



**Speech by World Anti-Doping Agency President, Witold Bańka
138th International Olympic Committee Session**

Tuesday, 20 May 2021, Tokyo, Japan

Dear IOC President Thomas Bach, IOC Vice-Presidents, IOC Executive Board Members, other IOC Members, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to provide you with an update on WADA's activities. Finally, after what seems like a lifetime, we are able to gather in person once again. Video conferencing has been, and continues to be, a useful tool that helps us stay connected but there is no substitute for being able to meet together in a spirit of solidarity and partnership. Indeed, it is wonderful to be here in the amazing city of Tokyo as we all look forward to the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It has been a remarkable journey to get to this stage, along a road with many twists and bumps. But like many others, I am delighted to be here in Japan to enjoy the world-class athleticism that will be on show.



I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and all your team at the IOC, as well as the local organizing committee. The Olympics is no stranger to adversity. Throughout the long and storied history of the Games, organizers have been met with many difficult and, at times, tragic challenges. And this global health crisis has been one of the most difficult and most tragic. It is to the organizers' credit, both those in Japan and in the IOC, that this massive event is taking place at all and, before the sports begin and the athletes rightly become our focus, that should be recognized.

GLOBAL TESTING IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE TOKYO GAMES

Since my most recent report, to the 137th IOC Session held in March 2021, WADA has continued to navigate the pandemic. We have been working with our anti-doping partners around the world and have overseen a return to full testing capacity. Our focus has been to ensure that the Olympic and Paralympic Games – and all other major sporting events – are protected and that athletes are afforded the level playing field that they so richly deserve.



In [May](#) and [June 2021](#), we announced that global testing figures were continuing to rise as activities of a growing number of Anti-Doping Organizations worldwide returned to normal. The latest available figures show that more than 25,000 samples were collected in June 2021 by more than 150 Anti-Doping Organizations, which was the highest number of samples collected since March 2020. Also, despite restrictions still in place in many parts of the world, out-of-competition testing has actually moved to a level significantly greater than for the same period in 2019.

The increase in testing around the world represents a significant effort on the part of Anti-Doping Organizations and other stakeholders, such as the International Testing Agency. WADA thanks them for their commitment, flexibility and determination to deliver a quality testing program in challenging circumstances. In the build-up to the Games, WADA urged all Anti-Doping Organizations to make the most of the remaining time to ensure that all athletes bound for Tokyo were properly tested and to implement the



testing recommendations that they received from the Pre-Games Expert Group being led by the ITA.

In these same Anti-Doping Organization communications, WADA also reminded them that the IOC-funded pre-Olympic long-term storage program delivered by the ITA was available to them, at no cost, so they could securely put samples away in a long-term storage facility for possible further analysis in the months and years to come. The storage and further analysis of samples has yielded considerable success in previous years, and has proven to be an effective deterrent. Furthermore, it is a requirement under the [International Standard for Testing and Investigations](#) that Anti-Doping Organizations must have a written strategy for storage and further analysis as part of their testing programs.

As we always do at the Games, WADA has an [Independent Observer](#) team present here in Tokyo to monitor the anti-doping activities of the Olympic Games, which is being operated by the ITA on behalf of the IOC. The team will work in partnership with the ITA and the organizing committee to



ensure the most effective anti-doping program is delivered. In the same way we will also have an Independent Observer team to monitor the anti-doping activities of the Paralympic Games, in partnership with the International Paralympic Committee.

We have also been working hard with the WADA-accredited laboratory here in Tokyo to ensure it is ready for the challenge that awaits.

RUSADA COMPLIANCE AND OPERATION LIMS / LEGAL AFFAIRS

WADA has of course been monitoring the implementation of the [January 2021](#) Court of Arbitration for Sport decision concerning the compliance of the Russian Anti-Doping Agency. In addition, significant work is still being conducted by WADA in relation to the follow up of doping cases as part of the Agency's Operation LIMS related to the data and doping control samples retrieved by WADA from the former Moscow Laboratory.

In particular, WADA continues to provide support, when needed, to International Federations to bring cases forward that may lead to anti-



doping rule violations, to monitor International Federation decisions in relation to evidentiary packages provided to them by WADA, and to appeal decisions when the Agency does not consider them to be in line with the Code. In the lead-up to these Games, WADA's Legal Affairs Department and independent Intelligence and Investigations Department have been focusing their energy to provide all relevant information and support to respective IFs in order to prevent athletes or support personnel against whom there is clear evidence of cheating from the Operation LIMS from participating in the Games.

WADA has also created an internal RUSADA monitoring project team to monitor RUSADA's re-instatement conditions as set out in the Court of Arbitration for Sport award. The Agency is working with RUSADA to assess their progress towards achievement of those conditions.

In terms of Legal Affairs more generally, WADA has been doing everything in its power to protect the Games. Our Legal Affairs Department has been



collaborating with the IOC and ITA to ensure that no athlete currently suspended takes part.

In addition, WADA Intelligence and Investigations is currently engaged in a number of investigations around the world. In June 2021, we [welcomed the publication](#) by the ITA of a report related to its investigation into historical allegations of mishandling and impropriety by certain officials within the International Weightlifting Federation, particularly in relation to its anti-doping program. We were happy to support the ITA in its enquiries, including by sharing evidence and information from our own complex and wide-ranging weightlifting probe, which has been ongoing since 2017. In October 2020, we published the provisional findings of the investigation.

DRIED BLOOD SPOT TESTING

As we announced in May, we are in the process of rolling out a new, innovative and very exciting form of testing known as dried blood spot (DBS). With WADA Executive Committee approval of a Technical Document on this subject in May, Anti-Doping Organizations and WADA-



accredited laboratories now have specific requirements and procedures for DBS sample collection, transport, analysis and storage. The Technical Document will come into effect on 1 September 2021 but certain aspects of it will be in operation during these Tokyo Games. The intention is that this method will be in routine use at the Beijing 2022 Games and beyond. This could be a game-changer for anti-doping as DBS will make things easier for doping control officers, it will be less invasive for athletes, less expensive, easier to store and easier to transport, with possible additional benefits related to sample stability.

PRE-TOKYO GAMES EDUCATION

From the point of view of athletes and their entourage, WADA in collaboration with the IOC, ITA and the IPC, has been leading the way in preparing them for the Games from an anti-doping point of view. Our education programs, [‘ADEL for Tokyo Olympics’](#) and [‘ADEL for Tokyo Paralympics’](#) are aimed at athletes and coaches coming to Tokyo. They have been extremely well received with Anti-Doping Organizations, National Olympic Committees and National Paralympic Committees,



investing in educating their teams. Our Tokyo education courses are available in a variety of languages – 17 different languages for the Olympics and 11 for the Paralympics – and I can tell you that, to date, there have been more than 6,000 completions of the ‘ADEL for Tokyo Olympics’ module with 897 learners still in progress. And 1,183 completions of the ‘ADEL for Tokyo Paralympics’ course with 400 still in progress. This represents a great response from the athlete, sport and anti-doping community with more than 7,000 completions... perhaps this is the first world record of the Tokyo Games! We have been delighted to work with the IOC, IPC and the ITA to help prepare athletes and coaches, and work has already started on our efforts to do the same for Beijing next year.

ATHLETE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Speaking of athletes, we have been continuing our outreach with this most important of stakeholder groups. Earlier this year, WADA’s Athlete Committee launched its [2021 athlete-led webinar series](#). This important initiative, which enables interactive engagement by the Agency with athletes worldwide, provides useful and informative webinars for athletes,



including a recent one entitled “2021 COVID-19 and Clean Sport Update” that attracted more than 1,000 athletes and other stakeholders.

In addition, in May, WADA and its Athlete Committee were delighted to be invited to take an active role in the [10th IOC Athlete Forum](#). It proved to be a great opportunity for Committee members to gather feedback and ideas from fellow athletes as well as updating them on the activities of the Committee and WADA as a whole.

WADA GOVERNANCE REFORMS

And athletes continue to be front of mind when it comes to WADA's ongoing [governance reforms](#) that WADA's Foundation Board first initiated in 2016. In May 2021, WADA's ExCo and Board received the first interim report from WADA's [Working Group on the Review of Governance Reforms](#), including the contributions received from stakeholders as part of the first phase of consultation. The Working Group was set up in November 2020 to monitor the effect of the [governance reforms](#) approved in 2018, as well as to consult with various stakeholders and propose additional and appropriate reforms going forward. The seven-person Working Group is composed of governance experts, includes two athletes and an independent Chair. The Group is now embarking on the second part of its work, which includes further stakeholder consultation and the development of specific recommendations for discussion and potential approval by the Executive Committee and the Foundation Board at their November 2021 meetings as planned. We look forward to the continuation of this reform



work in a spirit that should preserve the essence of WADA that is an equal partnership between the Sport Movement and the Public Authorities.

CONCLUSION

At the IOC Session back in March, I said that I remained optimistic for sport in 2021. Seeing how the sports family, including the anti-doping community, has prepared for Tokyo, my opinion has not changed. In fact, I am more excited than ever for what the future holds. I am looking forward to the next few weeks as we watch the world's best athletes gather. I hope they will amaze us with their sense of fair play as much as with their athletic prowess. I am sure there will be further challenges to face along the way. But I am confident that, together, we will continue to strengthen the global anti-doping system and, as a result, sport in general.

Thank you all for your efforts and commitment to clean sport. Here's to enjoying a wonderful festival of sport that will unfold before us in this great city.