

Speech by WADA President, Witold Bańka

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International Convention against Doping in Sport (COP8)
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UNESCO officials, honorable ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the World Anti-Doping Agency, I would like to thank UNESCO for granting me this opportunity to address this important group. It is wonderful that we are able to gather in person once again here in Paris – the location for the next summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024.



WADA

At the beginning, please allow me to remind you of who we are at the World Anti-Doping Agency. WADA is an international, independent, non-profit organization that is composed of and funded by the Sports Movement and Governments of the world. Since its formation in 1999, WADA has been leading a collaborative worldwide movement for doping-free sport. Simply put, WADA is the world regulator of the anti-doping system as recognized by UNESCO's International Convention against Doping in Sport.

WADA's primary role is to promote, develop and enforce harmonized anti-doping rules and regulations, while enabling Anti-Doping Organizations to develop customized anti-doping programs.

With athletes at the center of our mission, we deliver a wide range of activities, which include scientific research, investigations, education and development of anti-doping capacities among Anti-Doping



Organizations. But maybe first and foremost, we develop and oversee the rules as contained within the World Anti-Doping Code. This document manages to harmonize anti-doping across all sports and in every country of the world. The Code is at the heart of the Global Anti-Doping Program. Along with the eight related International Standards, it sets the rules for all Signatories to follow. A large part of WADA's work is concerned with ensuring the Code is implemented consistently and fairly around the globe... for the protection of athletes everywhere.

WADA and UNESCO

Protecting clean sport is not just about developing rules and regulations and making sure they are followed. At its core, it is about ensuring that sport continues to be a force for good in our world. That it maintains the trust of athletes and the general public. It is tied up with national identity, pride, good health and instilling the right values of integrity, respect and camaraderie. It is about using the power of



sport to positively influence society. This makes anti-doping a societal issue as well as a sporting one.

From the outset, WADA and UNESCO have been partners. We have a complementary mission. For both of us the goal is to protect the rights of individual athletes and teams to live out their dreams.

UNESCO is the custodian of the Convention, the legal framework under which Governments address anti-doping issues. The focus of the Convention is more on macro policy tools rather than the detail involved in implementing an anti-doping program. Governments are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the Convention. They must be held to account for the commitments they have made in this regard. But more about that later.

Meanwhile, WADA assists the Sport Movement and Anti-Doping Organizations in their efforts to comply with the Code. The emphasis is always on partnership and collaboration. But, when appropriate,



WADA stands prepared to impose consequences on those who are non-compliant.

Through the Code, WADA also sets expectations for Governments to meet. But WADA does not regulate Governments per se. The implementation of the Convention is monitored by UNESCO. That is why the WADA-UNESCO partnership is so crucial for anti-doping.

One organization cannot regulate the entire system by itself – it takes a close collaboration in order to get the job done successfully. If both organizations are not harmonized, problems soon arise.

The scope of the Convention is remarkably broad. It lays out the role that Governments play in the anti-doping system. Through legislation, policies, regulations, administrative practices and, of course, through funding, Governments can take actions that are not available to the Sport Movement or to WADA. Governments can restrict the availability or use of doping substances, increase border controls and fund Anti-Doping Organizations. Governments can address the use of



performance-enhancing drug abuse in wider society, beyond the level of elite sport.

And the International Convention against Doping in Sport provides the legal framework for those Governments to take the necessary action.

Funding

This system continues to be successful. But this does not mean that WADA is without its challenges. First and foremost, more financial resources are required to strengthen the Global Anti-Doping Program. Already, the Governments of the world and the Sport Movement are providing significant funding to WADA and to anti-doping generally, but more is needed.

As a global regulator, we must make every dollar count to ensure we can deliver on our mandate. And it is important that Governments and

the Sport Movement do not have to shoulder this financial burden alone. It is for this reason that I am reaching out for other sources of funding, mainly from the private sector, to assist in the protection of clean sport. One of the key ways we would use this additional funding would be in the area of capacity building. Some parts of the world do not have the resources to implement as robust anti-doping programs as others. Contributions from the private sector would help to improve our capacity to help Anti-Doping Organizations that have more limited activities.

In addition, extra resources would allow us to invest more in compliance monitoring to ensure the Code is implemented consistently around the world. We could also invest more into research, investigations, education and other priorities.



Collaboration

WADA values the partnership with UNESCO. With the support of the Sport Movement and Governments, UNESCO and WADA together can make the Global Anti-Doping System better. The truth is we have a responsibility to make the system better.

From our side at WADA, we are constantly forging ahead. For example, we continue to improve our education offerings, our governance model and our compliance monitoring. We are also strengthening our research program. In the coming years, we will be investing more funds in science as we develop innovations to improve testing capabilities. In particular, the exciting new process of dried blood spot analysis is set to be rolled out for routine use at the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games early next year. Dried blood spot requires only a small sample of blood. It is a technique that carries many advantages over traditional forms of sample collection.



It makes the process less intrusive for athletes and it is easier and cheaper for the authorities.

For its part, UNESCO is focusing on the improvement of the Ad Logic questionnaire. It is developing new tools to facilitate the implementation of the Convention, and it is bringing some welcome changes to the Voluntary Fund.

Without question, UNESCO is taking steps in the right direction. But is it enough? What more can you do?

As I mentioned earlier, one area where I think we owe it to sport to be stronger is with Governments. Currently, there is no strong legal framework of consequences to impose on Governments that cheat the system or do not take steps to protect it adequately.

Athletes who break the rules face severe consequences. The same is true for coaches, medics and other athlete support personnel, as well

as Anti-Doping Organizations, sports federations, Major Events Organizers and so on. When they fail to meet their obligations under the Code, they are held to account.

But what happens when Governments fail to implement the UNESCO or European Conventions effectively. They are not Code Signatories and WADA has no power to act against them. Indeed, currently there is no real threat for these nations and no incentive for them to play by the rules.

For me, this is a weak link in the system. Maybe now is the time to address this issue. We must be bold and ambitious and ensure that some kind of mechanism that binds Governments in this area is implemented. All of us – WADA, UNESCO and Governments – must collaborate to fill this gap in the system.

The solution has to be a joint effort. An international effort. We must come together and work out a solution to fill that gap and strengthen



the system. I believe that it is in the interests of all Governments of the world to do this in order to protect the athletes and clean sport. Weaknesses in the system serve no purpose except to provide opportunities for those who wish to break the rules and cover their tracks.

Dialogue and collaboration remain key to success.

In closing, I would simply like to thank you once again for your commitment to anti-doping. In collaboration with WADA, I urge you to continue working with the Governments to support your NADOs, giving them the funding and assistance they need. Wherever you go, I need you to be strong ambassadors of our healthy mission for clean sport.

From the very beginning of my presidency I have met hundreds of athletes. They are all very supportive, they all expect us to improve and strengthen the system. This is my mandate that I received from



the athletes. It is a huge responsibility, so I will never let WADA be used as part of a political game.

For our part, WADA will continue to collaborate with Governments, the International Olympic Committee, UNESCO, athletes and all our partners worldwide to strengthen the Global Anti-Doping Program. We are confident that together we will succeed. It is now time to focus more on anti-doping and leave the politics out of the room. So let us work together, for the good of athletes, for the good of sport, and for the future.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to address you all today.