

Government of South Africa

Delivered by: Rev. Dr. A.M. Stofile
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Chairperson,

Delegates and Colleagues,

When the deliberations on the approval and adoption of the World Anti-Doping Code were concluded in Copenhagen in 2003, I doubt if anybody could have foreseen the immense impact it would have on sport in general, and anti-doping in sport in particular.

It is my contention that the World Anti-Doping Code:

Brought harmony where there was discord;

Forced action where there was intransigence;

Facilitated cooperation where there was distrust;

Created partnerships where there was exclusivity, and;

Secured confidence where there was doubt.

As a public representative, and as the WADA Executive and Foundation Board Member representing Africa, I am astounded by the swiftness with which we have been able to consolidate, in such a short space of time, a set of principles and rules, such as the Code. At the same time it is exhilarating that governments could agree to accept and accede to an international convention on doping, in record time. I believe that it is indicative of the times and the fact that we are all in agreement that doping in sport is a real threat that must be dealt with ... and dealt with decisively. In this respect the Code has been the guiding tool and a very effective force.

Representing a region where, not too long ago, the concept of anti-doping was foreign and unknown, we are beginning to witness a significant change. We are experiencing a revolution in the way issues of doping are no longer perceived as being out of reach for African athletes or, as a First World

WC Session 7 & 8: Government of South Africa phenomenon. African sport has also experienced the numbness and displeasure when our athletes succumb to cheating through doping. We have also witnessed how lives are destroyed and how families and communities are shattered because of the actions of an unscrupulous few who defied the rules and integrity of sport in an attempt to achieve their own selfish and ill-gotten gains.

We realise that no country is immune to doping. We have also realised that we need to be sharp and decisive and we are conscious of the necessity for swift and uncompromising intervention.

I am very happy to see so many of my African brothers and sisters here in Madrid. Their presence is indicative of how much importance we attach to the subject and of our willingness to be part of the global anti-doping community, despite the myriad of severe challenges, facing many countries in the region.

Yes, as a continent we have been slow off the mark in ensuring that we join the global fight;

Yes, we have so many other challenges that require our attention and scarce resources;

Yes, we still have a lot of catching up to do, but, we are committed to ensure that we join the international fray and we are steadfast in our resolve to contribute and play a significant role in the unfolding processes.

Chairperson, my own country has been fortunate enough to have had an anti-doping program for a number of years. We count ourselves as a leading force and we pride ourselves on having had the opportunity to be part of WADA, serve on its governance structures and to represent Africa at the highest level. We try to fulfill this role with responsibility and transparency. We will continue to do whatever it takes to assist the region as we strive to ensure that each and every member state complies with the Code. There is no other way.