

Anti-Doping Law & Sport Conference 2015

Saudi Arabia, 15 March 2015

Opening Address

Delivered by WADA Director General, David Howman

On behalf of the World Anti-Doping Agency I would like to thank the Saudi Arabia National Anti-Doping Committee, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Saudi Arabia National Olympic Committee for hosting this important symposium.

I would specifically like to commend Dr. Saleh Konbaz, WADA Foundation Board Member, Chair of the UNESCO Convention Against Doping in Sport and Chair of the Saudi Arabian Anti-Doping Committee for his commitment to protect clean sport.

The world of anti-doping can be complex, with several elements required to ensure programs are operating in an efficient and effective manner. One of the key elements of this success is partnerships. Partnerships can range from hosting a symposium such as this one or aligning your anti-doping organizations with key stakeholders; this includes International Federations, National Federations, National Olympic Committees and other National Anti-Doping Organizations.

This symposium being held over the next two days is an example of how partnerships with Law and Sport can facilitate effective anti-doping programs that protect clean sport and clean athletes. With every part of society, including anti-doping, the rights of people, athletes and the athlete entourage need to be protected. This protection generally rests with quality anti-doping programs and a supported legal framework that can be called upon and trusted by all.

With the revised 2015 World Anti-Doping Code now in force it is an opportune time to enhance the fight against doping in sport. The framed conditions are in place through sports and NADOs adopting and implementing the World Anti-Doping Code and complemented by governments ratifying and complying with the UNESCO Convention Against Doping in Sport.

Over time doping has become a more complex issue, and with complexity comes the need to ensure effective tools are in place to protect clean sport. No longer are we expected just to collect urine samples. The enhancement of the fight against doping in sport has resulted in additional tools being implemented. Some of these tools include governments having the mechanism in place to deal with the trafficking of prohibited substances, and anti-doping organizations having the necessary investigation capacity in order to deal with information that either indicates potential doping activity or, in a more advance manner, facilitate the transfer of information from law enforcement to act on potential anti-doping rule violations.

The anti-doping community has now started to embrace the athlete biological passport; a mechanism that can be used to directly sanction athletes or that can be used to more effectively target test athletes. All of these mechanisms require a framework to ensure rules are respected and rights are protected.

This is why it is unique that over the next two days we will be discussing how Law and Sport plays an important role in the fight against doping in sport. We partner with lawyers to ensure athletes are entitled to a fair hearing, and should athletes or support personnel break the rules they are brought to justice to ensure the rules of sport are protected.

So on behalf of the World Anti-Doping Agency, I look forward to spending the next two days discussing how sport and law plays an important part in the fight against doping in sport and how we can further enhance partnerships to protect the clean athlete

Once again I would like to thank our hosts for their hospitality and warm welcome, and I wish everyone a pleasant stay over the next two days.