and promoting African athletes. He is working to this end through the quality of his leadership and the multiplication of solidarity actions for all athletes. The talent identification, support through training and sports scholarships and the organisation of high-level competitions are a real safety measure for the African athlete, who deserves special attention, as our President, Mustapha BERRAF has always underscored.

Athletes are the heart of all our initiatives, breathing a new lease of life into the Athletes' Commission, where their concerns are listened to with keen attention and considered in our governance, elevating them to an absolute priority.

As a matter of fact, without athletes, the Olympic Games would lose their very essence.

This is why we understand that athlete accountability and participation in decision-making processes are fundamental, as rightly said Thomas BACH: "*Athletes are not just at the heart - they are the heart of our Olympic Community.*"

The ANOCA Athletes' Forum is therefore an ideal platform for you, athletes, to make your voices heard on the Games and the decisions that directly affect you: this is the time for you to make them heard at the tables where these decisions are taken.

Africa is a vibrant continent, with a rich history, culture and, above all, immense talent.

Our athletes are the true ambassadors of our nations, inspiring millions of people around the world with their remarkable achievements.

This forum affords an opportunity to celebrate these athletes, share their stories and discuss opportunities and the challenges they face.

It is a unique opportunity to build a stronger African sports community, promote excellence and ensure that our athletes receive the support and recognition they deserve.





Over the next few days, we will have the opportunity to listen to inspiring speakers, take part in uplifting debates and exchange valuable experiences.

May these experiences help us build a brighter future for African sport!

I hope that this forum will be a catalyst for sports excellence on the continent and a beacon of hope for future generations of athletes, who are truly the heart of the new Movement.

Kirsty COVENTRY, a former athlete like many of you, expressed her pride in being the first woman and the first African to occupy this position following her election as IOC President.

She hopes that her journey will inspire you, and you must be part of that inspiration and continue to fight to defend the values of sport and Olympism.

Sport has an unrivalled power to unite, inspire and create opportunities for all.

We must harness this power to break down barriers and create opportunities that enable us, together, to transform the world, as Nelson Mandela dreamed.

Higher, Stronger, and Faster - Together, let's build solid foundations, innovate and defend the values of friendship, excellence and respect.

Thank you very much!

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE NAMIBIA NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (NNOC) PRESIDENT, DR NDEULIPULA HAMUTUMWA

AT THE OPENING OF THE 2025 ANOCA CONTINENTAL ATHLETES' FORUM





Namibia is ready, Namibia is capable, and Namibia is proud to play its part in the global sporting community. As a child of international solidarity, Namibia is always ready to welcome our brothers and sisters from Africa and world at large.



Honourable Minister Sanet Steenkamp,

Honourable Kirsty Coventry, IOC President-Elect,

ANOCA Vice President, João Manuel Da Costa Alegre,

IOC Athletes' Commission Chair, Emma Terho,

ANOCA Athlete Commission Chair and Vice President of Namibia National Olympic Committee, Gaby Ahrens,

Director of Sport, J. Manuel

Distinguished guests, fellow athletes, and members of the sporting family,

It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you to Namibia for this significant gathering of Africa's athlete leaders. As a nation that values sport as a driving force for unity, inspiration, and progress, we are truly delighted to host the ANOCA Continental Athletes' Forum on our soil.

Athletes are the heartbeat of the Olympic Movement, and this forum provides a vital platform for us to exchange ideas, shape policies, and strengthen the voice of athletes across Africa. This is not just about discussions-it is about action, empowerment, and the continued growth of sport on our continent. It is about building a progressive Pan-African Agenda through sport. It is about the unification of the world through sport.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Olympic Solidarity and ANOCA for their generous support in funding and organising this important event. More importantly, I wish to thank you for entrusting Namibia with the opportunity to host this forum.



I would also like to thank the Namibian government for their unwavering support. This is a chance for us to showcase not only our hospitality and sporting culture but also our ability to successfully organise and host high-profile events such as this. Namibia is ready, Namibia is capable, and Namibia is proud to play its part in the global sporting community. As a child of international solidarity, Namibia is always ready to welcome our brothers and sisters from Africa and world at large.

To our distinguished guests, your presence reflects your deep commitment to supporting athletes, and we value your leadership and guidance. To athletes and athlete representatives-this is your moment. Your voices matter, and your contributions here will shape the future of sport in Africa. Let us engage, collaborate, and ensure that the athlete's voice remains central in all decision-making.

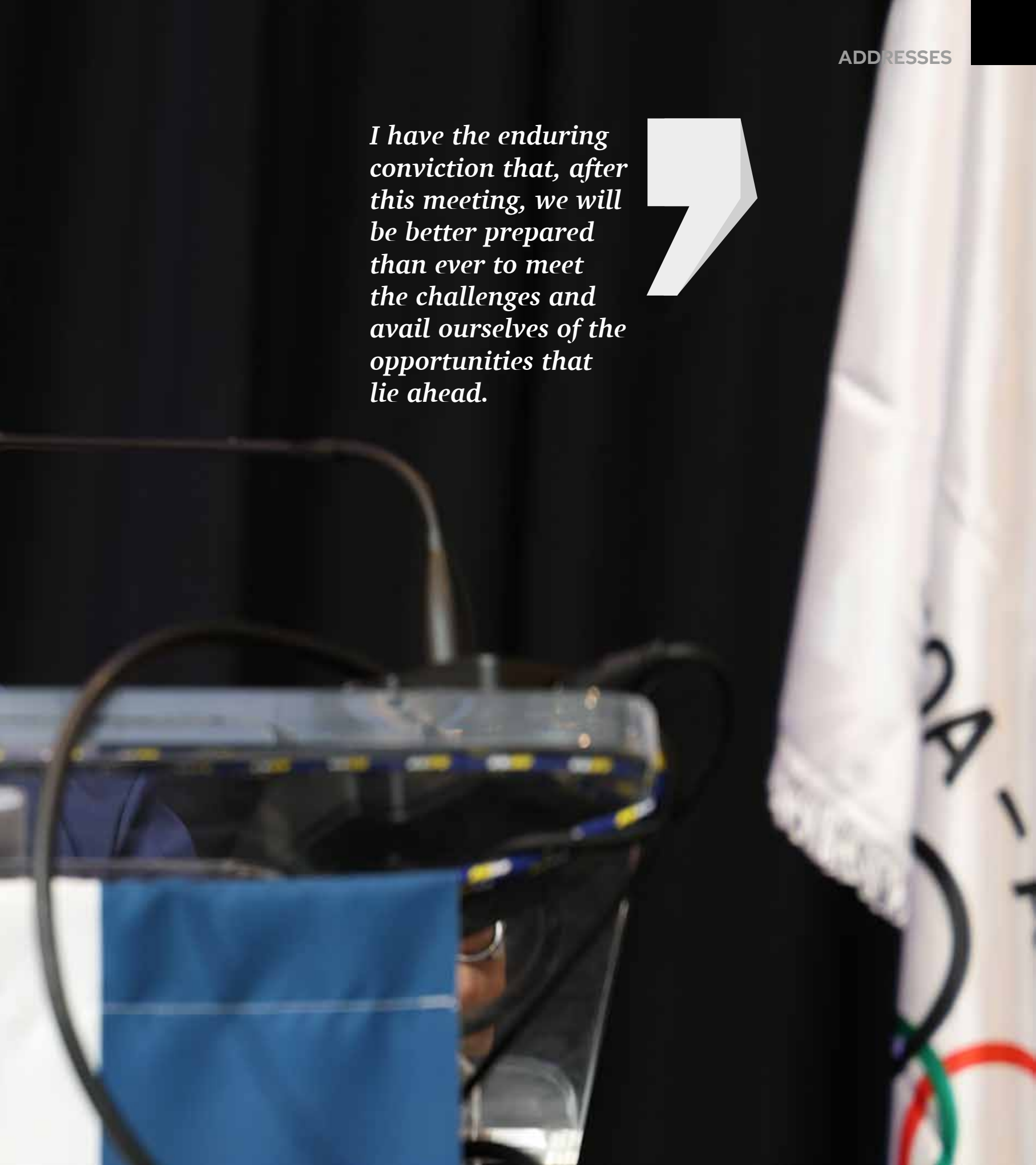
On behalf of the Namibia National Olympic Committee, I wish you a productive, insightful, and inspiring forum. Thank you, and once again, Welcome to Namibia!

"ADVOCATING FOR ATHLETES' RIGHTS AND INTERESTS"

IOC Athletes' Commission Chair, Emma TERHO, underscores the need for all stakeholders to get involved in supporting African athletes.



I have the enduring conviction that, after this meeting, we will be better prepared than ever to meet the challenges and avail ourselves of the opportunities that lie ahead.





The President of the Namibia Olympic Committee,

Dear Executive Committee members of the Namibia Olympic Committee,

Dear Gaby, ANOCA Athletes' Commission Chair,

Dear Commission members,

Distinguished guests,

Hello everyone,

It is with immense satisfaction and pride that I take the floor to open this meeting of the ANOCA Athletes' Commission here in Windhoek, in the beautiful land of the Commission Chair.

Let me begin by thanking each and every one of you - athletes, managers and collaborators - for making this event possible.

Your dedication to sport is, indeed, inspiring. The fact that we are gathered here today not only as representatives of our various countries, but also as one big family united by a passion for sport on our continent, fills us with pride and hope.

Our mission as representatives of the institution that symbolises Olympism in Africa is unequivocal:

- Defend the rights and interests of athletes,
- Promote sport development and ensure that the voice of each and every one of you counts in the decisions that affect our future.

It is essential for each of you to consider yourselves an integral part of this process.

Over the next few days, we shall have the opportunity to discuss the fundamental issues affecting your lives and careers.

This privileged platform will allow everyone to express their opinions and propose innovative solutions.

The experiences that will be shared here will be one of the cornerstones of our collective success.

I would like to remind you that, by joining forces, we can make a difference not only in your lives, but also in the lives of future generations of athletes.

The role we play together goes far beyond competitions; we are true agents of change, role models and advocates of the integrity of sport.

I look forward to the discussions we will have and the ideas that will emerge throughout this 5th Athletes' Forum.

Every one of you brings a wealth of experience that will undoubtedly contribute to a meaningful dialogue.

I have the enduring conviction that, after this meeting, we will be better prepared than ever to meet the challenges and avail ourselves of the opportunities that lie ahead.

Once again, I would like to thank all the participants and I hope that this meeting will be productive and inspiring, opening up new prospects and strengthening our commitment to sport.

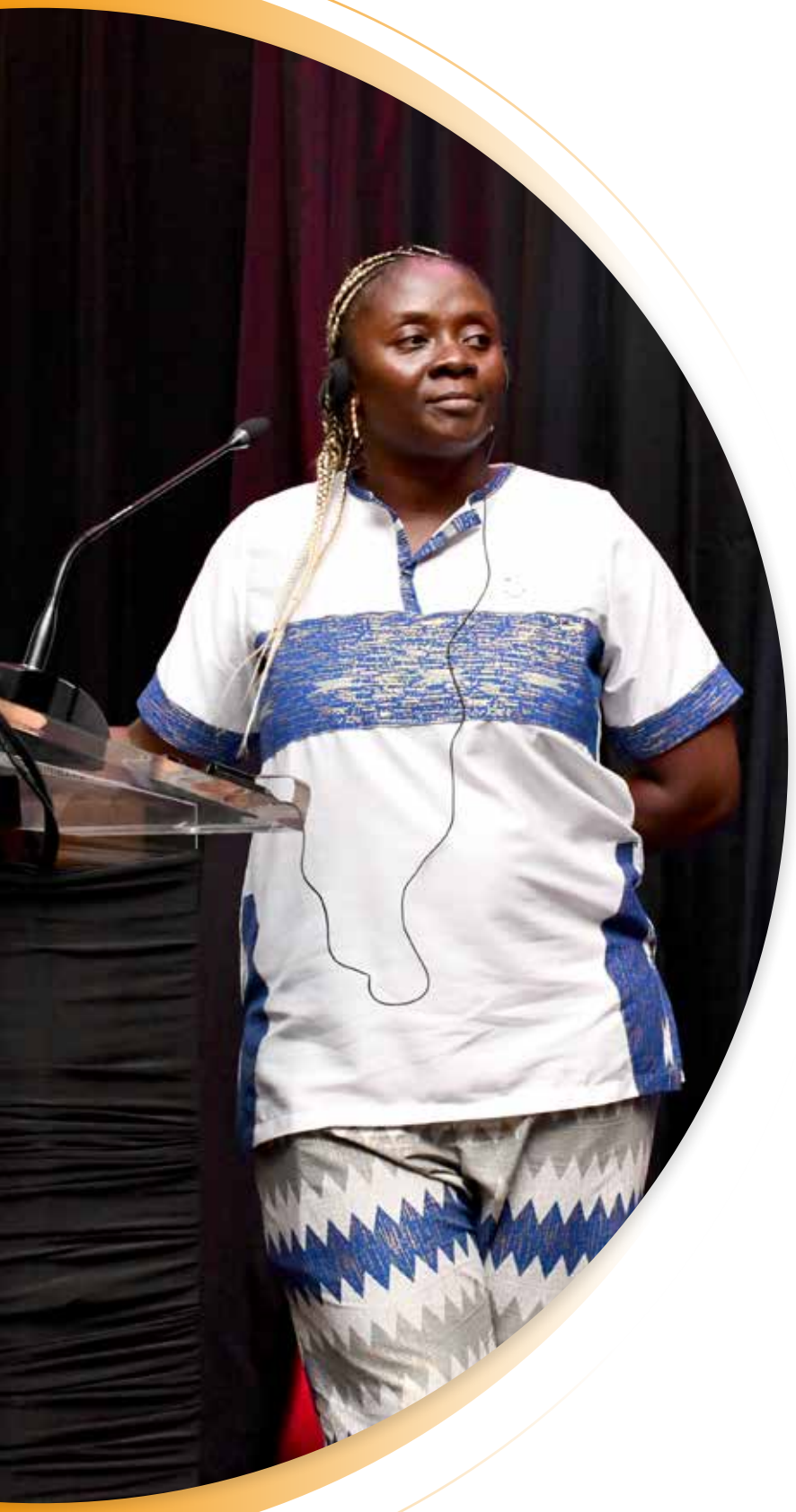
Thank you very much!





IOC PRESIDENT-ELECT AMONG LEADING FIGURES IN WINDHOEK





It was a highly symbolic moment, when over 100 athlete representatives from across the 54 African NOCs gathered in Namibia from 4 to 6 April to discuss the most important topics for athletes and athlete representatives from the continent were joined by IOC President-Elect, Kirsty COVENTRY.

It was her first official event since her election in March 2025.

"I am a proud African Olympian. I understand firsthand the journey, challenges, and triumphs of African athletes. This Forum is like a full-circle moment for me, as the Chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission, I had the privilege of hosting the African Athletes' Forum in Zimbabwe in 2018. I was present again in 2023 and very proud to be again with my fellow African athletes. No matter my role, I will always be an Olympian and will remain an advocate for athletes and athlete representatives," she said.

COVENTRY went on:

«Everything I have achieved, be it in my sporting career or as an athlete representative in Africa and at the IOC, or my various responsibilities in my country and across the Olympic movement, I have achieved them because of team work. I look forward to continuing the same unity and teamwork approach in my new role.»

The Forum was organised by ANOCA and hosted by NOC Namibia. Athletes were welcomed during the Opening Session by the Namibian Sports Minister and the NOC President.

Throughout the Forum, funded by Olympic Solidarity, athlete representatives had the opportunity to share best practices, network, learn from each other and receive tools and resources to be effective in their role as athlete representatives.

> ***I am a proud African Olympian. I understand firsthand the journey, challenges, and triumphs of African athletes.***

During the two-day event, participants heard presentations on important topics such as update from the IOC Athletes' Commission, Olympic Solidarity, Athlete365 programmes, career transition as well as anti-doping and prevention of competition manipulation.

«*Firstly, I want to thank ANOCA and the Namibian NOC for their support for the organisation of this Forum. I am very proud to host athlete representatives from Africa in my home country. This event was a fantastic opportunity for all of us to network, share ideas and inspire each other. It was important for our ANOCA Athletes' Commission to take the opportunity during this event to provide all African athlete representatives with tools and resources, and also importantly, to empower them with knowledge so they are successful in their role,*" said Gaby AHRENS, ANOCA Athletes' Commission Chair.

"*This Forum enabled us to showcase all the resources and programmes available from IOC and stakeholders to African athletes. I am very grateful for all these resources and tools which would empower our Athletes' Commissions, and importantly, athletes across Africa to be successful and make their dream come true,*" she added.

IOC Athletes' Commission Chair, Emma TERHO, added:

"*Athlete representation in Africa has come a long way, and even more so in the past two years since the last ANOCA Athletes' Forum in 2023. It is very encouraging to see how eager our fellow athlete representatives are to support and represent athletes effectively in their country. I am particularly grateful for the leadership of the ANOCA Athletes' Commission and their Chair, Gaby, for their tireless work and dedication.*"

EFFECTIVE ATHLETES' COMMISSIONS IN AFRICA

Reflecting on the importance of the collaboration between Athletes' Commissions and their respective NOCs, participants benefited from a dedicated workshop focusing on communication and stakeholder management skills. "*Listening to athletes is very important to us on the ANOCA Executive Committee. We are here to show our solidarity with athlete representatives from across our continent to ensure that they are heard and have the full support of their NOC leadership to make an impact in their role. Athletes must be at the centre of our attention, they must be part of important decisions for and about them,*" said ANOCA 1st Vice President, João Manuel DA COSTA ALEGRE.

A workshop was also dedicated to best practices for the NOC AC Activity Grant where all NOC ACs have access to USD 10,000 each year from Olympic Solidarity to support their activities.



OLYMPIC AND YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES

Athlete representatives also celebrated the incredible and successful Olympic Games Paris 2024 where African athletes won 39 Olympic medals. Additionally, participants had a presentation from Balla DIEYE, the Youth Olympic Games Dakar 2026 Sports Director, on preparations for this historic event in Dakar, which will be the first Olympic event on the continent. Proud of having the first Olympic event on their continent, participants shared their support and excitement for this historical event.

OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY

The importance of the Olympic movement solidarity model and Olympic Solidarity programmes were highlighted through different discussions, noting an increase in the Olympic Solidarity budget for athlete programmes for the 2025-2028 Olympiad. This increase in the budget was highly appreciated by athlete representatives as it will help athletes from across the continent in their path towards the Olympic Games LA28. During an engaging session, participants learnt about various Olympic Solidarity programmes





Athletes must be at the centre of our attention, they must be part of important decisions for and about them.

and had the opportunity to ask questions and share their feedback and experience.

INTEGRITY AND CLEAN SPORT

As part of the Forum, athlete representatives provided feedback for the World Anti-Doping Code review process as part of the consultation process. WADA representatives also shared information on various WADA educational programmes. A separate panel also focused on the importance of preventing competition manipulation and the resources made available to athletes by the IOC to this effect.



IOC's FIRST AFRICAN PRESIDENT PLEDGES UBUNTU-LED LEADERSHIP


RecWell



Leading the Olympic Movement with African values, is one of the goals of IOC President-Elect, Kirsty COVENTRY, who has pledged to represent Africa to the best of her ability by keeping athletes at the heart of her decisions and embracing the Ubuntu philosophy.

Africa's most decorated athlete made these remarks at the ANOCA two-day 5th Continental Athletes' Forum hosted by NOC Namibia (NNOC), which concluded yesterday in Windhoek

Zimbabwe's former Sports Minister and IOC Athletes' Commission chairperson was elected as IOC president last month and is set to take office on Olympic Day, 23 June, for an eight-year term, succeeding German Thomas BACH.

Speaking at her first engagement since her election, an event that reportedly saw every African country represented by one male and one female athlete, Mrs COVENTRY said it was significant that the athletes' forum was her first stop.

"Many athletes [here] have walked this journey with me and I know a lot of them. So, it is really important for me [that my first responsibility] is to come here and be with all of them to say thank you to them. It's to show my commitment to athletes from around the world and our continent that I will continue to have them at the heart of our [IOC] movement," she assured.

"I am because we are"

Embracing her heritage as a proud African and Zimbabwean, Mrs COVENTRY welcomed the IOC's recognition of the need to reflect a truly global movement through her historic election as its first African and first woman president.

"It makes me extremely proud to ensure that I will represent all of you to the best of my ability in our international and global community. My campaign was run off of the Ubuntu philosophy of 'I am because we are' and it's something that I truly believe is true."

"I was never successful in the pool by myself. I was successful because I had an incredible team around me, and I'm going to rely on those incredible teams to ensure that we are successful as a movement going forward - and all of those teams include all of you," she noted.

HELP TO BETTER SUPPORT ATHLETES

Mrs COVENTRY said she had already been in conversations over the last six months with IOC members, discussing how to better support athletes.

"So, I would like some feedback from you on how you think we can better support athletes on their journey to becoming Olympians. It will be a big focus for me in the next eight years of my presidency," she said.

Also speaking at the occasion, NNOC President Dr Ndeulipula HA MUTUMWA said the forum provides a vital platform for African countries to exchange ideas,



shape policies and strengthen the voice of athletes across the continent.

"It is about building a progressive Pan-African agenda through sport and unifying the world through sport. As a child of international solidarity, Namibia is ready. Capable and proud to play its part in the global sporting community," he assured.



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

IOC PRESIDENT-ELECT, MRS KIRSTY COVENTRY, IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH ANOCA MAGAZINE



ANOCA MAGAZINE: Good day Madam President, during your tenure, do you plan to integrate African Games as a qualifying event for Olympic Games to enhance their role in the development of African sport and provide athletes from the continent with a direct pathway to the Olympic Games?

Mrs COVENTRY: So, like all the other Continental Games, they are genuinely a part of the pathway for qualifications and it would be great for the African Union and ANOCA to come together and make that pathway very clear.

AM: The Olympafrica programme plays a crucial role in promoting sports and Olympic values among African youth. What specific initiatives does the International Olympic Committee plan to support and expand this programme to the young people and strengthen African impact on the African continent?

Mrs COVENTRY: Well, through my campaign, the mandate that I would like to put forward is being able to develop better pathways and identify more programmes to develop athletes globally on becoming Olympic athletes. So, this will still be the focus and it will impact, hopefully, all continents.

AM: As the IOC President, what message would you like to convey to young African Olympic athletes and the Movement to encourage collaboration, innovation and sustainable development?

Mrs COVENTRY: Again, I think that we (and I, have never been successful as an individual), I think that as Africans, we know the Ubuntu philosophy, which is *'I am because we are'. And that, again, was anchored in my campaign. It's something I believe very strongly in and, in terms of being successful, the only way we are going to do that is to be able to be collaborative and*



truly collaborative on our programmes, on our funding, on how we support each other as Africa. If the continent can come together and find and identify ways to better support each other, I do believe we' ll have more and more medallists at the Olympic Games.

AM: African athletes consider you as an inspiring figure and a model of leadership. What personal message would you like to share with them to motivate them to pursue excellence and embody Olympic values in their athletic personal journeys?

Mrs COVENTRY: Well, I'm truly humbled by that sentiment and grateful, grateful to the African athletes; and my words of wisdom, if I could share that with them, is to always believe in themselves, to always work and train with integrity, choose to do the right things, choose to train in the right way, and always take people with you. So, identify people around you that can help you achieve your goals and allow them to add value to your journey.

AM: As Region 5 made of yourself, what are some of the things you are expecting to see at the Region 5 Youth Games that Namibia is going to host in July?

Mrs COVENTRY: I am really excited about the Youth Games, especially the region. In the region, we've been doing some incredible work. It's one of the strongest regions that work really well, the Olympic Committees and AU side within the region and we are very proud of that. So, I think that the Games in July are going to be very exciting. I'm looking forward to seeing our young athletes come together, and again, learn from each other, respect each other and grow together and make each other better and make each other stronger.

AM: And lastly, yesterday you met with our President and yesterday, I interviewed the VP of ANOCA and he mentioned the uniqueness of seeing two women in power in that way. Just for the young women in Africa out there, what do you have to say to them?

Mrs COVENTRY: Well, first and foremost, it was an absolute honour to meet Her Excellency yesterday. She is paving the way for so many of us to follow in her footsteps. So, I was very honoured to have that opportunity to talk with her. And to women across the continent, just know that we believe in you. We know and we want you to see through our leadership roles that you are ready and so take those opportunities that come your way and be brave enough to believe in yourself.

AM: Thank you

Mrs COVENTRY: Thank you.



DECLARATION OF ATHLETES' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Fundamental rights are essential for the sporting journey of every athlete. They are outlined in an Athletes' Declaration that was a key focus of the 5th African Athletes Forum.




OLYMPIC
SOLIDARITY



- This Declaration outlines a common set of aspirational rights and responsibilities for athletes within the Olympic Movement.
- It consists of 12 rights and 10 responsibilities.
- This is a historic initiative led, developed by and for athletes through a global consultation process and guided by a steering committee with at least 19 athlete representatives.
- It was established to ensure that athletes worldwide, including in Africa, are aware of their fundamental rights in their sporting journey.
- The Declaration and its implementation guide provide an opportunity for athlete representatives to work hand-in-hand with their respective NOCs.

OBJECTIVES

- To present the Athletes' Rights Declaration adopted in 2018, with a particular focus on the challenges and opportunities for African athletes.
- To provide Athletes' Commissions (ACs) with the tools to promote the adoption and implementation of the Declaration by their respective NOCs.

ATHLETES' RESPONSABILITIES

This Declaration encourages athletes to:

1. Uphold the Olympic values and adhere to the Fundamental Principles of Olympism.

2. Respect the integrity of sport and compete as a clean athlete, in particular by not doping and not manipulating competitions.

3. Act in accordance with the IOC Code of Ethics and be encouraged to report unethical behavior, including instances of doping, competition manipulation, prohibited discrimination and abuse and harassment.

4. Comply with applicable national laws, and the rules of the qualification processes and competitions, of the sport, and of the relevant sporting organization, as well as the Olympic Charter.

5. Respect the rights and well-being of, and not discriminate against, other athletes, their entourage, volunteers and all others within the sporting environment, and refrain from political demonstration in competitions, competition venues and ceremonies.

6. Respect the solidarity principle of the Olympic Movement, which allows assistance and support to be provided among athletes and members of the Olympic Movement.

7. Act as a role model, including by promoting clean sport.

8. Inform themselves and be aware of their responsibilities.

9. Participate in hearings when requested to do so and provide truthful testimony in such proceedings.

10. Participate and vote in athlete representatives' elections.





ATHLETES' RIGHTS

1. Practice sport and compete without being subject to discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other immutable status.

2. Be part of a transparent, fair and clean sporting environment, particularly one that fights against doping and competition manipulation, and provides for transparent judging/refereeing, selection and qualification processes, and appropriate competition schedules, including training schedules at such competitions.

3. Access general information on athlete and competition-related matters in a timely and clear manner.

4. Access education on sports-related matters as well as to work or study while actively training and competing, should the athlete choose to do so and where practicable.

5. Leverage opportunities to generate income in relation to their sporting career, name and likeness, while recognising the intellectual property or other rights, rules of the event and of sports organisations as well as the Olympic Charter.

6. Fair and equal gender representation.

7. The protection of mental and physical health, including a safe competition and training environment and protection from abuse and harassment.

8. Elected athlete representation within sporting organisations of the Olympic Movement.



9. Report unethical behaviour without fear of retaliation.

10. Privacy, including protection of personal information.

11. Freedom of expression.

12. Due process, including the right to a fair hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial panel, the right to request a public hearing and the right to an effective remedy.

AFRICAN ATHLETES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- The Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration offers both significant challenges and opportunities for African athletes.
- African athletes often face discrimination on the basis of sex, race and social origin. The recommendations of the Athletes' Declaration Implementation Guide can contribute to reducing these injustices.
- Many African athletes do not benefit from social and medical coverage, the necessary care after injury or post-career follow-up. This declaration and its implementation recommendations can serve as a lever for the introduction of protection policies.
- Traditionally, African athletes are not involved in decision-making processes that affect them. The declaration and guide propose a series of areas and concrete measures on which sports organisations and their athletes can discuss.



- Most African countries lack modern infrastructure and financial support for top-level athletes. As such, many African athletes are obliged to travel out of the continent to prepare themselves better, leading to talent drain.

- Neglect of the mental health of African athletes has adverse effects on their performance and can lead to a sudden end of their sports careers. These two issues have been raised in the declaration and guide.

- African athletes and their respective sports organisations can build on the declaration and its implementation guide to improve their sports environment.

- The declaration and its implementation guide can enable Athletes' Commissions of African NOCs to play a key role in creating programmes that better meet athletes' specific needs (access to Olympic Solidarity programmes for athletes in the areas of training, career transition and medical support). This will enable athletes to play an active part in the decisions that affect them.

- The declaration and its guide provide details of the resources and development opportunities that NOCs can offer their athletes. To this end, ANOCA has set up a solidarity fund to support African athletes in their preparation for international and world competitions.

- The measures recommended in the guide - implemented by NOCs in consultation with their athletes - can help African athletes to work in a healthy environment, free from injury, stress and

pressure, by having access to various medical support and mental well-being programmes set up by ANOCA and some NOCs (rehabilitation centre for injured athletes in South Africa).

HOW TO ADOPT ATHLETES' DECLARATION

1. Discuss the Athletes' Declaration with your Athletes' Commission (AC).
2. Your AC can integrate the Athletes' Declaration into their statutes.
3. The AC Chair can work with the organisation's leadership to propose that the Athletes' Declaration be publicly adopted by the organisation.
4. The organisation should publicly agree to adopt and reference the Athletes' Declaration in its governing statutes.
5. The organisation and AC should communicate the adoption of the Athletes' Declaration.
6. The AC should notify the IOC via mail so they can update their adoption database.
7. The IOC will share adoption updates on the Athlete365 impact page.





IMPLEMENTATION OF ATHLETES' DECLARATION

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

- The guide provides a set of recommendations on practical implementation measures for each of the 12 rights of the Athletes' Declaration.
- The goal is to gradually and practically help International Federations (IFs) and NOCs, each having different priorities, institutional capacities and operational realities.
- As a comprehensive roadmap, the guide offers practical steps, shares best practices and a self-assessment tool.

BASELINE-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- They refer to practical steps that all NOCs and IFs should implement as they begin to apply the declaration.

HIGH-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- They refer to other activities that could help sports organisations better implement or promote the declaration.

NEXT-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Verification of adoption**: Confirm the adoption of the Declaration by your AC and organisation.
- **Verification of statutes**: Where adopted, the declaration should be integrated into the organisation's statutes.
- **Implementation**: Start with the self-assessment tool in the guide.
- **Community Engagement**: Engage with your athletes' community to identify the relevant topics on which they want to see progress and those that are important to them.

- **Collaborative Discussion**: Discuss with your organisation's administration areas where your AC can collaborate effectively.

CONCLUSION

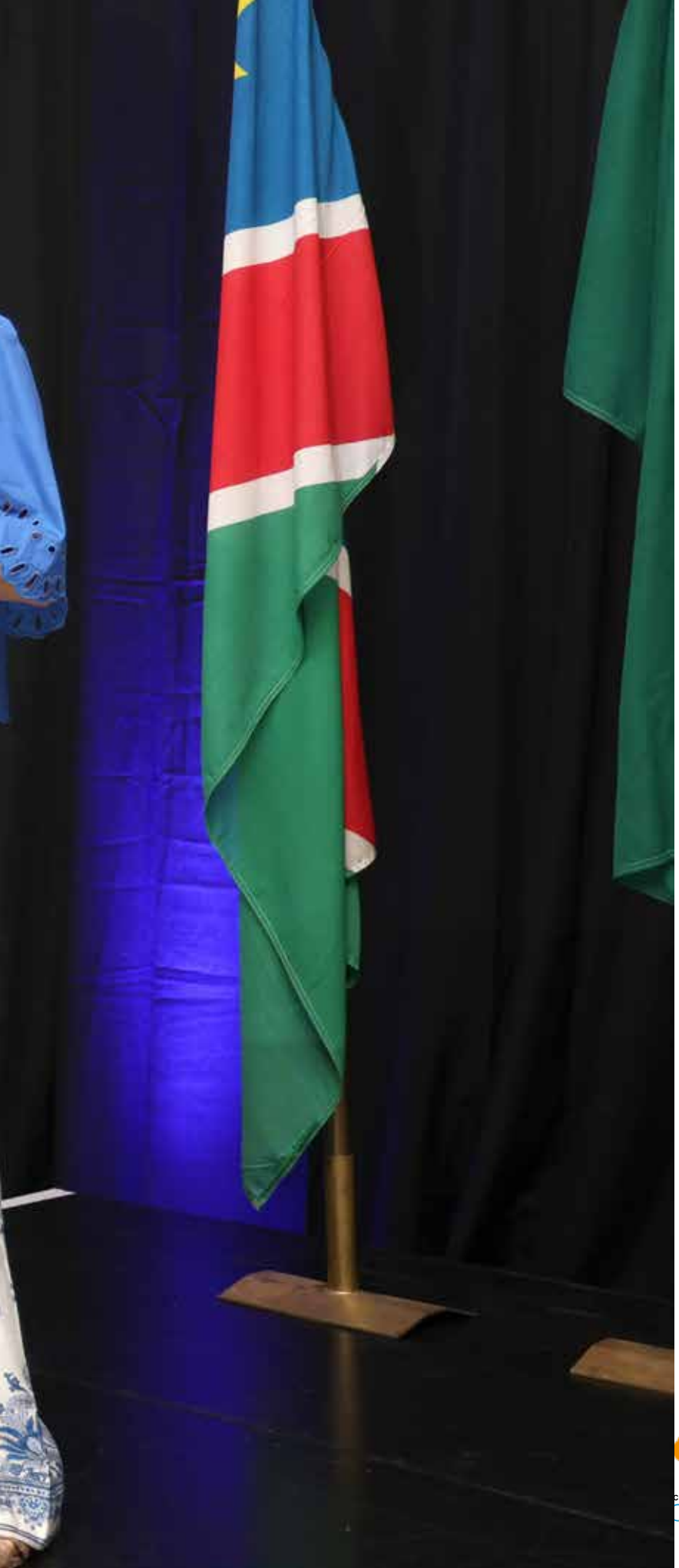
- Africa has made great strides thanks to the actions of ANOCA, some NOCs and ACs.
- The Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration (IOC, 2018) and its Implementation Guide offer opportunities to improve the conditions of athletes in general and of African athletes in particular.
- The implementation of practical measures in the guide requires the collective commitment of athletes and governing bodies of various sports organisations. To this end, African athletes need to be more involved with their respective NOCs so that they adopt and implement the declaration.
- By transforming challenges into opportunities, Africa could become a model of respect for athletes' rights globally.





CONTINUING TO IMPROVE THE ANTI-DOPING SYSTEM

AFRICAN ATHLETES IN REVIEW PROCESS



Day 2 deliberations of the African Athletes' Forum focused on the review of the World Anti-Doping Code and the 2027 International Standards, with a study of the strategy aimed at improving the anti-doping system. The mechanism is structured as follows.

INTRODUCTION

The Code and the International Standard are currently under review. As athletes, your feedback on these documents is crucial. Your unique insights and experiences are invaluable to us, and we believe that your input can play a critical role in shaping the future of not only the Code and the International Standards but also of additional supporting documentation such as guidelines and other resources.

While there are several proposed changes to the Code and the International Standards, for this session, we have selected four (4) questions where athlete feedback would further assist the expert groups who review and update the rules with their final proposals. We have also included two (2) broader questions if the specific changes or the more 'legal' articles do not speak to you. You choose!

Today is just the beginning and to give you a glimpse of some of the changes and feedback we need from athletes. We hope you will participate in the Athlete Centered Consultation which will be launched midApril 2025 and available online. More information will be shared on that consultation very soon.

Instructions:

- Ahead of the session, if you have time, read through the questions below. You can even start to discuss and come see us to ask questions.
- During the session, we will ask the following of each table:



- To identify a team leader who will guide the discussion.
- To identify a note taker to document key points of your discussion.
- You can write it down or type it. Your choice.
- To send your notes at: athlete@wada-ama.org.
- To review the 6 questions below and select 2 – 4 to discuss (and take notes on). If you can discuss all 6, that's great!
- You will have approximately 20 minutes to discuss (e.g., for 4 questions, 5 minutes per question).
- We will take approximately 10 minutes to hear back from at least 4 tables (i.e., 4 of the 6 questions).

Questions related to some of the proposed changes

1. **Public Disclosure**: A general requirement under the Code is that after a final decision in a case is made, the anti-doping organization (the "*Results Management Authority*") *must publicly disclose the*



result, which generally includes the name of the athlete, the sport, the anti-doping rule violated, the prohibited substances or methods (if any) and the related consequences. The latest draft of the Code proposes an exception to this mandatory public disclosure if an athlete is found to have "No Fault or Negligence" for the anti-doping rule violation. If that is the case, the decision itself and the underlying facts would not be publicly disclosed except with the consent of the athlete who is the subject of the decision. (Reference: latest Code draft Article 14.3.3)

Questions:

a) So far there has been debate over whether making an exception to the mandatory public disclosure is appropriate in light of fairness and respect of the athletes' rights or inappropriate given the importance of transparency and credibility of the anti-doping system. What are your thoughts regarding this proposed change?

b) Do you believe that athletes who are found to have committed a "*No Fault or Negligence*" anti-doping rule violation should have their name made public? Why or why not?

Using samples for other purposes than anti-doping: Under the Code, organizations may use samples, or doping control information for purposes beyond doping regulation, such as safety, medical, eligibility rules (such as gender), or Code of Conduct policies. However, if they do so, they must ensure that such use is explicitly covered by their rules and complies with applicable laws, including obtaining necessary consent. (Reference: latest Code draft Articles 23.2.2 and Comment 141)

Question:

c) Do you agree that samples collected for anti-doping purposes (under the World Anti-Doping Program) can be used by National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) or International Federations (IFs) for purposes unrelated to doping, such as enforcing safety, Code of Conduct policies and eligibility rules (for example, related to gender)? Why or why not?

2. Registered Testing Pool (RTP) athletes and the submission of whereabouts information: Currently, athletes included in a RTP must submit the following information (generally speaking):



- One 60-minute timeslot for each day of the quarter;
- Overnight address/accommodation;
- Competition schedule and related information; and;
- Name and address of training locations, with timeframes.

In the latest draft of the International Standard for Testing (IST), the requirement to submit training information has been removed. While there is no obligation, athletes are encouraged to provide this information, if/when available. This change aims to reduce the burden on athletes while maintaining essential whereabouts requirements to ensure intelligent and effective out-of-competition testing.

(Reference: latest IST draft, Article 4.10.6.2)

Questions:

a) In general, what are your thoughts regarding the removal of the mandatory whereabouts requirement for RTP athletes to file daily training locations and general timeframes?

b) Do you think this change will make it easier for athletes to ensure their information is accurate and up-to-date?

c) If you use or have used the "*Athlete Central*" App to provide whereabouts information, what are 2 things you would like to see improved and what are 2 things that you are happy with?

Phone calls to athletes: Currently, phone calls to athletes should not be used (unless it is to call a



Registered Testing Pool [RTP] athlete during the last 5-minute of their 60-minute timeframe). However, WADA is aware that phone calls are being used under different 'exceptional' circumstances, which vary greatly depending on the sport, the country, etc.

To harmonize the use of phone calls (outside of the last 5-minute of the 60-minute timeslot), in the latest draft of the International Standard for Testing (IST), a new article has been drafted to summarize the exceptional circumstances for which the use of a phone call to contact an athlete will be permitted. Broadly speaking they are: if the Doping Control Officer (DCO) receives reliable information regarding an athlete location, but the DCO is unable to access this location due to restrictions (e.g., security) or when a follow up test or target test is time sensitive. (Reference: latest IST draft, Article 5.3.2)

Questions:

d) Do you agree that DCOs should be able to call athletes under those circumstances?

e) Do you think there are other situations where it would be appropriate to contact an athlete for testing (please provide examples)?

f) Do you believe that the use of a phone call to contact athletes for testing, even under exceptional circumstances, compromises the principle of 'no advance notice'?

Questions related to your experience with anti-doping

5. As an athlete subject to the World Anti-Doping Code and the relevant International Standards, have you experienced a moment when anti-


play
true



doping has failed you? Can you share that experience (i.e., what happened) and what would have made your experience better (i.e., any recommendations to improve)? Alternatively, can you think of a positive experience and what made it so good?

If you could change one thing about the anti-doping system to make it more fair, supportive, or effective for athletes, what would it be?

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The latest drafts of the Code and the International Standards, along with a summary of changes for each, can be found on WADA's website: Code Review. Below are a few excerpts from the Code that could be relevant to provide additional background to some of the questions.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

14.3.3 In any case where it is determined, after a hearing or appeal, that the Athlete or other Person did not commit an anti-doping rule violation or violation of Article 10.14.1 or has established that they bear No Fault or Negligence for the anti-doping rule violation, the decision itself and the underlying facts may not be Publicly Disclosed except with the consent of the Athlete or other Person who is the subject of the decision. The Anti-Doping Organization with Results Management responsibility shall use reasonable efforts to obtain such consent, and if consent is obtained, shall Publicly Disclose the decision in its entirety or in such redacted form as the Athlete or other Person may approve. As an exception, if the identity of the Athlete or the other Person is already public or Consequences have already been imposed, then the Anti-Doping Organization with Results Management authority may, without consent, Publicly Disclose the matter to the extent necessary to explain its outcome of the case.

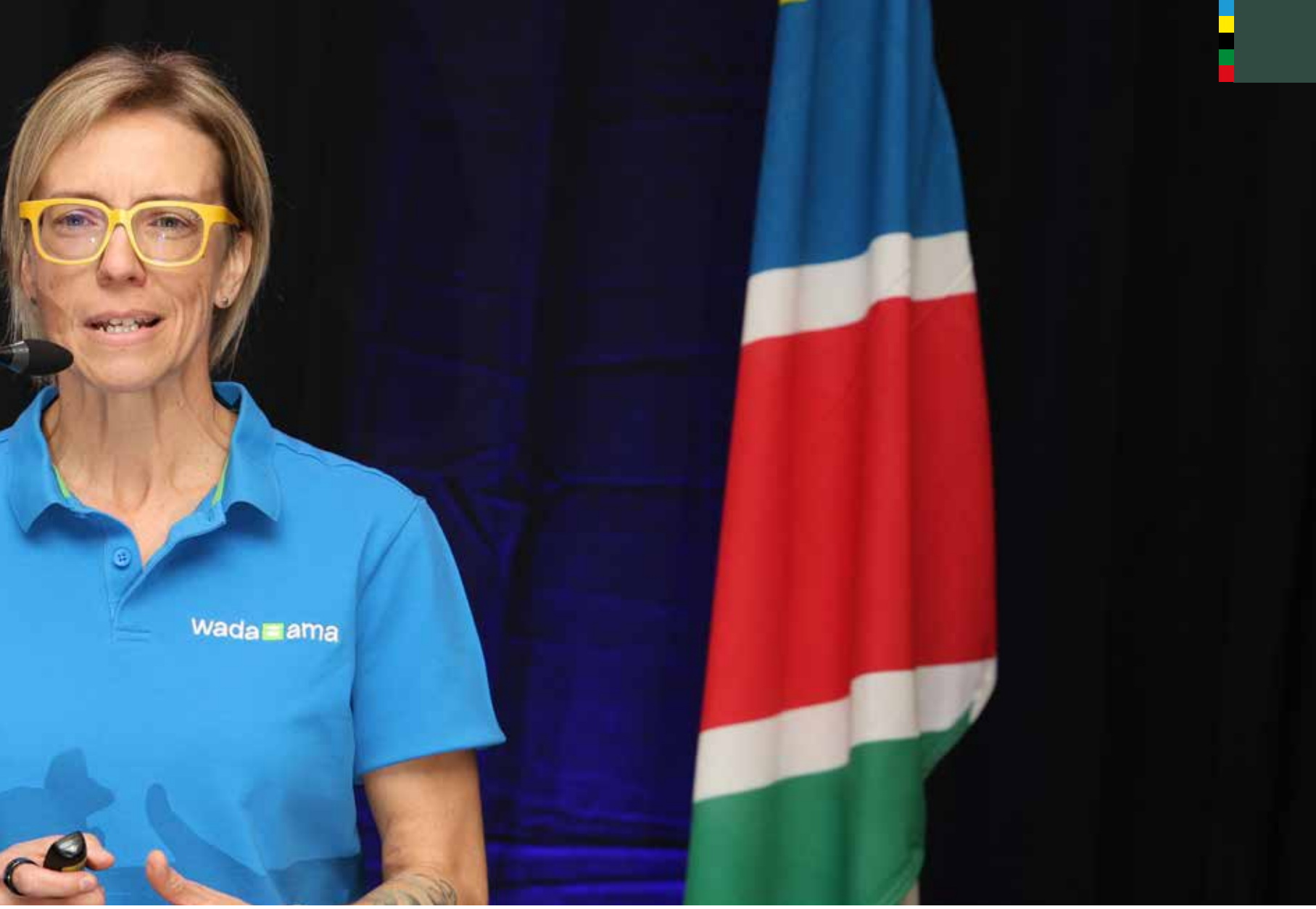


No Fault or Negligence: The Athlete or other Person's establishing that he or she did not know or suspect, and could not reasonably have known or suspected even with the exercise of utmost caution, that he or she had Used or been administered the Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method or otherwise violated an anti-doping rule. Except in the case of a Protected Person or Recreational Athlete, for any violation of Article 2.1, the Athlete must also establish how the Prohibited Substance entered the Athlete's system.

Use of sample for purposes other than doping/ anti-doping

Code Article 23.2.2 (part of the article is reproduced here)

Where a Signatory intends to use Samples or Doping Control information for the purpose of regulating aspects of their sport or activities unrelated to doping (e.g., safety, medical, eligibility or Code of Conduct policies) such organizations would be acting outside its capacity as a Signatory and would be solely responsible for ensuring any of its collection, use, disclosure or other processing of such Sample or Doping Control information is (i) expressly



contemplated in the applicable rule(s), and (ii) permitted by and in compliance with its own rules and applicable laws, including requirements for consent or other lawful authority for the collection, use, disclosure or other processing of such Sample or Doping Control information, the provision of notice, and limitation on the use of such Sample or Doping Control information for the applicable purpose.

[Comment to Article 23.2.2: For example, an International Federation could decide, for reputational and health reasons, to have a Code of Conduct rule prohibiting an Athlete's Use or Possession of cocaine Outof-Competition. Subject to applicable laws and foregoing requirements in an anti-doping Sample collection Out-of-Competition, such International Federation would be able to have the laboratory test for cocaine as part of the enforcement of its Code of Conduct policy. On the other hand, the International Federation's Code of Conduct could not impose additional sanctions for the Use of cocaine In-Competition since that is already covered by the sanction scheme established in the Code.]



IMPRESSIONS

At the end of the Athletes' Forum, key actors expressed their satisfaction but also many expectations.


5TH ANOCA
CONTINENTAL
ATHLETES' FORUM


STELLA
DAISY MONDLANE

Stella Daisy MONDLANE is an Olympian from Mozambique. She competed in the Paris and Tokyo Olympic Games.

What are your impressions of the forum?

Stella Daisy MONDLANE: This is a major forum that is dedicated to African athletes. It touched on crucial aspects of the life of athletes off the field of play, notably topics on Olympic Solidarity, doping, and a wide range of topics on the life of athletes after sport.

Which topic made the greatest impression on you during these two days?

Stella Daisy MONDLANE: Although I've learnt a great deal over these two days, it should be noted that there was no interpretation into Portuguese. Communications were either in English or French and speakers were fast. Consequently, I didn't quite grasp their presentations. However, I will pass on what I've learnt to athletes back in my country. By the way, Namibia is a wonderful country. Thank you.



ISSOUFOU
ALFAGA

Issoufou ALFAGA is an Olympic silver medallist, a world champion in taekwondo, and also Chair of the Athletes' Commission of Niger.

What are your impressions of this forum?

Issoufou ALFAGA: Today, we're taking part in the 5th Athletes' Forum, thanks to which athletes know who they are, their values and how to behave towards our federations and Olympic committees. I think this is a brilliant idea of the IOC that will enable athletes to speak out because, in Africa, when you're an athlete, it's a bit like in the army: you're given orders and then you execute them, whereas you have to show athletes what they are capable of and also their worth.

This is key. Show them that they are important because each federation and each NOC is there to support them. And when we see other countries performing miracles, it's because they have support teams that show them that they come first; that athletes are their main priority and every other thing comes after.

I think we're here to learn several things that we'll go and implement in our various countries for the benefit of our athletes because, in Africa, we have talent, we have athletes who are ready to defend their countries and I think we're here to learn and pass on what we've learned. And I'd like to thank the Namibia Olympic Committee for welcoming us and putting us in the best possible conditions to follow this forum. I'd also like to thank ANOCA for everything it does for African athletes. Thank you!


COMITÉ NATIONAL OLYMPIQUE ET SPORTIF DU MALI
OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY
RØDE

MAMANE SAKO

Mamane SAKO is Vice-Chair of the Athletes' Commission of NOC Mali.

What is your take on the forum?

Mamane SAKO: Well, we're here for the 5th Continental Athletes' Forum at the invitation of Namibia. We're elated to be here and thank God, the forum is going on well.

What would you say are the two things that caught your attention during this event?

Mamane SAKO: Over these two days, we talked about many topics and had very meaningful discussions. We discussed the working tools that can help us improve our athletes' commissions to better train and educate our athletes at home, raise their awareness and guide them in other activities. It was absolutely interesting because the experts who were there helped us significantly, giving us meaningful guidelines to help us perform our tasks in the future as athletes' commissions at home and in our respective countries.



KHOTSO
MOKOENA

Khotso MOKOENA is a South African athlete, an Olympic silver medallist in the long jump. He is a member of the ANOCA Athletes' Commission and also the Chairperson for the ANOCA Zone VI Athletes' Commission.

So, how did you find the forum?

Khotso MOKOENA: This forum has been fantastic. In fact, this is my second time attending. I did attend the fourth one. This is the second one I'm attending, which is the 5th ANOCA Continental Athletes' Forum, and it has been absolutely fantastic. Athletes got to learn a lot about how they can move their own Zones forward, how they can move their athletes going forward and also to prepare them.

You know, there's so much that we learnt. We learnt about branding, which is very important for athletes to know how to access brands, to know how to brand themselves out there as sportspeople as well.

Thank you. So, what stood out for you during these two days?

Khotso MOKOENA: What stood out for me was the negotiation skills that we were given by an expert called Mathias, who taught us how to negotiate. You know athletes go into contracts, they go into collaborations and that session actually helped us to know how to negotiate our contracts, how to negotiate within the collaborations that we go into as athletes, and I felt that that was the most important topic for me.


PAUL
TERGAT

Paul TERGAT is the current President of NOC Kenya and IOC Member.

So, how did you find the forum?

Paul TERGAT: Very exciting. This is one event, which has created an opportunity for all the African athletes' representatives who are representing NOCs across the continent, participating here in Windhoek, Namibia. We have really found it very exciting and everybody is very happy about this opportunity to attend this forum.

Thank you so much. So, what stood out for you during these two days?

Paul TERGAT: What stood out for me is that this is a very unique opportunity. I think, as you have heard, this was the 5th edition of the forum and I believe that even going forward, there's so much new information that has come out from this forum that is going to change the progress of our Athletes' Commission within our continent.


RUTH
GBAGBI

Ruth GBAGBI from Côte d'Ivoire is a two-time world champion, two-time Olympic champion, seven-time consecutive African champion in taekwondo and Vice-Chair of the Athletes' Commission in Côte d'Ivoire.

How did you find the Forum?

Ruth GBAGBI: This is my first time to start with. I loved it. I've enjoyed this beautiful country, Namibia. And I think the forum has been a great discovery for me. Seeing several athletes from different countries working together towards a shared goal has taught me a lot about the training required for athletes and their future careers.

What are the things that caught your attention during these two days?

Ruth GBAGBI: I've gained so much over these two days. I think that everything I've learnt here, everything we've learnt, it's now up to us to pass on to other athletes in our various countries to make sport more inclusive. Thanks!



HANGANENI FIKUNANAWA

Hanganeni FIKUNAWA is a young Namibian athletics sprinter and member of the Athletes' Commission of Namibia.

So, how did you find the forum?

Hanganeni Fikunawa: The forum was very informative. There were a lot of topics that I have never touched on, that I never knew about. In fact, it was my first time attending a forum of this magnitude as I was recently elected into the Athletes' Commission. I must say I have learnt a lot. Things like Olympic Solidarity Scholarships, branding, and negotiating under pressure. A lot of things were touched, not to mention the IOC President-Elect that was here. Her presence was of magnitude. So, for us young people, it was a sort of motivation because she just started as an athlete as well, and now, she is the President of such a big organisation. So, the forum was very insightful.

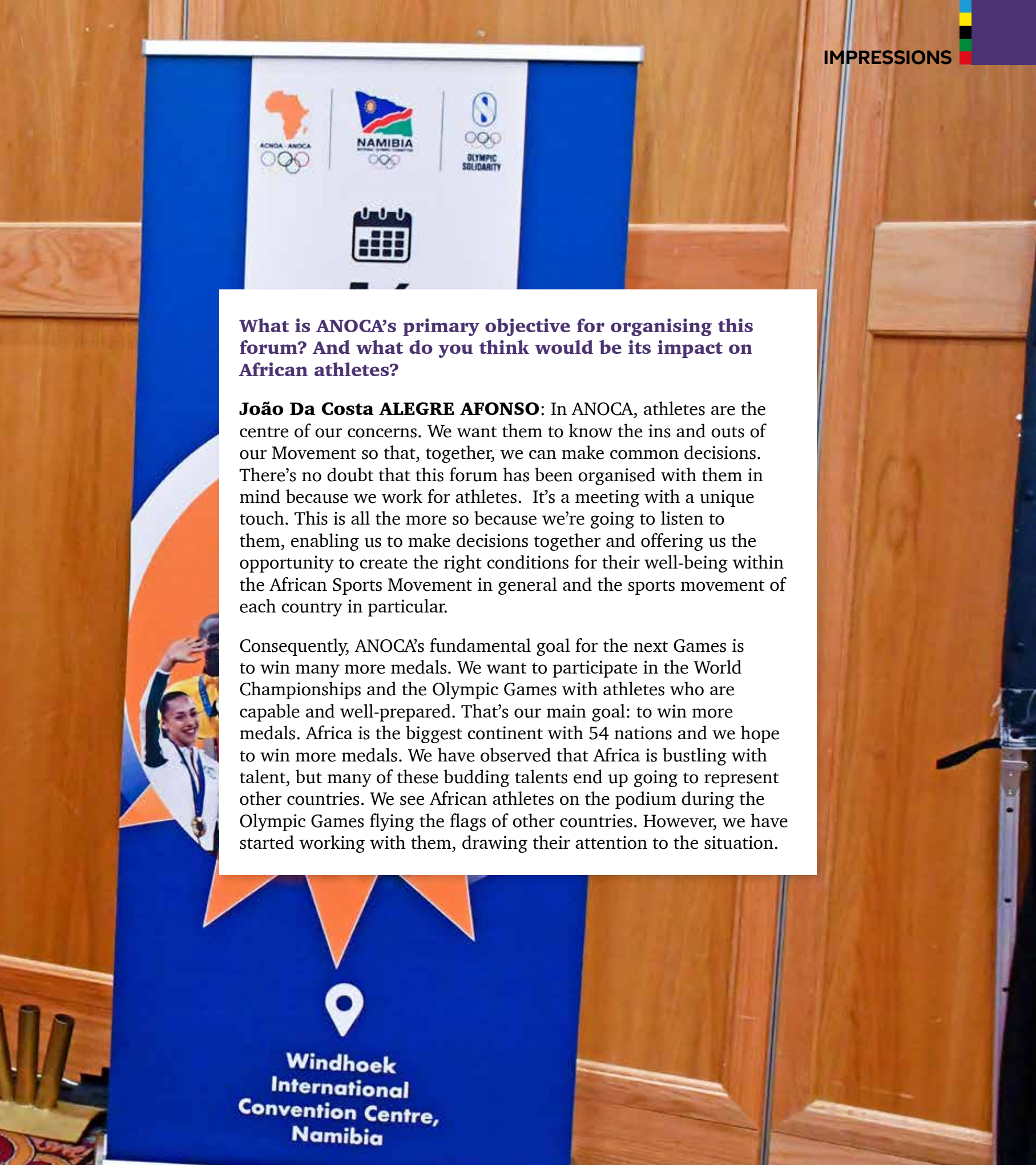
Alright! Thank you. Now, what stood out for you over these two days?

Hanganeni Fikunawa: The biggest stand out for me was the scholarship programmes. I wasn't very much aware that Olympic Solidarity actually offers scholarships to athletes, which help them build a brand for themselves and become something and help them achieve their Olympic goals. So, this is now a platform for us to also take it back to our athletes and show them that 'Ok, we can get scholarships for you if you work hard enough', and that Los Angeles 2028 is not just a dream but it can actually be achievable.



JOÃO DA COSTA ALEGRE AFONSO

ANOCA FIRST VICE PRESIDENT



What is ANOCA's primary objective for organising this forum? And what do you think would be its impact on African athletes?

João Da Costa ALEGRE AFONSO: In ANOCA, athletes are the centre of our concerns. We want them to know the ins and outs of our Movement so that, together, we can make common decisions. There's no doubt that this forum has been organised with them in mind because we work for athletes. It's a meeting with a unique touch. This is all the more so because we're going to listen to them, enabling us to make decisions together and offering us the opportunity to create the right conditions for their well-being within the African Sports Movement in general and the sports movement of each country in particular.

Consequently, ANOCA's fundamental goal for the next Games is to win many more medals. We want to participate in the World Championships and the Olympic Games with athletes who are capable and well-prepared. That's our main goal: to win more medals. Africa is the biggest continent with 54 nations and we hope to win more medals. We have observed that Africa is bustling with talent, but many of these budding talents end up going to represent other countries. We see African athletes on the podium during the Olympic Games flying the flags of other countries. However, we have started working with them, drawing their attention to the situation.



How does ANOCA intend to ensure that Forum resolutions are implemented beyond this event?

Mr João Da Costa ALEGRE AFONSO: We will do our utmost to ensure these resolutions and recommendations are implemented, especially because the forum is an ANOCA initiative. ANOCA will therefore ensure that they are implemented. For instance, athletes complained about inadequate communication between them and Olympic committees. So, one of the things we seek to achieve is to include Chairs of Athletes' Commissions in all NOC Executive boards to garner all the information needed to engage athletes in all decision-making processes. There will never be a problem with implementing these resolutions because, as you can see, the ANOCA leadership, NOC presidents, Olympic Solidarity, etc. are all here in Namibia. We therefore want the entire Olympic Movement to come together around athletes to ensure that all their concerns are addressed effectively.

What is your take on the election of the new IOC president, especially because she is from Africa?



> ***For us, it's a great opportunity. Firstly, it should be noted that the IOC President-Elect is an African. Secondly, she is a woman, and finally, she is a former athlete, which shows that Africa has the required skills. We must continue to work harder to ensure that our continent represents world sport with dignity.***

For us, it's a great opportunity. Firstly, it should be noted that the IOC President-Elect is an African. Secondly, she is a woman, and finally, she is a former athlete, which shows that Africa has the required skills. We must continue to work harder to ensure that our continent represents world sport with dignity. She is someone I know and as an athlete, a former elected athlete and a woman, this means, I would say, that we are in tune with the world order and must leverage this opportunity to ensure that our continent's aspirations are undoubtedly what we meet and that these values help to transform our continent, and quite simply, transform the world as Nelson Mandela said: «*[...] sport can transform the world.*» And here in Namibia, I had the opportunity to speak with the IOC President-Elect and the President of the Republic of the country that is hosting us today. It was a unique experience to talk to two women leaders: one, the Head of State, and the other, the Head of the Olympic Movement. This means, I would say, «that as concerns both politics and sport, we must work harder to ensure that sport does serve our interests and those of our Sports Movement.



ATHLETES' FORUM WINDHOEK 2025 **IN PICTURES**


KENYA


ACNOA - ANO




5th AFRICA ATHLETES FORUM 2025


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It starts with you

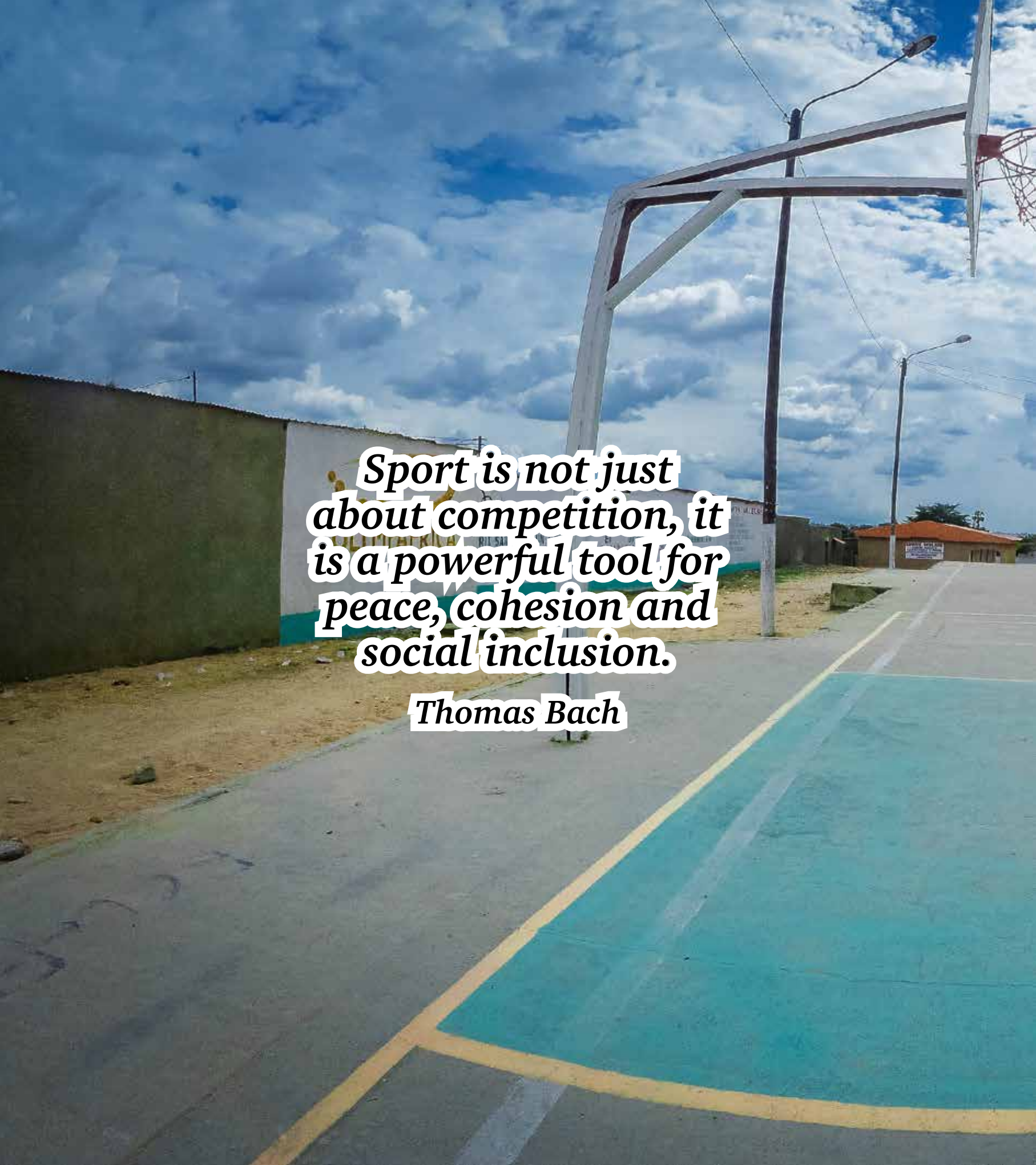

5TH ANOCA
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Sport is not just about competition, it is a powerful tool for peace, cohesion and social inclusion.
Thomas Bach


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JEUX AFRICAINS
AFRICAN GAMES
ACNOA


THANK YOU
Windhoek