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INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES OF AFRICA



3RD GENDER EQUALITY FORUM

ANOCA FOR FAIR, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SPORT IN AFRICA



BUJUMBURA, capital city of Burundi, was abuzz with excitement on 11 and 12 November 2025 as it hosted the 3rd ANOCA Pan-African Forum on the theme: "***Gender equality in African sport: unlocking potential, supporting generations***."

Deliberations took place at the Donatus Conference Centre in Bujumbura with the effective participation of the 54 African countries.

The President of NOC Burundi and Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Mrs Lydia NSEKERA, set the tone at the opening ceremony: "***It is with immense joy and deep gratitude that I am here today on behalf of NOC Burundi and the IOC Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commission. This event, organised by ANOCA, is much more than just a gathering: it is an act of faith in our collective ability to build a fairer, more inclusive and more representative African sport***."



The opening ceremony was graced by His Excellency Evariste NDAYISHIMIYE, President of the Republic of Burundi, accompanied by his wife. Speaking on the occasion, the Head of State reiterated the unwavering commitment of the government of Burundi to gender equality in sport:

"***Strengthening elite sport and promoting the development of women's sport in close partnership with the NOC and sports federations is one of the missions of the government of Burundi through the ministry of sports... We are here to underscore that competent, ambitious and talented women have their place in the world of sport and that they must be supported.***"

The President of the Republic, former President of the NOC for eight years and now Honorary President, emphasised the crucial role of sport as a vehicle for peace, social cohesion and education:



"*In Burundi, sport has long been a vehicle for peace, social cohesion, national reconciliation and the integral development of the human person," he said, before recalling that "nearly 49% of the medals won by Burundi on the international stage were won by women.*"

He congratulated Mrs Lydia NSEKERA, "***a symbol of strong female leadership***', on her vision and commitment, before receiving a Trophy of Honour from the ANOCA President in recognition of his strong support for sport development in Africa.

The Forum also featured a virtual address by IOC President, Mrs Kirsty COVENTRY, who delivered a highly impactful message.

"***Sport and especially the Olympic Games are a powerful platform to showcase women as role models. In sport, everyone is equal***," she said, noting that she is the first African and first woman to serve as IOC President.



She then went on to highlight progress made so far:

"***Paris 2024 achieved full gender parity on the field of play, a milestone we will repeat at the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games...***"

However, much still has to be done for, she noted, though women now represent 40% of Olympic Movement members, double what it was a decade ago, "***... across our Olympic Movements, progress remains uneven, women hold only about 28% of leadership positions in NOCs and only six international organisations are led by women... When one woman breaks a barrier, she paves the way for others to follow... Together let us keep building a world of sport where every girl can dream freely, lead confidently and know that her success lifts us all, men and women, girls and boys.***"



The event was preceded by a gala on 10 November 2025, at the initiative of President Mustapha BERRAF and the Executive Committee.

ANOCA recognised some women who embody leadership, resilience and transformation in African sport. They each received the GENDER EQUALITY AWARD.

ANOCA President, Mustapha BERRAF, was awarded a trophy by the Confederation of African Volleyball for his lifetime achievement in promoting sport and Olympism in Africa.

In his address delivered on the occasion, Mustapha BERRAF underscored that:

"***Gender equality in sport is not a slogan. It is a fundamental requirement, a condition of justice and an imperative for development. Africa, with its wealth of youth and talent, can only reach its full potential by valuing the skills, energy and dreams of all its girls and boys equally. Every African athlete, whether male or female, carries within them a part of the continent's future. Not offering the same opportunities to women in sport would deprive us of half of our vitality, our creativity and our collective power.***"



He then went on to say that:

"Through this Forum, ANOCA is making a firm commitment. We will work hand in glove with the IOC, our 54 member NOCs, African and international sports federations, as well as governments and civil society to fulfil this ambition. This is not simply a matter of affirming a principle, but of building mechanisms, implementing policies and supporting initiatives that can have a lasting impact."



The two-day Forum issued the following key recommendations:

- **INTEGRATE** gender equality into all sports policies and programmes while establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework;
- **ENSURE** a safe and inclusive environment for women and girls and provide them with the necessary conditions to compete at the highest level;
- **WORK** towards achieving at least 40% representation of women in decision-making bodies, in accordance with IOC basic principles of good governance and the ANOCA constitution;
- **ENTRUST** women with more leadership positions at all levels, from coaching to administration, drawing on Olympic Solidarity programmes.

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Closing the Forum, President Mustapha BERRAF thanked the government of Burundi for its hospitality while commending the delegates for their commitment:

"Sport is a powerful development tool and a vehicle for peace. By promoting equality, we are helping Africa grow. Together, we must create an inclusive and equitable environment for all, where every woman can dream, act and succeed... this forum has been a huge success and we have once again made significant progress in promoting gender equality in sport. I am convinced that we will continue to work together to achieve our goals and create a fairer and more equitable world for all."

At the end of it all, the President of NOC Burundi and Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Mrs Lydia NSEKERA, accompanied by two Olympians, Francine NIYONSABA and Elsie UWAMAHORO, pleasantly enlivened the ceremony by dancing on stage.


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11-12 NOVEMBRE 202




SUR L'ÉGALITÉ DES GENRES
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