

**WADA's 17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM**  
**14-15 March 2023, SwissTech Convention Centre Lausanne,**  
**Switzerland**  
**Keynote address by WADA President, Witold Bańka**

Distinguished guests, dear friends from the anti-doping community, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to WADA's 17th Annual Symposium in Lausanne. Thank you all for attending – whether in person or virtually.

We have a fascinating and varied agenda with 22 different sessions. All under the Conference theme of 'United Toward a World of Doping-Free Sport'. We are pleased to be able to once again host this Symposium in a hybrid fashion, retaining the option of virtual participation. However, it is great that most people have decided to attend the event in person – as we know, there is much more we can achieve when we all get together in the same room.

Today, we will hear more about WADA's governance reform. In particular, we will hear about how we are putting athletes first, ensuring they have a central part to play in the decision-making process. As part of that, we will explore how we can support athletes better by addressing questions around the role of the entourage. Also today there will be a session on the importance of intelligence and investigations in the protection of clean sport, as well as a session on human rights and a Q and A with WADA's Independent Ethics Board.

Tomorrow, we will touch on topics such as the Athlete Biological Passport, the Athletes' Anti-Doping Ombuds, education, privacy, governmental accountability, and many other interesting topics.

The WADA Annual Symposium is the highlight of the anti-doping calendar. This year it comes with an element of sadness. As we noted with a moment of silence earlier, since the 2022 Annual Symposium we have lost our dear friend, colleague and WADA Chief Operating Officer, Frédéric Donzé. Fred always loved the symposium. It gave him a chance to catch up with so many of you, the anti-doping community. He enjoyed chatting and listening to what you had to say about clean sport. He also liked to meet you socially, to share a laugh or two. I know many of you miss him dearly. So do I, especially at this time of year.

In January, I embarked on my second term as WADA President. Closely collaborating with Vice-President Yang Yang, our first term was busy. It was challenging but I believe it was successful. WADA is unquestionably a more modern, independent and athlete-focused organization than at any time since its establishment in 1999. This is due in large part to our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan that places athletes at the center. It is also due to major governance reforms that were initiated in 2016 and will be fully implemented this year. These reforms are delivering a shift towards greater independence and more representation for athletes and National Anti-Doping Organizations.

WADA introduced stronger anti-doping rules with the fourth version of the World Anti-Doping Code and its eight International Standards coming into force on 1 January 2021. These key documents ensure harmonized, coordinated and effective anti-doping programs. Especially with regard to prevention, deterrence, detection, enforcement and the rule of law.

WADA is also in a healthier state financially. In November 2022, the Foundation Board approved WADA's 2023 budget of USD 50.2 million. It's important to note that this largely comes from governments of the world and the Sport Movement. We are grateful for this continued support. In managing our budget, we continue to apply a policy of fiscal responsibility. We want to maximize the impact of every dollar we spend.

The increased investment by Governments and the Sport Movement has presented opportunities for us to do more in key areas. In particular, innovation and scientific research are extremely important for the future success of the anti-doping system. We are investing USD 4.5 million per year over the next three years in research grants. This is critical. It increases the volume of research dedicated to developing new and improved detection methods for performance-enhancing substances and methods. The investment is not yet back to the level of USD 6.5 million of a few years back. But the current amount will still attract high-level researchers to the mission.

The Agency has been strengthened financially. But we believe that much more can and must be done in scientific research and other critical areas. Today, there are still many regions of the world that are underfunded. Governments and the Sport Movement cannot be expected to shoulder the financial responsibility alone. To help address this situation, we are actively seeking national, continental and global partnerships. Last year, we announced our first such partnership. I am happy to say we hope to have more good news to reveal in the coming weeks.

Another area of improvement I am particularly proud of is that of collaboration. I made a commitment to be the President of dialogue. So far, I have met with more than 100 Ministers and Prime Ministers of Governments worldwide, and representatives of more than 70 NADOs and International Federations. I have also participated regularly in Sport Movement meetings and inter-governmental meetings, such as the Council of Europe and United Nations. I am grateful to all of them – and all of you – who have been so ready to collaborate on a range of important projects and initiatives.

On Education, we have entered a new era. We must continue to find ways to support athletes who want to train and compete clean. WADA's Education Department aims to increase access to education and information programs worldwide for athletes and their support personnel. It provides support, guidance and tools, helping Anti-Doping Organizations to create and implement education programs. In 2020, WADA introduced a four-year Social Science Research Strategy. In 2021, we introduced a new International Standard for Education. And in 2022, we held a very successful Global Education Conference in Sydney, Australia. At this meeting, I called upon all Anti-Doping Organizations to make education a key pillar of their programs. Thanks go to the Government of Australia and Sports Integrity Australia for their efforts in making the conference such a landmark event.

Reflecting on the past three years, it is hard not to mention the pivotal role played by WADA's independent Intelligence and Investigations team. There have been several successful WADA-led operations, across a range of countries and sports. As well as these investigations, WADA has successfully collaborated with the efforts of various law enforcement agencies, including INTERPOL and customs authorities.

Most importantly, I have spent the past three years meeting with athletes from around the world. I am happy to report that we have made great progress in how we engage with athletes and with increasing their role in the decision-making processes. A new 20-member Athlete Council has been established to represent, support, and promote the voices of athletes on anti-doping matters. The Council will meet for the first time here in Lausanne on Thursday. It is made up of athletes, chosen by athletes. It is the avenue for athletes to assume important seats within WADA's governing bodies and to express the view of athletes around the WADA table.

So, what have the athletes been saying?

Well, it will surprise no one to hear that athletes have a diverse range of views on many different topics. However, one very general theme keeps coming through. Again and again, I have been told by athletes: "We want everyone involved in anti-doping to be held to the same standards as we are." That means Anti-Doping Organizations, coaches, doctors and WADA accredited laboratories. All these groups are held accountable by the World Anti-Doping Program... whether it is through the World Anti-Doping Code, WADA's robust compliance monitoring program or stringent lab assessments.

That leaves Governments, at least the ones that are apathetic or resistant. This is where we need to do much more. The importance of Governments in anti-doping cannot be overstated. Through legislation, policies, regulations, administrative practices and funding, they can take actions that are not available to the Sport Movement or to WADA. Governments can, in particular, restrict the availability or use of doping substances, increase border controls and fund Anti-Doping Organizations. They also fund NADOs and, as mentioned, contribute significantly to WADA's funding.

The Code is a non-governmental document that applies only to members of sports organizations. 98% of the Governments of the world have ratified the UNESCO International Convention Against Doping in Sport. This document provides the legal framework under which Governments can address specific areas of the doping problem that are outside the domain of the Sport Movement. The Convention is the multilateral treaty that formally commits Governments to align their domestic policies with the Code. It is supposed to hold Governments to account from an anti-doping perspective. Adopted in 2005, the Convention calls on states to adopt national measures to prevent and eliminate doping. It attempts to harmonize anti-doping rules internationally in order to provide a fair and equitable playing environment for all athletes.

The UNESCO Convention should work in tandem with the Code that WADA oversees. In fact, In Article 4, State Parties commit to respect the principles of the Code and undertake to support the mission of WADA in the fight against doping. Unfortunately, the Convention does not have an effective enforcement mechanism. Violating it has virtually no consequences. In other words, those

Governments that are failing their athletes and other nations by not respecting the Convention, face no real consequences. And UNESCO, or its Conference of Parties, is either powerless or unwilling to act.

Recently, I was at a meeting of senior Government officials where one Sports Minister was very vocal that his nation was compliant with the UNESCO Convention. I did not find this Minister's intervention very convincing. So, I did a little research. What did I find? Let me put it this way... how many anti-doping tests did this country carry out in 2022? The answer: Zero. How much education? Zero. How many investigations? Zero. So, the question is, how can a country be compliant with the UNESCO Convention if it does nothing in these important areas? How is that possible? While a NADO or National Olympic Committee acting as a NADO is held accountable through the Code, there is not much it can do if a government does not respect the Convention or does not provide adequate funding.

I have a request to you. I want you all to close your eyes and think of where you were 18 years ago. Some of you were already part of this anti-doping family. Perhaps some of you were thinking of joining it. And others possibly had never heard of it! Me? In those days, I was a young 400m runner on the Polish team. It seems like a lifetime ago. Now, for those of you who were involved in anti-doping in 2005, imagine if the tools were still the same today. Does it sound right? Of course not – so much has changed in that time. The Code has been revised three times and most of the eight International Standards were created since then. 18 years is a long time in anti-doping. Now think about this: The UNESCO Convention has not changed since it was first adopted nearly 18 years ago. Not even a single word. Clearly, it is no longer fit for purpose.

Every few years, WADA organizes a transparent stakeholder consultation process to revise the World Anti-Doping Code and International Standards. Do you know why these documents are so robust? Why they are so universal? Because of you... your passion and commitment to contributing to the review process. You are part of it, so you know how complex it is. I think we sometimes forget what a unique achievement our Code is. It makes the rules consistent across all sports and all countries. Imagine trying to harmonize civil or criminal law for even a few countries. It is not possible – each country has a different socio-legal background. But we managed to do it in anti-doping. Thanks to your help! We did it for the athletes of the world because they are at the center of everything we do. But we also know that for anti-doping to be efficient, the World Anti-Doping Program must move with the times. It cannot stand still. That's why we make sure that the Code and Standards evolve, along with the compliance monitoring of our Signatories. Unlike the Convention.

And so, what is UNESCO's role in anti-doping if it cannot hold Governments to account or protect other Governments against those that violate the rules? Even the Russian Federation is, and always has been, compliant with the UNESCO Convention. Russia! It remained a compliant state party even after WADA revealed an extensive institutionalized doping program in that country and even after the Court of Arbitration for Sport acknowledged the active role of the Russian Government in the doping scandal. In fact, more than that, Russia has remained an influential player within UNESCO and, specifically, within its Bureau of the Conference of Parties.

Over the past few years, it seems that UNESCO has been unilaterally focused on bringing about change to WADA's funding formula over which it has no jurisdiction. Governments' annual contributions are calculated through a regional split, which was agreed upon by public authorities shortly after the creation of WADA in 1999. The Olympic Movement matches Governments' contributions up to 50% of WADA's annual budget. Only the Governments can determine if they want to modify the current regional split. This initiative must be discussed collectively by them in the right forum, with the relevant information. It should be agreed once a consensus has been reached, as was done 20 years ago with the Copenhagen Declaration. WADA would not seek to change UNESCO's funding model – that is a matter for its members alone. During my years working in Government, I never heard of such a thing.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to see UNESCO's focus be redirected towards improving the Convention. This way Governments can be held accountable and face consequences when warranted, just as athletes and others are held to account by the World Anti-Doping Code. We cannot let UNESCO and the COP bringing uncertainties to WADA and the entire system. Surely, the athletes deserve a Convention that works. So, I call on all of you, particularly the Governments and NADOs in the room, to give some thought to this situation and ensure that UNESCO and the COP focus on the right priorities. We must work together to strengthen the Global Anti-Doping System that we have all worked so hard to build.

I mentioned Russia just now. Now I would like to provide a clear update on Russia and the status of the Russian Anti-Doping Agency, RUSADA. First, I reiterate our support for the people – and, in particular, the athletes – of Ukraine in face of this continued Russian aggression. We stand – and will continue to stand – with Ukraine.

Meanwhile, RUSADA remains non-compliant. That is related to the 2020 decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport to declare RUSADA non-compliant and implement a number of consequences on Russian sport for a period of two years. We wanted four years and tougher consequences. Unfortunately, we didn't get that. RUSADA will remain non-compliant until it fulfills each of the reinstatement conditions in full as laid out by CAS and until we have been able to verify that. We will continue to follow the agreed process. However, I must say that trust in the independence of the anti-doping system there remains very low. For example, the way the case of the ROC figure skater Kamila Valieva has been dealt with, has not been encouraging. The unnecessary delays in the case feed that distrust. Moreover, we have seen the coach in question receive awards from the highest office in the land. So much for the protection of young athletes, of children! We believe the first instance decision by RUSADA's disciplinary tribunal is wrong. That is why WADA has appealed it to CAS. That decision raises questions as to the competence of their national hearing panel. It certainly does not build confidence. This is something we will continue to take very seriously.

Meanwhile, our Operation LIMS investigation into the data and samples retrieved by WADA I&I from the Moscow Anti-Doping Laboratory in 2019 continues to be successful. As of today, 181 athletes have been sanctioned with an additional 88 charged and 212 cases that remain under investigation. This is a great result for clean sport.

Despite all the challenges we face, Vice-President Yang Yang and I embark on our second term with optimism, supported by WADA Management, staff and the many volunteers that make-up our various governance bodies. And, these will be busy years. Let me tell you now in brief about our plans.

After the second phase of governance reform has been completed, our attention should be focused on WADA's core anti-doping activities. We have to intensify our efforts in areas such as:

- Further engaging and empowering athletes;
- Preventing intentional or unintentional use of prohibited substances and methods through education;
- Investing more in scientific research;
- Monitoring Code compliance robustly and fairly;
- Encouraging the Governments of the world to invest in building stronger anti-doping programs, as I have outlined already; and
- Developing fruitful partnerships and proactively seeking additional funding to close gaps withing the anti-doping system.

Despite our constant efforts in these areas, there is still much work to be done.

One thing that hasn't changed since my election in 2019 is that the anti-doping system is still dependent on its national links. Therefore, in the coming years we must focus our efforts on building anti-doping capacity in all corners of the world. We will work more closely with leaders in regions with insufficient financial resources. We will promote partnerships between anti-doping organizations. We will be present wherever our assistance is needed! I will also continue my bilateral meetings with public authorities and convince them to invest in the future of their athletes by building strong anti-doping programs. For this to happen, we need accountable and trustworthy governments. Because the burden of building strong national programs rests primarily with the public authorities.

Another area needing more focus is compliance monitoring. In 2021, we introduced a new policy for the application of the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories'. This is the so-called Prioritization Policy. It increases compliance obligations for more signatories and more anti-doping program areas. Dividing signatories into tiers, the policy creates a clear framework in terms of when and for what reason WADA will initiate a compliance procedure. This is a definite tightening of the policy. We now demand much more from our signatories. This will continue. Athletes deserve to know when they train and compete in one country, their competitors elsewhere are subject to the same high standards.

Education is another high priority. We need to build on the success of many of our programs, including the ADEL platform. We will expand our region-specific activities, such as the Global 2 Local initiative, which was piloted in Europe. I would also like to work intensively on educating the youngest athletes and informing the public that doping is a public health issue, not just a sporting one. We have to remember that our anti-doping efforts to 'support and prevent' are just as important as those to 'catch and punish'.

Another issue is science and innovation – here, too, I see many opportunities for our activities to grow in the near future.

And finally, I wish to commend initiatives such as the EU Pilot Project on Intelligence and Investigation Capability and Capacity Building and Interpol Regional Workshops. It is my hope that they lead to the strengthening of a professional network of anti-doping investigators around the world. This will allow even more robust investigations within global partnerships.

WADA and the global anti-doping system has grown stronger in recent years. Through hard work, ingenuity and collaboration. What we have to do is to continue working together. Let me remind you that the theme of this year's Symposium is: "United Toward a World of Doping-Free Sport". Please ask yourself, what future would you like for anti-doping and for athletes from your countries or sports? I bet every one of you wants our work to be even more effective, to raise the game for our athletes. For this to happen, however, we must be united. United in diversity. Diversity is our strength. Just as testing cannot exist without education, and legal without science, we complement each other in our different perspectives and skillsets. Therefore, everything we do requires your commitment. What you bring to this organization and to the entire anti-doping community is diversity - of opinions, views, cultures and sports.

WADA is now in a completely different place than it was just a few years ago. We are a much stronger organization. We have new strategies and tools for our daily work. However, there is still much to be done. As an athlete, I always wondered what I could improve in my training to achieve better results. Today, as WADA President, I often ask myself the same question. I believe this symposium provides an answer. We need to involve more and more people in delivering on our mission. We need all of you because WADA is everyone here. We need each of you. Now is the time. We need to work together. We need to be united as One Play True team.

Please, enjoy this year's Symposium among colleagues. Relish this time together and make the most of it. Ask questions, collaborate, build relationships, take selfies and share with others the benefit of your own expertise so we can all do our bit wherever in the world we are and whatever challenges we face. Thank you for attending. I look forward to talking to many of you this weekend.