

**SPEECH BY WADA VICE-PRESIDENT YANG YANG TO THE
MINISTERS OF SPORT AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF
THE EAST, SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES**

7 JULY 2021

Honorable Ministers and representatives of Governments from the East, South, and South-East Asia, WADA Executive and Foundation Board Members, ladies and gentlemen. Hello dear colleagues, greetings from China. Like President Bańka, I am delighted to be able to address you today in this forum where you as the Ministers responsible for sport, together with your partner organizations, consider ways and means to strengthen sport. This is a wonderful opportunity for me to be able to discuss anti-doping with the representatives of so many Governments, National Anti-Doping Organizations and other important groups from east, south and south-east Asia.

My role as WADA Vice-President is to serve sports alongside Witold Bańka and I am honored to do so. I think we complement each other well. His experience in government and as an athlete makes him an excellent



President and I am happy to advise him, particularly when it comes to giving the perspective of athletes in Asia. The experience I have gained from my involvement with a National Federation, International Federation and National Olympic Committee has helped in my understanding of the anti-doping system, what works and what needs improvement. Although I retired from the elite level of speed skating a few years ago, I still think like an athlete. My first priority is to the athletes and it always will be.

But there are many different perspectives we must consider. In 1999, WADA was set up as a collaboration between the public authorities and sport. It is perhaps unique in that sense. What other aspect of life relies on a global cooperation between governments and sports organizations? For 22 years, this model has operated well. But the collaborative model of WADA is only as strong as the various stakeholders allow it to be. The public authorities, such as those you represent here today, are so crucial to maintaining and strengthening the balance and spirit of cooperation that exists today.



To that end, this kind of forum is extremely important to build a strong global anti-doping community. We engage in similar ways with Governments in other regions of the world, not just here in Asia. These meetings help to develop a spirit of collaboration across all affected bodies. WADA is here to help but also to be assisted in our commitment to clean sport. WADA cannot do it all alone. Neither can the public authorities nor the sport movement. It is only by working together that we will make progress. That is true, not just for WADA, but for the public authorities, Anti-Doping Organizations, National Olympic Committees, and other regional sporting and cultural bodies in Asia.

We are here today to inform and encourage but also to listen. WADA maybe the global regulator for anti-doping, but it is also an Agency whose efforts are directed, as much as possible, to assist where need be and build capacity to catch those who attempt to cheat the system while protecting athletes who are determined to compete clean. WADA is committed to helping develop anti-doping organizations worldwide and especially in parts of the world that may face bigger challenges.

Part of WADA's assistance is also to help leaders like you identify what can be done to improve the fight against doping in sport. Today, I would ask that we take the time to reflect on the extremely negative impact doping has on the integrity of sport and on the health of athletes. Sport fulfills an important role in society and we simply cannot let it be tarnished by the use of performance-enhancing drugs and the mentality of winning at all costs.

As the Vice-President of the World Anti-Doping Agency and a former short track speed skater, I am a strong proponent of clean sport. Everything I tried to do when I was competing as a short track speed skater was centered around fairness. I wanted to win. Of course I did. In fact, I was driven to win. But I also knew that winning was not enough if it came at the expense of fairness for all. For me, it has always been important to compete with honor. And to do that means to be true to yourself, to your family, to your country and to your opponents. That truth is founded on a belief in hard work – there can be no shortcuts to excellence. But for that truth to take hold and flourish within someone requires a culture... a culture of integrity and honesty. That is why education is so important.

The key to remember is that no athlete sets out to cheat. When they were very young dreaming of winning an Olympic medal, they did not think about breaking the rules to do it. Instinctively, they knew they wanted to win the right way. It is vitally important to protect and support the dreams of athletes as they strive to succeed in an ethical way that will allow them to enjoy their achievements long after they have retired, without having to lie about or make excuses for what they did or how they did it.

That is why education is a core component of any anti-doping program.

The introduction to the 2021 World Anti-Doping Code includes education in the prevention of intentional or unintentional doping, along with deterrence, detection, enforcement and the rule of law. The first International Standard for Education came into force on 1 January 2021. This important document sets out the requirements that Signatories to the World Anti-Doping Code need to meet as it relates to education.

Another great development for anti-doping education also came in January of this year when WADA launched its new and improved Anti-Doping Education and Learning platform, known as ADEL, which was originally



launched in January 2018. Via the new ADEL platform, WADA provides education and learning opportunities for the anti-doping community worldwide, including: athletes, coaches, parents, medical professionals and more.

The launch of ADEL is an important milestone. It demonstrates the Agency's commitment to education and its intention to support the development of balanced anti-doping programs that include education as a core function by Anti-Doping Organizations.

In addition, WADA leads educational initiatives that support the capability development of anti-doping practitioners. Many of these initiatives can form part of the implementation of values-based educational programs in schools. This highlights the fact that the fight against doping cannot be won only through deterrence or testing on its own. In the long run, education has the best chance of changing the culture and the use of doping substances and methods. So, I strongly encourage you to engage with your respective ministers of education to consider implementing such programs.

Of course, anti-doping education is not just about athletes. Crucially, we must inform and equip their entourage, including their parents, coaches, trainers and doctors. This is especially true in Asia where the culture is more submissive and hierarchical. In many parts of Asia – perhaps more than in other parts of the world – athletes rely on their entourage for everything. They trust them completely and do as they say. That can be a good thing or a bad thing – if we can educate the entourage and make them understand the importance of clean competition, it will filter down to the athlete, even those of a very young age.

Clean sport has always been something close to my heart. When I was a member of the National People’s Congress as a representative of sports, I introduced new anti-doping legislation that facilitated investigations into doping conspiracies, not just for anti-doping rule violations committed by athletes but also by others, such as coaches or doctors. There can be no more hiding behind the achievements or activities of athletes – it is so important that athlete support personnel feel the heat also. We must make them more accountable.



As a Chinese athlete and someone who has seen the potential in Asia for many years, it is great to see sport in this region flourishing. More and more, sports federations are seeing Asia as an attractive place to stage their competitions. Over the past few years, we have hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games, both winter and summer, as will be the case for Tokyo and Beijing very soon. Also in 2022, we will host the Asian Games in China and the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, followed in 2023 by the Cricket World Cup in India. Clearly, Asia's sporting influence and importance is growing. And with that comes a growing responsibility to clean sport – more and more this region is becoming a key piece of the global anti-doping puzzle and we must be ready for it. Ongoing support for WADA is crucial, particularly in its efforts to ensure Anti-Doping Organizations remain compliant with the Code. Governments must also commit to building the capacity of the National and Regional Anti-Doping Organizations within Asia in order to ensure this region is a strong partner in the anti-doping movement. On this note, I believe that the MoU, which is to be established in October between WADA and ASEAN and is focused on anti-doping program cooperation, will succeed in building capacity in Asia. Knowing Asia as I do, I am confident that the region can be seen as a beacon of



hope for everyone who believes in the power of clean sport - as a force for good in our society.

In closing, I would like to thank you again for the invitation to be here today and for your hard work in the area of anti-doping. Much work has been done and much more is left to do to secure athletes' confidence and trust in the system, which they so richly deserve. WADA's mission is to lead a collaborative worldwide movement for doping free sport. We want all stakeholders – and that includes you – to have the opportunity to input their expertise and influence to ensure that the clean athlete prevails and to ensure that society, in particular youth, are protected from the scourge of doping.

Thank you.