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PRESS RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES OF AFRICA



OLYMPIC AFRICA HONOURS IOC PRESIDENT KIRSTY COVENTRY

Historic recognition of an iconic leader of the global Olympic Movement.



In a highly symbolic and token gesture of recognition, ANOCA awarded the prestigious Africa Gender Equality Trophy to IOC President Kirsty COVENTRY, at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne on Thursday, 6 November 2025. This distinction marked a historic moment in relations between the African Olympic Movement and the supreme governing body in world sport.

The emotion-packed and solemn ceremony, was graced by iconic figures from the African Olympic Movement. ANOCA President, Mustapha BERRAF, was accompanied by four women from the IOC - Ms Dagmawit Girmay BERHANE, Ms Filomena FORTES, Ms Aïcha Garad ALI and Ms Lydia NSEKERA, all pioneers and emblematic figures of the African Olympic Movement - as well as Engineer Habu Ahmed GUMEL, ANOCA Treasurer General and IOC Honorary Member, demonstrating the importance attached to this event by the African continent.



Kirsty COVENTRY is an embodiment of sports excellence and enlightened leadership. A former Olympic champion and the most decorated world swimming champion, she made history in her sport before embarking on a sports executive career that took her to the top of the global Olympic hierarchy. Her historic election as IOC President is not only a first for an African woman, but also a turning point for women's representation in international sports governing bodies.

This incredible journey makes her an inspiring role model for millions of athletes, especially young African girls and women who aspire to excel both in the field of play and in sports governance spheres.

In his speech, the Honourable Mustapha BERRAF, on behalf of the entire African Olympic and Sports Movement, expressed his profound gratitude to Mrs COVENTRY. «***Your historic election as IOC President and your continued commitment to equality, peace and unity through sports represent immense hope for our continent,***» he said with great emotion.



He further stressed that the trophy conveys «***the deep feeling of gratitude of Olympic Africa***» towards a leader he considers to be an «***icon of fairness and justice for the common good***». These words attest to the admiration Kirsty COVENTRY inspires on the African continent, where her commitment to gender equality resonates even more.

The Africa Gender Equality Trophy is not just an honorary distinction. It symbolises Africa's recognition of Mrs COVENTRY's relentless efforts to promote equality between men and women in sports, but also to foster unity and peace, in Africa in particular and in the world at large.

«***The African Olympic and Sports Movement reaffirms its commitment and loyalty, while hoping earnestly that the principles of sports and Olympism will thrive under your wise leadership***,» continued Mustapha BERRAF, illustrating Africa's trust in the leadership of the new IOC President.

On behalf of African athletes, coaches and leaders, ANOCA conveyed a message of gratitude and unwavering loyalty to Mrs COVENTRY. «***You are our greatest icon, our enduring cornerstone of fairness and justice in initiatives for the common good,***» said President BERRAF, underscoring her exceptional role as a model for an entire generation.

This distinction comes at a critical moment when gender equality in sports remains a major challenge, particularly in Africa, where women face several obstacles that bar access to elite sports practice and leadership positions. Kirsty COVENTRY's career is clear proof that these barriers can be lifted and that excellence is not gender specific.

The long-standing leaders of ANOCA expressed their hope that the values of sports and Olympism would thrive under Ms COVENTRY's enlightened leadership, building on her extraordinary skills and unique experience. This confidence reflects the conviction that her tenure will be beneficial for sports development in Africa and the furtherance of Olympic ideals on the continent.

ANOCA also expressed its hope that the Almighty God would strengthen the unity of the Olympic Movement and imbue its President the will and fortitude to achieve the shared goals of promoting world peace through sports and fostering the values of friendship and solidarity.

«***This trophy is so well deserved that our hearts are overflowing with joy and happiness, as we present it to you,***» concluded Mustapha BERRAF, expressing the emotion felt by the entire African delegation present at this historic ceremony.

The award of the Africa Gender Equality Trophy marked a new step in the meaningful collaboration between the IOC and ANOCA, reaffirming Africa's commitment to gender equality and universal Olympic values.

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