



**Speech by WADA Director General, Olivier Niggli
Global Ministerial Forum on Sport Values, Ethics and
Integrity**

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**‘Clean sport as a key component for protecting the
integrity of sport’**

Your Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal, Ministers, esteemed delegates and representatives, good afternoon. It is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak to you today on the topic of integrity in sport.

This is another example of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supporting the wider anti-doping movement. In 2019, the Saudi Government and its Anti-Doping Committee, led by WADA Foundation Board member Dr. Mohammed Saleh Konbaz, hosted the 16th Asia/Oceania Region Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting on Anti-Doping in Sport, in Jeddah. That was a real milestone for the development of anti-doping. Your Highness, Saudi’s ongoing commitment is appreciated.



Clean sport is the celebration of the human spirit, body and mind. It is characterized by values such as ethics, honesty and respect... respect for oneself, for others and for the rules. At its best, sport is about excellence in performance, fair play and healthy competition. That is what spectators want to see. It is what athletes should always strive to deliver. And it is what we, as sports administrators or government officials, must always defend, promote and protect. For me, and for the World Anti-Doping Agency, ethics in sport is a matter of personal beliefs, where we cultivate the right attitudes and commitment to fostering the best possible spirit and culture. It's about doing the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons.

Sport is one of the few activities in life that is universally appreciated and encouraged. This is true across nations, cultures, creeds and races.

Sporting success and endeavor bring pride to families, nations and entire societies. It is one of the very few things that can unite us. But only clean sport, sport that is free of corruption in all its forms. We want sport to be a vehicle of healthy competition yes, but it also needs to be a way to build



communities and bridges between them. Sport without integrity is no longer sport. Without values, sport loses **all** value.

As the global regulator, the World Anti-Doping Agency is devoted to clean sport. That is our entire reason for being. As such, WADA is responsible for preserving the essential competitive nature of sport, without which sport would be reduced to nothing more than a predetermined exhibition. Those of us who admire the pursuit of human excellence based on natural talent simply do not want to watch competition if the objectives of “faster, higher, stronger” are only achieved through deception. We, at WADA and the governments of the world, must do everything we can to preserve the beauty and values of sport.

Through its activities, WADA ensures the effectiveness of the World Anti-Doping Program which aims to prevent and detect doping in order to protect athletes. We take our role as regulator extremely seriously. Athletes put a lot of faith in us. They rely on us and we owe it to them to provide the level playing field they deserve.



WADA is a one-of-a-kind organization. An equal partnership between the Sport Movement and the Governments of the world, it was established nearly 24 years ago, charged with leading a collaborative global movement for doping-free sport.

As the sole anti-doping regulator, WADA has the overall responsibility to ensure that everyone complies with the rules, whether they are athletes, coaches, medics, administrators or anti-doping professionals. The rules have been agreed across all sports and governments of the world. This harmonized approach is crucial as it provides the global consistency and reliability that was absent before WADA came into being. The best place to see this harmonization is in the World Anti-Doping Code and related International Standards. These documents, which include the all-important List of Prohibited Substances and Methods, give athletes and everyone involved in sport, the confidence they need to know that sport can be fair, ethical and clean.

More specifically, WADA has to ensure that all anti-doping programs worldwide include certain key components. The first thing we need to see



in every country of the world is that all governments are committed to clean sport. This is demonstrated, in the first instance, by their willingness and ability to implement a solid legislative framework that works in conjunction and compliance with the World Anti-Doping Code. The strength of the global anti-doping program is that it is harmonized. This can only be achieved when governments take the lead and introduce robust laws that protect athletes and sports from those who would cheat the system. Still there are some countries that have work to do in this area.

Another key area is science. From WADA's perspective, it is imperative that we keep pushing the boundaries of scientific and technological advancement. For me, the key aspect is research. Thanks to an increase of WADA's budget, we are investing up to USD 4.5 million per year for the next three years to carry out our research mission. Even with the budget constraints, scientific progress is still being made, especially in the areas of analytical methodologies and artificial intelligence. These are helping us respond to the complex challenges that we face. To survive, we must always keep moving forward. We strive to enhance the sophistication of the



global anti-doping community's approach to catching and deterring cheats... building confidence in the system all the time.

As the science improves, so does the efficacy of testing. All good anti-doping programs will have a robust in- and out-of-competition testing regime to detect and deter potential cheats. Hand in hand with this is the work of intelligence and investigations. At WADA, our investigators have enjoyed significant successes as they continue to collaborate with Anti-Doping Organizations around the world, as well as law enforcement agencies, including INTERPOL.

But it is not all about catching and punishing. It is also about preventing and supporting. That is where education comes in. Put simply, education is the single best long-term solution we have for protecting the values of clean sport. It is a critical component of the global anti-doping system. More and more, we are seeing the real results that education delivers in preventing doping and supporting athletes in their efforts to compete clean throughout their careers. Education is fulfilling its role in helping athletes learn the behaviors and actions they need – to live their values. Information alone



will never be enough. It is through effective, values-based education that we will instill the right culture in sport, to ensure young people have the respect they need to practice fair competition while understanding its place in a progressive, peaceful society.

We all need to invest in our capability to ensure that athletes and those around them are treated fairly, and that they believe in it. We want them to have a positive experience and know that we are here to protect their right to fair and clean competition. It is in part through education that WADA is putting athletes at the center of the organization. Making sure athletes are part of the discussion and part of the decision-making process is another essential aspect of well-organized, modern anti-doping program.

And the final one is collaboration.

In line with our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, there is consensus that WADA must go further to build bridges and unite efforts to protect athletes and the integrity of sports globally. To this end, collaboration is essential to our day-to-day work. Apart from our key stakeholders in Government and Sport, we



have set up strong partnerships with various groups, including in law enforcement, customs authorities, pharmaceutical companies, universities, and many more, enabling us to stay ahead of the game.

As far as the public authorities are concerned, we have met with sports ministers and other senior government representatives on numerous occasions over the past three years and have engaged in extensive discussions on matters such as legislation and capacity building on the ground. We look forward to continuing with that approach in the months and years to come.

Indeed, we have seen your great willingness to collaborate in the development of anti-doping programs and the protection of clean sport. It is particularly encouraging when this collaboration includes other actors, such as between the Regional Anti-Doping Organizations and the better developed Anti-Doping Organizations.

But the protection of clean sport is an ongoing challenge. We constantly need to reach new milestones if we are to continue to protect the dreams of



athletes. But anti-doping is a team sport. WADA cannot do it alone. The role of governments is key. Your help is vital considering you can effect real legislative and cultural change in your countries in ways no one else can. So please continue to support your National and Regional Anti-Doping Organizations. Give them the resources and legislative standing they need to be effective. And please continue to back WADA, not just financially but also in giving us the political and development support we need to oversee the global program. I encourage you also to be strong ambassadors in your nations of our collective mission for doping-free sport. This is how we protect the athletes.

By now you know you are not alone. WADA offers assistance at every turn. We are here for Governments as they build capacity and promote clean sport. Whether at our headquarters in Montreal, Canada, or at any of our four regional offices around the world, my colleagues and I stand ready to help.

In Saudi, throughout the Middle East, all across Asia and the world, we must come together and work collaboratively so that everyone is protected



by this system that puts the athletes at the center and empowers them to be the best they can be on and off the field of play.

Thanks again for the warm welcome I have received here. I urge you all to make the most of this time we have together.

Thank you.