

Note: The Executive Committee meeting minutes are published on WADA's website once they have been approved by the Executive Committee, generally at its subsequent meeting. The minutes are intelligent third-person verbatim transcriptions, i.e. slightly edited for readability.

Minutes of the WADA Executive Committee meeting 11 March 2024, Lausanne, Switzerland

The meeting began at 9.00 a.m. GMT +1.

1. Welcome, roll call and observers

THE CHAIRMAN welcomed the members and observers to the Executive Committee meeting. It was good to see them all in Lausanne. He was pleased to be holding the meeting in that exceptional city. WADA had last held a meeting in Lausanne in January 2020 as far as he could remember, and it had been his first meeting as the president, on the eve of the pandemic. It was good to be back again in completely different circumstances. That edition was also the first in the new format, with WADA holding the first Executive Committee meeting of the year in March prior to the Annual Symposium. It was very good that everybody would have a chance to participate in the following day's symposium and, of course, the gala celebrating 25 years of WADA. It seemed to be a good time in the calendar because everybody was present. The members were all present in person, which was extremely pleasing. There was one new member in 2024, Mr Chris Bishop from New Zealand, who had replaced Ms Anika Wells from Australia. He welcomed Mr Bishop. It was good to have everybody together. Two committee chairpersons would be joining the meeting, either in person or online, to provide some updates and, of course, the WADA management team members would also present at times.

He would circulate the physical roll call around the table for the members to sign and then pass on to their neighbour. The meeting was forecast to last for almost the entire day. The morning would be used to deal with the normal business and the afternoon would be devoted to the continuing work on the next edition of the strategic plan.

The following members attended the meeting: Mr Witold Bańka, President and Chairman of WADA; Ms Yang Yang, Vice-President of WADA; Professor Ugur Erdener, IOC Member, President of World Archery; Mr Jiri Kejval, President, National Olympic Committee, Czech Republic, IOC Member; Mr Nenad Lalovic, Executive Board Member, ASOIF, UWW President, IOC Member; Mr Ingmar De Vos, Council Member, ASOIF, IOC Member, FEI President; Mr Humphrey Kayange Emonyi, IOC Member, representing the IOC Athletes' Commission; Ms Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union, Burkina Faso; Dr Rahul Gupta, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, USA; Dr Koji Murofushi, Commissioner, Japan Sports Agency, Japan; Ms Roxana Maracineanu, France; Mr Chris Bishop, Minister of Sport and Recreation, New Zealand; Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Independent Member, Italy; Ms Venetia Bennett, Independent Member, Australia; Dr Patricia Sangenis, Independent Member, Argentina; Mr Ryan Pini, Chairman of the WADA Athlete Council.

The following committee chairpersons attended the meeting in person or virtually: Ms Kady Kanouté Tounkara, Chair of the WADA Education Committee; Mr Henry Gourdj, Chairman of the WADA Compliance Review Committee.

The following representatives of WADA management attended the meeting in person or virtually: Mr Olivier Niggli, Director General, WADA; Ms Dao Chung, Chief Financial Officer, WADA; Mr

Sébastien Gillot, Director, WADA European Office and Sport Movement Relations; Ms Yaya Yamamoto, Director of the WADA Asia/Oceania Office; Mr Kevin Haynes, Compliance, Rules and Standards Director, WADA; Ms Karine Henrie, Head of Athlete Engagement, WADA; Ms Amanda Hudson, Education Director, WADA; Ms Angela Iannantuono, Human Resources and Corporate Services Director, WADA; Ms Olympia Karavasili, Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships Deputy Director, WADA; Mr Stuart Kemp, Chief Operating Officer, WADA; Mr Francisco León, Director of the WADA Latin America and Caribbean Office; Ms Florence Lefebvre-Rangeon, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, WADA; Ms Catherine MacLean, Communications Director, WADA; Mr Marc-André Matton, Chief Technology Officer, WADA; Mr Tom May, NADO/RADO Relations Director, WADA; Mr Rafal Piechota, Director, Office of the President, WADA; Prof Olivier Rabin, Science and Medicine Senior Director, WADA; Mr Tim Ricketts, Testing Director, WADA; Mr Julien Sieveking, Legal Affairs Director, WADA; Mr Rodney Swigelaar, Director of the WADA Africa Office; Dr Alan Vernec, Chief Medical Officer, WADA; Mr Ross Wenzel, General Counsel, WADA; Ms Shannan Withers, Chief of Staff, WADA; and Mr Gunter Younger, Intelligence and Investigations Director, WADA.

The following observers were present: David Dellea, Michael Cepic, Kum-pyoung Kim, Dagmawit Girmay Berhane, Gaby Ahrens, Hannah Grossenbacher, Michael Vesper, Richard Budgett, James Carr, Julien Attuil, Amandine Carton, Richard Baum, Jocelyn East, Marcos Díaz, Robert Auguste, Yumiko Nakajima, Shin Asakawa, Ken Hashiba, Chika Hirai, Darren Mullaly, Joshua Smith and Nick Paterson.

- **1.1 Disclosures of conflicts of interest**

THE CHAIRMAN asked if any members wished to disclose any conflict of interest. He saw no requests for the floor, so moved on to the next agenda item.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting on 16 November 2023

THE CHAIRMAN referred to the draft minutes from November 2023 which had been circulated among the members as part of the meeting materials shared in mid-February. No member comments had been received relating to the minutes in advance of the meeting and, if there were none that day, he would proceed to approve them. He asked the members if they had any comments or questions regarding the minutes. No comments meant that the minutes from the November meeting were approved. He thanked the members.

DECISION

Minutes of the meeting on 16 November 2023
approved and duly signed.

3. Director General's report

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL welcomed all of the members. He proceeded to give them a few updates from the report they had in their binders. He started by highlighting the fact that two new regional directors had recently been appointed at WADA which did not happen that often in the organization. He wished to introduce them to the members so that they could put a face to a name. For the Asia-Oceania region, Yaya Yamamoto, who came from the Japanese Anti-Doping Agency (JADA), had been appointed. Many of the members would be familiar with Ms Yamamoto, and he was happy to have her at WADA. She had been the education director with JADA. A new director had also been appointed for the Latin American and Caribbean region: Francisco León, who had been with WADA already as head of programme development. Before that, he had worked on NADO-RADO development, also within WADA. And before that, he had been working with the Government of Peru. He was from Peru and was a former pole-vaulter.

He informed the members that WADA had received a request from the International Testing Agency (ITA) regarding the need to appoint a new member to the ITA foundation board. It was WADA's

duty, based on the history of creation of the ITA, to appoint the member. WADA would follow the same protocol that it usually followed for such appointments. There would be two steps. First of all, the Nominations Committee would be asked to play its role. When a candidate was proposed, the Nominations Committee would review the candidate. After the review and with the recommendation, the Nominations Committee would come to the Executive Committee to formally appoint the member on the ITA board. That meant that the Executive Committee members would receive two circulatory votes. The first one would be to formally ask the Nominations Committee to do the job, because it was not directly part of their terms of reference, but that was how WADA had operated the previous time. Once that was completed, the members would receive another circulatory vote to appoint the member, or that might be done at the meeting in September if it was early enough for the ITA. That was coming after the meeting, just so that the members were aware of it.

The third matter, which was very fresh from the previous night, was that there had been an election to replace a member of the National Anti-Doping Organisation (NADO) Expert Advisory Group who had sadly passed away. Another election had had to be conducted within the African region. The final round had taken place the previous night, and WADA had had the results that morning. Sarah Shibutse, who was the CEO of ADAK from Kenya, had been elected. Ms Shibutse would thus join the NADO Expert Advisory Group. He was very happy that that was concluded and that the group was again complete.

He was sure that the members would have questions on some of the items, but he just wanted to highlight that one item in his report was about the Friendship Games. The matter had been talked about in November 2023, as the members would recall, and he just wanted to tell them that the games seemed to be still going ahead. As far as he could understand, there was still an intention for the Russians to organize that multi-sport event, in Russia, apparently, in September 2024. The concern that had been raised at the time remained the same, both in terms of the way it was being done completely outside of the sport framework and the risk of athletes being pushed into an event in which there was absolutely no guarantee of a level playing field and where they would probably be forced to go by their governments. He wanted everybody to be aware that that remained a concern for WADA. He would be happy to address any question that there might be regarding his report.

PROFESSOR ERDENER spoke on behalf of the sport movement to thank the Director General for his really very comprehensive report. As usual, he wanted to say something about the UNESCO relationship, which was really very important. He always concentrated on that matter. Also, he expected a more constructive approach from the public authority friends on that important matter.

MS BENNETT thanked the Director General very much for his extensive report, as usual, and observed that she had been pleased to see noted in his report a mention of the Friendship Games and the Enhanced Games. She also noted his comments in Montreal in relation to the Friendship Games previously. Certainly in Australia, the Enhanced Games were gaining an increasing profile in media reports and (she had spent a bit of time the previous night deep-diving into the website) they presented a sophisticated, if frightening, message. She had three questions related to the Enhanced Games and, finally, a comment. The first was how much time, energy, and proportion of WADA's admittedly limited resources ought to be spent countering the narrative in a proactive way as opposed to a reactive way? For example, commenting on the health risk to athletes, the involvement and vested interests of the anti-aging industry and so-called Big Pharma, and detailing WADA's innovation in science itself. The second question was, noting the mutual interest in athletes' health between WADA and the World Health Organization (and she noted that there was a new partnership with the WHO), had there been any discussions with the WHO about the Enhanced Games or Friendship Games or similar events, and was it worthwhile those two organizations having a joint position? The third question was that the Enhanced Games promotional material relied on a WADA-commissioned study into two events and indicated a higher proportion of athletes had used or admitted to using supplements or performance-enhancing drugs. Was the recitation of that study correct, or was there a nuance in the study outcomes that was not being disclosed by the Enhanced Games and could that be corrected? And finally, as a

comment, with apologies for taking a lot of the floor, she could not help but notice that that meeting's agenda was peppered with a number of issues that could undermine the international anti-doping framework. And, indeed, the Wikipedia entry for the Enhanced Games openly said that the founder of the Enhanced Games wanted to eradicate WADA. She noted that they would be participating in a discussion about the strategic plan that afternoon, and perhaps that was more appropriate for discussing existential matters, such as preserving the principles of fair sport, but it did seem that there might be an increasing risk to WADA's existence and its role in sport that the organization would need to work out how it would address.

DR GUPTA spoke on behalf of the public authorities and thanked the Director General for another comprehensive report. The scope of what the WADA management and staff were accomplishing was quite impressive. He offered some thoughts on just a few of the several important issues that had been addressed. The public authorities were very pleased with the report on the Athletes' Anti-Doping Ombuds, and appreciated the careful way WADA was moving forward in that important effort. The Ombuds was already helping to fill some important gaps in providing useful data to everybody on athletes' top concerns.

The lack of progress in improving the WADA-UNESCO relationship was one that remained a concern. The public authorities agreed that improved collaboration between WADA and UNESCO was quite essential to addressing those complex matters, including the funding formula. And, if it was helpful, One Voice would be pleased to host or participate in a virtual meeting between governments, WADA and the UNESCO bureau.

He really appreciated the comments made about the Pre-Games Taskforce and the progress that had been made to date, and would have further comments on that later.

The public authorities also strongly supported WADA's position, as his colleague had just mentioned, against the Enhanced Games. The public authorities would be pleased to endorse any Executive Committee statement amplifying those concerns, as well as the concerns over the Friendship Games that had been mentioned. He thought it was really important that WADA, the IOC and governments support high integrity and anti-doping programmes when any international games were occurring.

Also, he thanked the Director General very much for his thoughtful response on previous public authorities' requests for assistance in analysing testing data to better inform WADA Foundation Board members on anti-doping organizations around the globe that might need assistance or support. The public authorities were also very supportive of WADA's establishment of the Prevalence Working Group. It was a truism that strong organizations sought the facts and dealt with them directly. He appreciated the fact that that had been taken on.

He also highlighted WADA's very appropriate focus on better informing athlete support personnel, as well as the work that was being done on learning insights in terms of generated insights and changes based on the important exercise that was happening.

Finally, on item 3.1, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the public authorities welcomed the KPI updates and the robust data provided. They did see the low response rate from the Americas region and acknowledged that and they were looking forward to working with WADA to improve that in substantive ways, including the CADE conference that was to be hosted in Washington D.C. the following month. They also very much appreciated and supported the benchmarking project and appreciated the excellent paper on that topic. They also looked forward to seeing the initial publication regarding NADOs in the third quarter of that year.

PROFESSOR ERDENER wanted to say something about the Friendship Games and the Enhanced Games. The Olympic Movement's position was very clear. It was strongly against both and almost all of the international federations had informed their member associations about that position.

Perhaps the matter might be included on the agenda of the next Foundation Board meeting with a view to informing the board about some of the details. He thanked the speaker very much.

MR BISHOP thanked the Director General for the excellent report. New Zealand would like to endorse the comments made by the colleague Ms Bennett in relation to the Friendship Games and the Enhanced Games. He would encourage a proactive stance by WADA against the Enhanced Games in particular and endorsed the questions and comments made by Ms Bennett.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL thanked the speakers very much. He would just address the WADA UNESCO issue first, as it had been raised by Professor Erdener, but also by Dr Gupta. Obviously, there had been an attempt to take a more collaborative approach, as the members could see from the correspondence in the file. That had obviously not been immediately welcome. Hopefully things would improve there, but it was a little disappointing. WADA would see how things evolved. WADA had been told in the letter that it had been the first bureau meeting and that things might be different the next time. WADA would see how it went. If it did not improve, WADA would certainly go back to One Voice with that.

Ms Bennett had asked a number of very good questions to which he did not have all the answers, but, certainly, WADA had proactively issued releases on the Friendship and Enhanced Games with a number of other organizations, and might continue that. The balance was also between giving more publicity than required to those events and providing visibility through the WADA network as opposed to reacting. The WADA communication team had not got much interest from journalists on the matter, at least in that jurisdiction, although perhaps in Australia and New Zealand there had been more. It was not extreme in Canada. WADA was certainly ready to be proactive and insist on the health aspect and all of that and had noted that it was actually very serious. He had not spoken with Prof Rabin, who was in charge of the relationship with the World Health Organization. He did not think that it had been discussed with the WHO, but thought it would be a good idea to do so. He suggested doing that in the future. However, as far as he knew, that had not yet happened.

The prevalence studies that had been mentioned and were being used were studies that had been controversial for a number of reasons, including in particular the methodology. Actually, the researchers within the same team were disagreeing with one another on the methodology applied. The members had heard from Dr Gupta that he was happy with the Prevalence Working Group that had been reformed and was doing some work. The matter had to be dealt with very prudently, because it had been recognized by the international community for a long time that the prevalence percentages in those studies were not reliable, based on the methodology used to conduct the studies.

As to the fact that there were people who wanted to eradicate WADA, he was tempted to say it was not the first time that there were people who wanted to eradicate WADA. He was kind of getting used to it. It was sad, but he did not think that the members should be overly concerned about that kind of initiative. Nevertheless, WADA would remain vigilant, of course, as always. He had the impression that that initiative might be more a matter of publicity for those who were trying to organize it than something that had serious grounds. However, WADA would continue working on that and would talk with the WHO to see how it might be more proactive, and would continue doing it that way.

He thanked Dr Gupta for his comments. Some of them would be dealt with later on in the agenda, for example, regarding the Ombuds item. He did not want to pre-empt all of that. For the Friendship Games, he took note of the position of the public authorities and the sport movement. That was something that the Executive Committee would probably want to address more formally, with a joint press release or something like that, because it was important to restate the general position of the community on the Enhanced Games.

Regarding the Pre-Games Taskforce, Dr Gupta had said that he would discuss it later, although he was not sure under which agenda item. Otherwise, the issue could be addressed there because it was in his report. Was there any preference from Dr Gupta on that one?

DR GUPTA noted that the Executive Committee could definitely talk about it then if the members agreed.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL said that he would just conclude and then the matter could be discussed. On the KPIs, that was coming soon and there would be comments on that. WADA would be at the CADE event and hopefully the region would get more engaged under Dr Gupta's leadership.

He thought he had addressed Mr Bishop's comments when responding to Ms Bennett. If the members wished, they could have the discussion on the Pre-Games Taskforce.

MS MARACINEANU thanked the Director General. She wished to make just one point. She understood what the Director General had said that talking too much about the two events might give them more publicity and more visibility. Nevertheless, she would be interested to know when the Director General thought that it would be necessary for WADA to intervene if athletes declared that they would be participating. Should WADA intervene, should the NADOs intervene, should governments say something, or should WADA limit itself to a general declaration? Like her colleagues, she would support what WADA did. However, should WADA not anticipate what might happen with the athletes and prevent them from participating or suggest that they not participate, given that, in some countries, elite-level athletes were accountable to the NADOs or their governments?

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL thanked Ms Maracineanu for her comment. He thought that it was necessary to distinguish between the two events. There were two different issues. For the Enhanced Games, clearly, the message had been sent out primarily by the International Federations (IFs) that athletes who participated in those games could have sanctions handed down to them under the anti-doping rules of the federation. The idea was that they could dope to participate in the games so, in that case, the sanctions would discourage the athletes from participating. For the Friendship Games, it was different, because Russia appeared to be operating through the governments and not the National Olympic Committees (NOCs); therefore, it was up to the public authority to not send athletes or not respond to the request, but obviously it was more political. It was not necessarily something that would lead to sanctions being handed down to athletes, since there were no rules forbidding them from doing that; it was more a question of the way in which things were organized outside the sporting context, with no applicable anti-doping rules or any guarantee of fair competition, etc., and there the sport movement had communicated its position, which was clearly against those games, and he thought that the IFs would continue to communicate with their members.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked the Director General very much. Before giving the floor to Dr Gupta, he proposed adding to the meeting's press release a strong paragraph regarding those two events, the Friendship Games and the Enhanced Games, and that, together, as public authorities and the sport movement, WADA strongly condemned those initiatives, as a common statement. If the members agreed, and if they allowed him to do it, he thought it would be a good idea to have a common position regarding those two events. Were the members happy with that approach?

DR MUROFUSHI thought that more attention would be given to those events if WADA placed greater focus on them. There were concerns about whether the announcement would be positive or negative. How would a strong statement affect the public? There was some concern, which had been discussed at the meeting of the public authorities the previous day.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Dr Murofushi very much for his comment. That was why he thought that it would be good to put it as a part of the press release, not a separate statement, especially regarding the Enhanced Games. He agreed that the Friendship Games were different to the games that would allow athletes to take prohibited substances. At first glance, WADA had thought that the event was not serious, and that was why not many journalists had actually asked about it because the initiative was so ridiculous. WADA had responded strongly to questions about the possible consequences for athletes. However, WADA could, of course, repeat the response again and be very, very clear.

DR GUPTA wished to make three points on that. Regarding the Pre-Games Taskforce and the expert group's recommendations, once they were issued, who would be charged with assessing the degree to which the recommendations were implemented and would follow-up be necessary to ensure that those additional tests, if they were recommended, were conducted? Put another way, did the ITA or WADA have the ability to instruct (he believed that they did not, but just wanted to get clarification) a NADO or IF to conduct those tests and were there any concerns? Second, as discussed at the previous Executive Committee meeting, who was going to ensure robust communication to athletes and other stakeholders on the final pre-Olympics data on the testing of neutral athletes, sharing, with protection of privacy for individual athletes, both the testing efforts accomplished and if there were any gaps remaining? And, lastly, there had been discussion about the potential for an after-action report. Whether that was conducted through the independent observers or the ITA or whoever, he thought that it was important to have closure from the pre-testing, obviously the Olympic Games and afterwards, so as to be able to continue to improve, see any gaps and understand, especially with the upcoming Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028. That opportunity might be helpful in terms of being able to prepare better for the next event.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL thanked Dr Gupta for his comment. He invited Mr Ricketts, who was part of the supervisory board of the taskforce, to give an explanation on how things were working and probably try to answer all of the questions, after which he would see if anything needed to be added.

MR RICKETTS referred to the first question about who was assessing and following up on any testing gaps. There was a three-step process that had been put in place for that. The first was that the International Testing Agency, the ITA, had a specific team that was working closely with the Pre-Games Expert Group to monitor the testing of those athletes who had qualified or might qualify for Paris. From the ITA's perspective, the test recommendations that had been issued on behalf of the Pre-Games Expert Group were just that: they were recommendations. The second step was that, for any international federation or national anti-doping organization that did not follow up on those test recommendations, taking into account that they had their own programmes and the test recommendations were not to replace their own programme but to support that programme, and following any further follow-up from the ITA with the NADO or the IF, the ITA would inform WADA. There was an agreement on that aspect, and then WADA would follow up directly with the IF or the NADO to determine why they were not conducting the testing and request that they do so. A failure to engage on that aspect could lead to corrective action under WADA's compliance monitoring programme. The third step was that the IOC had testing jurisdiction, which came into force three months before the actual games started, and that meant that that permitted the ITA to test athletes on behalf of the IOC, where any gaps might be identified during that period. So that testing jurisdiction started on 18 April 2024, which was just five weeks away.

It was also important to note that all of those processes and the monitoring systems in place were not new. They had been used successfully as part of the pre-games work leading up to the Tokyo and the Beijing Olympic Games.

In terms of the second question on communicating the outcome of the pre-games work and the publishing of testing information on neutral athletes and any remaining gaps, the process for any gaps that might still exist following the work of the Pre-Games Expert Group and the three-step process mentioned was handed over to another team from the ITA that was managing the anti-doping programme at the Olympic Games. That team would incorporate any targeted testing that might need to happen and include that in the actual games test distribution planning. The athletes would be targeted as soon as they arrived at the athlete village or, if outside the village, they could also be tested. So that was the case for all athletes, not just the neutral athletes. He thought that it was important to also note at that point that there were only 14 neutral athletes who had qualified for the games. That number had been 11 in December, so the size of the delegation for the neutral athletes would be relatively small compared to the full contingency of those countries seen at past games.

Finally, on the communication to athletes and the anti-doping community, WADA and the ITA had also committed to communicate regularly with the athletes and other stakeholders in the lead-up to the Olympic Games, in particular, and given the special attention regarding the participation of neutral athletes from Russia and Belarus, specific sessions had already been organized by the IOC athletes' commission and the WADA Athlete Council to answer any questions athletes might have and address any lingering concerns. The previous week, WADA's Athlete Council had published a Q&A document, which responded to most of the common questions being asked about that.

In terms of the third question about publishing a post-games report, there were two elements to that. The first was that WADA was sending an independent observer team to the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, and that group of anti-doping experts, as part of its overall mission, would report on the pre-games programme that had taken place as one part of its overall review and observations of the anti-doping programme for the Olympic Games. The second was that, as had occurred at past editions of the Olympic Games, the ITA had published a report after the games which included the pre-games work and also information on the anti-doping programme conducted during the games themselves. It was a combined type report for that. He certainly understood that communicating on all that work was important; however, in respecting data privacy requirements, publishing any data on specific groups, sports or countries would be limited to aggregated and anonymized data. He hoped that answered the questions, which reflected that a lot of work had been done to put in place a number of systems and that there were various stakeholders involved, working closely together to ensure that the Olympic Games would be as clean as possible.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Mr Ricketts very much. Were there any other comments or questions? In the absence of any, he thanked the Director General as well for his report.

DECISION

Director General's report noted.

- **3.1 Strategic key performance indicators update – preliminary results**

MS TAILLEFER had the pleasure to present the third edition of the WADA strategic KPIs. Coupled with internal analysis, the annual perception survey had been conducted from November 2023 to January 2024. During that period, response rates had been lower for both the athlete group and the overall stakeholder group, which might indicate a certain survey fatigue in the community and prompted a rethink in terms of the way in which WADA would collect perceptions in the future. However, she wished to point out that the response rate from members of governance bodies had been high and remained high. WADA had had the same number as the previous year, so she wished to take that opportunity to thank the members for participating in the survey. At that point, the plan was to leave both surveys open for longer and present further results during the September Executive Committee meeting. The members should therefore consider the present results as preliminary. The demographics of that year's survey differed from those of previous editions in a few respects. Overall, the Asia and Oceania regions accounted for a higher proportion of respondents compared to the previous year, and the proportion of national-level athlete respondents had been higher, almost double the amount of the previous year, while that of the international-level athletes had been lower, almost half of the amount of the previous year. So, where appropriate, WADA would present the overall results for athletes, as well as the results obtained by isolating international-level athletes for comparability with previous editions.

Regarding the take-aways for that year, as the members would have been able to appreciate in the executive summary shared in the preparation material, more than 50 indicators and three qualitative cases had been documented to provide a full picture of the impact generated in the anti-doping system. To spare the members a full-day presentation on KPIs, she would focus that day on the five strengths and the three areas for improvement she believed were worth discussing. Starting with the strengths, the leadership perception indicators had all improved with a record 88% perception of WADA acting as

a leader in the field of anti-doping. As the members could see with the historical trends that had been compiled over the past three years, thought leadership, trustworthiness, transparency and overall performance had all increased and some of them significantly.

The second strength was the impact of the compliance effort on the non-conformities observed in the assessment of ADOs. She wished to highlight how that indicator allowed WADA to compare Code-compliance questionnaire results between the 2017 deployment and the current deployment started in 2022. While it represented a good measure of comparable compliance progress, it was a cyclical one, meaning that it was possible to compare compliance impact only after every round of Code compliance questionnaire. She also wished to highlight that non-conformity variations could sometimes reflect the delay in ADOs implementing new rules and requirements, so decreasing or increasing findings always needed to be contextualized.

Looking at the results, the previous year's KPIs had presented the results from tier-one and tier-two ADOs, while that edition presented consolidated results after including the tier-three data. As could be seen very quickly from the presentation, the total number of non-conformities had gone down by 19% when looking at the whole group that had been reviewed, and overall, the take-away was that there had been a clear improvement in the compliance of the organizations that had been reviewed thus far.

The next strength she was highlighting was the progress observed from the athletes' perception on WADA's ability to be athlete-centric. While the members were already aware of the overall results presented in the summary, she thought it would be relevant to also present the results when isolating the international-level athletes. As the members could see on the screen, the results were slightly lower. Despite being slightly lower than the overall results, it still showed an improvement from the previous year's overall results.

The fourth strength worth mentioning was the continued growth in the use of education resources by athletes. The members had seen over the past year a stark growth in the number of active learners, completed courses and additional consulted resources. That growth was attributable to the translation of resources in a number of languages, including Arabic, Bahasa Indonesian, Traditional Chinese, Italian and Japanese.

Finally, the last point she wished to highlight was the steady increase in positive perception regarding collaboration. From a governance body member perspective, the perception about the level of collaboration, the level of openness and the level of competencies had been improving for the past three years, and the members could also observe an improvement in the stakeholders' perception of WADA's engagement with the anti-doping movement, both in terms of the level of engagement and the level of collaboration fostered within the community.

When looking back at those five strengths, the members could appreciate the impact being made on the ground by enabling ADOs to reach and maintain excellence in protecting clean sport. The members could also observe the impact of WADA's work on maintaining a strong collaborative anti-doping movement. When looking at areas for improvement, one major area already being discussed was the improvement of WADA's digital assets. As the members could see, user satisfaction with ADAMS remained low. One thing worth mentioning on the results observed regarding ADAMS satisfaction level was that the sample size for that year had been 148 respondents, and 90% of those respondents had been athletes. For comparison, the previous year, there had been 854 respondents and 63% of them had been athletes. So, the vast majority of the respondents for 2024 had been athletes but the sample size had been a lot smaller that year, as the members could observe.

In terms of movement, what the members could see was that there had been a net increase in the neutral zone from respondents. In the future, emphasis would be placed on evaluating the perception of newly developed modules to understand the impact of process improvement on user experience, while recognizing the long-life cycle required for significant improvement on any digital assets. It was worth noting that 76% of users were satisfied with the current technical support offered. One of the

priorities they would tackle in the near future was the revamp of Athlete Central to enable a positive experience for athletes. Even though the negative perceptions had decreased compared to the previous year, as the members could see on the screen, WADA intended to significantly improve that digital asset in the near future.

A second area for improvement was the higher proportion of athletes being concerned about doping, both for their sport and country. While the overall results showed a level of concern that was similar to the first edition, which would go back to 2022, she thought it would be helpful once again to show a fuller picture by presenting the perception results when international-level athlete results were isolated. Looking at it from that angle, she appreciated that a generally lower or similar level of concern had been expressed by international-level athletes compared to the previous year. When looking at the data from a more detailed perspective, it gave a little bit more to the analysis that could be made. One interesting element was the consistency of the indicator that the members could see on the screen, that 87% of respondents trusted that the system enabled clean competition and fair play (the same results as the previous year). Looking at that very indicator, purely from the international-level athlete standpoint, the result was very similar at 86%.

And, finally, she could appreciate that, as a regulator, WADA was still not perceived as being very innovative, despite an improvement on all accounts from all of the attributes that had been assessed for the past three years. As would be discussed that afternoon, she wanted to highlight the attention being focused on the next strategic plan to continue investment in innovation, and particularly to do it in collaboration with partners. Taking a step back and looking at areas for improvement, she understood the importance of providing a positive experience for users when stakeholders and more specifically athletes interacted with WADA. She also understood the need to bring stakeholders in to innovate the way in which anti-doping activities were conducted. That concluded her presentation.

MS MARACINEANU thanked Ms Taillefer very much for her presentation. She had a question on the result concerning the perception of ADAMS by the athletes. She wanted to know if the athletes disagreed with the principle of ADAMS (whereabouts and everything that ADAMS entailed), or whether the problem was more to do with using the software.

Ms Taillefer had not referred to the matter in her presentation; but, in the document, under item 4, collaborate and unite, in governance and diversity, she saw that WADA targeted 40% of women, and she wanted to know the reason for the 10% difference between 40% and 50%.

MR BISHOP thanked Ms Taillefer very much for the update. He recognized the significance of the ADAMS project and the complexities that WADA was working through. He also understood that the partnership with Sword brought with it many new opportunities in that area. He noted that, despite the time and money injected into improving the ADAMS system, the satisfaction rate remained low among users (35%), and would emphasize that that was a project of strategic nature for WADA, and would suggest that improvements to ADAMS be a standalone item on the WADA Executive Committee agenda in the future, including timeline, deliverables and success factors, given how significant it was for WADA.

MR KEJVAL thanked Ms Taillefer very much on behalf of the sport movement for a very nice presentation of the analysis. He had three points. The first one was to address the concern about ADAMS, which remained the number-one complaint from the athletes. In the afternoon, the members would talk about the strategic plan. That was the most important part of it. When talking about ADAMS, he thought also that the focus should be not only on the athletes, but also the entourage, which was a significant part of it, and perhaps it would be necessary to have a look at how to analyse that group and to know who was behind the athletes. The last point was innovation. It was a little bit of a pity. It was in WADA's interest to be innovative and he thought it would be good also to point out some projects, such as dried blood spot (DBS). That was what had been discussed the previous time, and he would be very happy to hear from WADA about those projects and if they were achievable and to

move in that direction, which might save lots of money and would be more sustainable and innovative. He thanked the speaker very much.

DR MUROFUSHI welcomed the details. There was a concern about ADAMS but he did not know if the athletes were complaining about the technical system or not. The question might be asked more specifically next time whether it was a technical issue or not. He was not sure that it was just a technical problem and requested more details. Perhaps next time a survey could be carried out.

MR PINI thought that the discussion on ADAMS, particularly for the athletes and their experience, was quite a good topic. He noted that there was not a large number of respondents, particularly from the athletes in that respect. He would therefore welcome a bit more information on that in particular. The Athlete Council would like to work with the team in developing that to make sure that it was robust and effective for the athletes. He thought that would provide a better outcome for the athletes, so the Athlete Council looked forward to working more closely with the team.

MS TAILLEFER thanked Ms Maracineanu for her question. She believed that it was linked to the question raised by Dr Murofushi. The survey question had asked how satisfied the users were with ADAMS. She agreed with both of the statements that it did not go to the level of detail concerning whether the athletes were satisfied with the duties that they had to perform through the anti-doping system with ADAMS, or whether they were happy with the features and the experience that the technical asset was providing. She took note of the desire of the Executive Committee members to hear the difference in nuance in those two elements, which came under the broad umbrella of satisfaction. She had taken note of the question and comments.

Regarding governance as set out in the executive summary, the reason why the target had been set at 40% and not necessarily 50% initially was that the aim had been to set a target that was achievable in the near future. The targets were revised every year to see if further progress could be made. In answer to the question, the long-term vision would be to go towards 50% and there was no reason why it would be preferable to cap it at 40%. She hoped that answered the question.

With regard to Mr Bishop's comments on the request to make ADAMS a standard item at the Executive Committee, she noted that comment and would suggest that it be considered by Management.

She had also noted the questions considering the entourage in the development of ADAMS in the later stage and regarding innovation too. If the members were comfortable with that suggestion, the discussion could continue regarding the other projects on innovation that could be led in the next strategic plan during the session that afternoon. She hoped it would be possible to discuss that.

Finally, to answer Mr Pini's question regarding the approach to collect the feedback that generated the sample size of 148 respondents, it had been a banner at the top of the ADAMS system and had therefore been entirely voluntary. It was an opt-in version for anyone who would actively want to give feedback to the system. She welcomed the support of the Athlete Council to help improve the approach, both on the questions and the way to reach athletes.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Ms Taillefer and, as there were no other comments or questions, wished to remark that he thought it was obvious that those two areas (ADAMS and, generally speaking, innovation) were for improvement. Of course, ADAMS remained the number-one priority, especially for those years of the signed partnership with Sword. He believed that results regarding the athletes' perception of ADAMS would be achieved very soon, as with the general opinion about WADA. The Executive Committee members would certainly notice that development but generally speaking he thought the results were very encouraging with regard to the brand perception, the fact that athletes perceived WADA as a leader in anti-doping within the anti-doping community, and the development in how the athletes perceived the work of WADA. He thought that was very encouraging for all and very optimistic. But, of course, there was room for improvement and WADA was working very hard on that.

Perhaps the members could be updated on the next steps with Sword and what the next step would be with ADAMS and how the collaboration with Sword worked?

MR KEMP thought that Ms Taillefer had given a good outline of the salient issues on the development and present situation of ADAMS. He would reinforce her point that, whilst the sample size was small, it was necessary to spend some time digging into that, not only to figure out how more feedback could be generated, but also to make sure that the feedback was more granular to enable specific understanding of what issues needed to be addressed. He looked forward to working with Mr Pini and the Athlete Council in particular to figure out the best way of going about that.

With respect to the actual development of ADAMS, he thought it was important to remember that the new partnership with Sword was still in its infancy but it was already yielding very positive results. WADA remained confident that that would help to progress the system tremendously. Close work was being carried out on a day-to-day basis and it had already been agreed with Sword that a priority in 2024 needed to be all of the athlete-facing elements of ADAMS. He recalled that, whilst the sample size of athlete feedback was less than about 200 athletes, somewhere between 20 and 30,000 athletes were using ADAMS on a regular basis at any given time, whilst there were approximately 2,000 anti-doping organization users, so they were the majority of ADAMS users. Therefore, obviously attention had to be paid to their feedback. To that end, in 2024, the work with Sword would focus on the Athlete Central module, the application that athletes used for whereabouts submission, with a view to hopefully expanding the scope of that application so that development could concentrate on the actual needs of athletes. He also thought Dr Murofushi's comment was very relevant to enable an understanding of where the pain points with the application were versus the pain points in the anti-doping system, especially with whereabouts, for example. Close work on the development of the standards and the rules in the coming years would continue to ensure that the technology supported those changes.

DECISION

Strategic key performance indicators update – preliminary results noted.

- **3.2 WADA Africa office – update on new agreement with South Africa**

THE CHAIRMAN noted that, the previous November, the Executive Committee had mandated the WADA management to initiate negotiations with the Republic of South Africa with a view to renewing the hosting agreement of the Africa office. Discussions were under way and Ms Florence Lefebvre-Rangeon would provide a short oral update.

MS LEFEBVRE-RANGEON greeted the members of the Executive Committee and said that she would provide a brief update following the decision that had been made in November to undertake negotiations with the authorities in South Africa to renew the hosting agreement for the office in Cape Town. Those discussions had begun immediately after the Executive Committee meeting in November 2024 and she was pleased to say that the discussions were progressing well and WADA was, at that time, in a second round of exchange of drafts with the authorities in South Africa. As she had mentioned in November, the priority was to secure adequate hosting conditions for the WADA staff, in particular with respect to being able to recruit international staff and making sure that they obtained work permits and visas via a clear and timely procedure. As such, clear provisions to that effect had been added to the drafts. Beyond that, it was necessary to make sure that the WADA staff and the office had sufficient legal protection for the mission to be conducted, which would also be provided for in the draft. It was important to make sure that the staff could travel easily throughout the continent and the whole world, and could host guests and events, etc. She reiterated that the discussion was progressing well and a successful outcome was expected. In terms of timing, the aim was to finalize the process by the end of that quarter. That concluded her update and she remained available for any questions.

MS CESSOUMA thanked Ms Lefebvre-Rangeon for her report on the new developments concerning the agreement with the Republic of South Africa. She congratulated WADA on the work

done. She acknowledged that it was not easy to negotiate a new agreement. She encouraged WADA to continue the work. She noted the importance of commitment on the part of the WADA leadership and the provision of the necessary legal protection and immunity in order to enable the office to do its work. For her part, there would be further opportunities to engage the South African authorities with regard to the merits of the agreement and the need to agree on all of the privileges and immunity. She would work with the authorities on the basis of the national legislation, as there were several bodies that would need to intervene in the process, but it was also important to ensure WADA's commitment. She would see how the African Union could contribute to have an agreement in place as soon as possible to enable the office to work. She apologized for her late arrival at the meeting, but she had been at the African Games in Ghana and had just arrived in Switzerland that morning.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Ms Cessouma for her comments and remarks, and for her support and the support received from the African Union in that regard. He also thanked her for finding time in her busy schedule to attend the meeting that day in Lausanne.

MR KAYANGE EMONYI stated that, as he was from the region, he wanted to raise an important comment about the closure of the laboratory in Africa in Bloemfontein which would have significant implications for athletes and other stakeholders. Athletes relied on accredited laboratories and accurate testing to uphold the anti-doping regulations. They understood the move to suspend the laboratory due to the non-conformities that needed to be addressed in the lead-up to the competition and especially that year which would potentially affect athletes directly, with concerns about any potential delay in timely processing and timely adjudication of the doping cases, as samples would have to be shipped to other accredited laboratories. However, he wanted to appeal for the proactive engagement of all stakeholders and those in the NADOs to offer alternative arrangements to stakeholders to ensure continued compliance with anti-doping protocols. Confidence in the anti-doping system was crucial for all athletes, and they needed to maintain trust in the robustness of the anti-doping system.

PROF RABIN thanked Mr Kayange Emonyi for the comment. First of all, he wanted to say that it was never with pleasure that the accreditation of anti-doping laboratories was suspended or revoked. WADA knew it was a very complex activity. It also showed that WADA carried out very strong monitoring on the quality of the anti-doping laboratories. That was done not only by the WADA management but also by the WADA Laboratory Expert Advisory Group. As had been said before, when there were suspensions decided on by WADA, quality was absolutely paramount to what the laboratories were doing. Recurrent issues that could affect the quality of the reporting by the laboratories could not be accepted. WADA also owed it to the athletes to make sure that the highest quality of analysis was present in all anti-doping laboratories at all times and that it was well monitored by WADA. It was not the first time issues had arisen with the laboratory in Bloemfontein. WADA had tried to support it as best it could, but also needed to make sure that there was proper support for the anti-doping laboratories. The previous day, he had talked to the director of the laboratory who had assured him that he had received very strong messages, not only from the university that was supporting the laboratory, but also by the South African authorities to make sure that some of those issues, some of which were related to investments in the laboratory, were properly addressed. He concluded that it was always necessary to tell major event organizers that a plan B for major events was essential in case something happened. WADA was very conscious of the fact that the decision had been taken shortly before the African Games, but that had also been to protect the quality of analysis during that major event. Again, that had been based on the recommendations by the experts. It was never pleasant; but, ultimately, protection of high-quality analysis and protection of the athletes was also at stake, and WADA would never compromise on that.

MR DE VOS just wanted to ask if there had been or was currently a dialogue ongoing with South Africa because a regional office was being confirmed in a country with a laboratory whose accreditation had just been taken away. At the same time, he also understood that the South African NADO was

appealing its non-compliance before the CAS. He thought that that was not really a good message. Therefore, he would suggest, although perhaps it was already taking place, that a dialogue be held with South Africa to say that it was fine for them to have a regional office, but that they needed to get their things together.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL noted that Ms Lefebvre-Rangeon was in very regular contact on that point with the South African authorities. WADA already had an office in South Africa so it was not disconnected from that country. WADA had contacts there and held discussions with everybody. He thought frankly that discussions had been held with the NOC, with the governments and with other players in South Africa who purported to be influential. Therefore, many channels had been tried to encourage resolution of the other issues to be solved. However, the laboratory was different and was very technical. He thought that those efforts would continue. He asked Ms Lefebvre-Rangeon to confirm his belief that the current CAS procedure, which perhaps also had a different political context, did not really interfere in the discussion about the regional office.

MS LEFEBVRE-RANGEON noted that the discussion was being kept separate but the fact that there was a CAS process did not prevent discussions on the matter of the legislation in South Africa at the same time. WADA was providing support on a daily basis to the authorities in South Africa to help them to adopt new legislation that was in line with the Code, but that did not affect the separate discussion on the hosting of the office. She had thought that the situation would be considered holistically, but at that moment in time, the three processes including the laboratory were being addressed separately.

DECISION

WADA Africa office update noted.

- **3.3 Anti-Doping Organization Benchmarking Project**

THE CHAIRMAN noted that a request had been made for more analysis of anti-doping data to better understand which countries were struggling with their programmes and needed assistance. The ADO Programme Assessment Framework had been in place for over a year, and the new ADO Benchmarking Project gave confidence that it would provide insight into the real status of all ADOs and better inform WADA and the anti-doping community. He gave the floor to Mr León to present it.

MR LEÓN stated that the ADO Benchmarking Project was an initiative that had started in quarter four of 2023 and was exciting, particularly to those who liked data. Before getting into the details of the project, he recalled that WADA's mandate was twofold. On the one hand, it was a regulator that coordinated the development of the rules of the game and oversaw their implementation. On the other, it was an enabler because there were several programmes and projects at the organization that helped ADOs to become effective organizations. The programme development impact area used a data-informed approach that played a coordinating role within that overall scheme. It was important to note that data analytics had become an institutional priority at WADA, and that prioritization would be further pursued with a strengthened approach under the new strategic plan cycle. It would be no news to the Executive Committee, or the anti-doping community for that matter, that WADA had access to an enormous amount of anti-doping data and that, with the right strategy, governance and security mechanisms in place, it should be able to use some of that data to strengthen its decision-making process, WADA's activities and the support it provided to anti-doping organizations. With that in mind, Programme Development and the new Data Analytics Unit were collaborating on several initiatives at that time to assess the performance of ADO programmes, considering multiple sources of information, such as ADAMS and the Code compliance questionnaire.

One of those initiatives was the ADO Programme Assessment Framework, or what he called the ADOPAF. The ADOPAF had been created over a year previously to evaluate ADO programmes using data sources and provide a high-level view of the landscape, identifying gaps, trends and potential risks. First, a dashboard had been created that allowed WADA teams to access data from anti-doping

all in one place. Power BI was used for that and it comprised data related to testing, result management and GDF compliance, to name but a few. In terms of the process, that had been very helpful to identify or better identify needs, update relevant initiatives and strengthen internal coordination. It had then been decided to take that exercise one step further. For many years, statistics about WADA anti-doping programmes had been shared. That was nothing new, for example, number of tests, anti-doping rule violations, etc. But one of the goals at that time was to provide a little more context to that data to be in a better position to say, for example, that those numbers meant x, y or z for that particular group of ADOs based on the characteristics of those ADOs, whereas those numbers meant something else entirely for other types or levels of ADO. That had not been done much before, largely because the resources, tools and expertise to do so had been lacking, but WADA was much better positioned to do that henceforth.

That said, the main purpose of the benchmarking project was to shed some light on what was typical for certain types of indicator, enabling ADOs to understand their indicators in relation to those of similar organizations, identifying areas for improvement, and from there implementing plans to address those gaps. A key aspect of that project was groupings. Since context was essential, groupings had been developed considering criteria that were external to the ADO, but largely to determine the work that ADOs must do. Work had begun with the current tier system in place, but which separated ADOs by type and then by level, taking into account sport performance and risk. Those tiers had then been divided into smaller groups based on three complementary factors: the number of athletes at the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and continental games, and that was for the past four editions, medals and top eight finishers at major events and then gross domestic product per capita of the country. He informed the Executive Committee that testing had also been done on other factors such as population and country size, to see if that had any impact on the final groupings, although the results had not been as promising thus far. The factors that had been selected were those that had produced the better outcomes. In terms of touching pulse with the work being performed, because that was a key element, the initial results had been shared with the NADO Expert Advisory Group (EAG), which had seemed to be, at least at that early stage, pleased with the purpose, the methodology and the groupings that had been initially created.

With regard to what benchmarking looked like in practice, in his view at least, that was where the concept of typical became clearer. He informed the members that the data they could see on the screen came from a group of tier-one NADOs. The three figures gave a view of three specific indicators: annual testing per ADO, budget and number of employees. Other indicators were also being examined and would also be included in the project. Without getting too technical, the lower end of the graphs shown and the upper limits of the shaded area represented the 25th and the 75th percentiles of the distribution. That meant that ADOs that fell within the shaded area were those that performed within the typical ranges for their group. He stressed the very important point that falling, for example, below the typical range did not automatically mean there was a problem with programme execution, as there might be very good reasons to explain existing practices. The situation always had to be analysed in context. However, it did provide an opportunity for ADOs to review the status of their programmes and see if there were any gaps.

Finally, when a set of indicators was published, it would include a list of ADOs so the indicators would be seen as they were on the screen with the list of ADOs at the side. The formatting details had yet to be finalized but what was important there was that each ADO would then need to know its own statistics. For example, the ADO had to know how many tests were being conducted in order to place itself within that specific range in the group. That was for privacy reasons and also because it was not the intention to name and shame ADOs but rather to inform and enable them in the process.

In terms of value, it firstly provided visibility to ADOs on where they were in comparison to others operating in similar environments, which could be helpful in many ways. However, one aspect he thought should not be underestimated was that the type of information would allow the ADOs to reflect on the performance of their programmes and to do what they thought best to strengthen them, alone

or in collaboration with others, including with WADA. The feedback that had been received from stakeholders thus far who had reviewed the project at that stage was that that information was useful to them, as they could use it both to ask their authorities for more resources if that was a need and to update their programmes from a technical perspective, if that was also a need that had been identified.

In terms of next steps, the following day a technical session would be held at the symposium on the topic. Another conversation would also be held with the NADO EAG members which would allow further feedback to be gathered from the stakeholders and the model to be updated as needed. He recalled that the project was in the very early stages. Of course, if further consultation was needed or requested, that could certainly be included in the process if it was necessary and properly justified. Next, the goal would be to publish a report with a first set of indicators on the WADA website sometime in the second or third quarter of that year. Finally, a similar process would then be followed for international federations with the appropriate consultation as well.

As he had said with regard to the overall timeline of the project, it had started late the previous year and would continue at least until quarter one of 2025. The project was divided into two main phases. The first was for NADOs and the second was for international federations. That had been done on purpose considering that the factors surrounding both types of ADOs in that case were completely different. It therefore made sense to focus on one ADO at a time. That concluded his presentation and he would be happy to answer any questions.

DR SANGENIS thanked Mr León for a very interesting presentation. To understand the benchmarking project a bit more, she wanted to understand if the report provided merely information and not evaluation, because that could lead to a punitive measure. Also, she wanted to know if the second phase would entail the education part or the helping part for the ADOs. On a personal note, she welcomed Mr León to the new leadership of the Latin American office, wished him the best on behalf of the whole region, and asked if he would be based in the Montevideo office or elsewhere.

MS MARACINEANU thanked Mr León for the explanation. She had a question regarding the objective that was sought, although she understood that it was for WADA to support the NADOs that needed expertise, support and advice for a stronger anti-doping policy. She drew the colleagues' attention to the fact that, in many countries, the NADOs were not the sole bodies responsible for anti-doping policy; the governments and ministries were also responsible, along with the sport federations. How was WADA going to measure stakeholder engagement, including sometimes the ministry of health in some countries? Would WADA focus on the exchange of data among NADOs, which was essential, as gathering such data could be extremely advantageous in the future for WADA? Nevertheless, CAHAMA wondered about the comprehensive objectives of such benchmarking. She understood that the idea was not to name and shame, but how would that be done so that it remained information and something of interest to the NADOs and the governments and the sport movement? The European public authorities would like to have information on the initial report and for the public authorities to be more involved in the consultation process in order to provide feedback on the operation, which was very interesting. It was important to understand also, since it was something that would enable and encourage the NADOs to ask their governments for more resources, that it would make WADA responsible for providing expertise to the NADOs, once the NADO benchmarking was effective and exhaustive. It was necessary to understand what that would entail for everybody.

MR LEÓN responded to Dr Sangenis's question on whether it was informative only or evaluative. In general terms, the idea of that project was to give more information to anti-doping organizations on what was already available. It was merely to provide a bit more context than ADOs had previously had because numbers had been in absolute terms. With that information, ADOs would henceforth be able to assess themselves against what others were doing that were similar to them, and use that to improve their programmes. It was not evaluative in the sense that the aim was not to put them through a compliance procedure, because it was not based on specific articles of international standards, but rather it focused on using it for ADOs to improve what they were doing.

With regard to whether he would be based in Montevideo or in Montreal, that was a transition year. At that time, he was still wearing the programme development hat in 2024. As the new strategic plan cycle began in 2025, the situation would be assessed and the best steps determined at that stage. In the long term, however, he would be moving to Latin America.

With regard to the other questions about the public authorities, he wished to make a couple of points. The work was being done in phases. Data analytics at WADA was in its infancy stage. WADA was looking at projecting into the future in steps so that it could provide information in a way that was understandable and digestible for the anti-doping community in general. It had started with NADOs and IFs and would then see if in the future other types of benchmarking could be done. It was important to make sure that WADA could do something that was feasible with the information it had and that could directly benefit the anti-doping organizations.

The point regarding no naming and shaming was because the information was being presented in aggregate format at that time. WADA would not be referring to one specific ADO, but was rather presenting the ranges. Each ADO would need to know where it fell because they all understood their own anti-doping programmes. The ADO would know what its budget or number of tests were, and therefore where it fell, and it could use that information to determine if there was a need to discuss whether more resources were needed or if improvements to its anti-doping programmes might be also necessary. He reiterated that context was important and therefore each of the cases had to be analysed individually and no automatic assumptions made that something was wrong from the information presented.

DECISION

Anti-Doping Organization Benchmarking Project
update noted.

- **3.4 Amendments to WADA Investigation Policy**

MR YOUNGER said that he would be very brief. There were only two amendments to the policy. One was the nomenclature of the former whistleblower policy. Some of the content had been changed and approved by the Foundation Board. The second had been triggered by a discussion he had had with WADA's data privacy expert on the fact that the investigative reports published on the WADA websites were sometimes sensitive and should therefore be removed after a certain period of time. One year was deemed to be a reasonable time. Therefore, after one year, the reports would be removed but the headlines and a short summary would remain so that anybody who was interested in the report could request it and it could be shared accordingly.

THE CHAIRMAN asked the Executive Committee for the record if it was in agreement to recommend to the Foundation Board the approval of the amendments to the WADA Investigation Policy.

DECISION

Executive Committee to recommend approval of
amendments to WADA Investigation Policy by the
Foundation Board.

4. Governance

- **4.1 Electoral package for 2025 WADA president and vice-president election**

THE CHAIRMAN wished to inform the members before proceeding with that agenda item that he and Vice-President Yang had both decided to run for another and final term as president and vice-president. They wanted to announce that decision to the Executive Committee that day because they thought it was fair and transparent to inform the members about their next steps. At the end of that

year, they would submit their papers to the Nominations Committee and to WADA officially. They wanted to continue their mission and he thought they still had the energy to work for the anti-doping community and for WADA. They would announce that decision officially and the following day during his opening speech, which, he could assure the members, would be shorter than the previous year.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL noted that the members had in the package in front of them a document that had already been discussed in November 2023. A few comments had been made in November and he thought those comments had been incorporated into the documents. In particular, they concerned clarification as to the financial independence criteria that would apply to all stakeholders. The process was that the document had to be approved by the Foundation Board. Like the previous item, the members were at that time requested to give a recommendation to the Foundation Board, which would be followed by a vote by circulation with the Foundation Board to adopt the documents. Obviously, the election was for 2025; but, if the members looked at the timeline, the process would already start in November 2024 with the nomination of the scrutineer and so on. Therefore, those rules had to be in place in the coming months, and that would be done through a circulatory vote held after a few weeks after that meeting. If there were no further comments on the package, the document would go to the Foundation Board.

PROFESSOR ERDENER believed that the electoral package was necessary for the future of WADA. Secondly, he strongly supported the Chairman's announcement that he would run for another term. He believed that, together with the Vice-President, under the Chairman's really important leadership, there was a very good atmosphere in WADA and very nice harmony within. He thanked the Chairman very much on behalf of his colleagues and friends for his great leadership.

MS BATTAINI-DRAGONI wished to echo the statement made by their friend Professor Erdener, and also very much looked forward to what would happen, but it was clear for her that it was very important to have stability at that time in the organization. There were many programmes and many things going on, some of which were new, and she thought that one important element in the future elections was the question of how to ensure that stability. With all the work under way, she believed that instability or change would perhaps lead to problems. Notwithstanding, she agreed with Professor Erdener's very good statement about the future of the organization.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked the members very much for their comments and support. He thought it gave them a lot of power to work even more strongly for the future of anti-doping.

MS MARACINEANU noted that, regardless of what CAHAMA thought about the President's term of office and the future, it wanted to recommend that the Foundation Board approve the electoral package for the election of the WADA president and vice-president in 2025. She thanked the President and Vice-President for the progress made, and welcomed the fact that the concerns expressed by Europe had been taken into account with regard to the independence of the campaigns. She nevertheless urged WADA to continue to ensure that financial and human resources not be used for the individual campaigns of the various candidates, and approved the electoral package.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Ms Maracineanu very much and noted that it was a very fair point that was perhaps worth clarifying. He wanted to make it clear that, if he or Ms Yang had to travel and hold meetings during that campaign period, it would be in April and May 2025. Of course, he would disclose for scrutiny and officially inform about those meetings and of course he would also assure the members that no activity he or Ms Yang conducted during that campaign period would or might be perceived as an attempt to campaign utilizing WADA resources. Obviously, everything would be very, very transparent. As there were no further comments or questions, he asked for the record if the members were in agreement to recommend to the Foundation Board approval of the electoral package for 2025 WADA president and vice-president election.

DECISION

Executive Committee to recommend to the Foundation Board approval of the electoral package for the 2025 WADA president and vice-president election.

- **4.2 Nominations Committee independent member term renewal**

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL recalled that the item had also been discussed in November 2023. There were no objections to Mr Beck running again, so it was the time to formally reappoint him. There were no other candidates, obviously, because an agreement had been reached in November, so it was a mere formality to appoint Mr Beck to the Nominations Committee for another term.

THE CHAIRMAN asked for the record if the Executive Committee was in agreement to formally reappoint Mr Stewart Beck as an independent member of the WADA Nominations Committee for a three-year term from May 2024 until May 2027.

DECISION

Proposal to reappoint Mr Stewart Beck as an independent member of the WADA Nominations Committee for a three-year term from May 2024 to May 2027 approved.

- **4.3 Risk and Audit Committee update**

MR KEMP said that he would try to be brief. The members of the Executive Committee had a paper in their package with respect to an update on the Risk and Audit Committee (RAC); but, by way of a reminder, the introduction of that new committee was a result of the 2022 governance reforms. Many of the members had been in Shanghai in September 2023 and would recall the approval of the composition of that new committee. It comprised Nathalie Bourque, an independent member, Kashif Farooq, the second independent member, and Jiri Kejval, who was the nominee of that Executive Committee to be represented on the Risk and Audit Committee. He noted that Mr Kejval had previously sat on the Finance and Administration Committee and had had to move from that post. He was pleased to briefly mention that Ms Dagmawit Girmay Berhane, who was present that day, would replace Mr Kejval on the Finance and Administration Committee when it meets in June of that year. The Risk and Audit Committee had met for the first time virtually in December 2023, and the focus of its work had been to establish a work plan to understand what needed to be done, when it needed to be done by, and to acquire the relevant materials to be able to carry out its duties. The second virtual meeting of that committee would take place in May 2024, where the emphasis would be on reviewing the financial statements, as well as appointing the auditor for the next three-year period. Within the work plan, as well as with discussions in the May meeting, not only was the Risk and Audit Committee looking at financial matters related to the agency, but also assessing the ongoing risks that the agency faced, and he anticipated that the RAC would have an increasingly valuable role in that in the future. He believed it even related to some of the work that the Executive Committee would discuss that afternoon. That was all he had to say on the matter that morning and he would be happy to answer any questions.

DECISION

Risk and Audit Committee update noted.

5. Finance

- **5.1 Government/IOC contributions update**

THE CHAIRMAN recalled that an updated version of the document on contributions had been provided on Friday 8 March, given the recent contributions made since 16 February.

MS CHUNG informed the members that she would provide an update on the contributions and noted the update of 8 March. With regard to the remittance from the public authorities, 30.3% had been received, whereas at the end of March of the previous year, that figure had been at 43.1%. Therefore, about 17.4 million US dollars had yet to be received from the public authorities, with the matching amount by the IOC, which took the sum up to about 34.8 million US dollars. In previous years, the status of contributions had usually been reported in the May Executive Committee meeting but, now that it was held in March, the percentage was generally lower since it was still early in the year. Nevertheless, the remittance per region was as followed: Africa and the Americas had reached less than 10% of their total remittance; Asia was at 16%; Europe at 46.6%; and Oceania was usually early so had already reached 100%. In an effort to resolve the previous year's contributions, in mid-December 2023 and again in February 2024, Venezuela had made multiple payments for a total of 660,000 US dollars, clearing 100% of its total pending contributions from 2016 to 2022. It had also fully paid its 2023 contributions in the same year. A considerable amount of effort had been dedicated to Venezuela over the past years regarding its outstanding contributions. To date, no additional contributions had been received in 2024 but, as noted, it was still considered early in the year. WADA was very grateful for all the contributions received from its stakeholders, including the payment of outstanding dues, no matter how delayed they were. That concluded her update on the contributions.

5.1.1 Russian contribution update

MS CHUNG stated that, as of that day, WADA had yet to receive the 2023 annual contributions from the Russian Government, amounting to 1,267,023 US dollars. The Russian Government had made several attempts to remit the payments without success, due to very strict and complicated banking and entities sanctions on Russian banks and the Russian Government. In essence, when funds were transferred from a sanctioned bank in Russia, in most cases they were being intercepted and rejected, blocked or frozen by an intermediate bank before they reached WADA's bank. So, despite WADA being an international organization whose funding was clearly used to support the delivery of anti-doping programmes to the global sport community, the monies were not being released. WADA had asked the Swiss authorities whether it was entitled to receive that money under the current international sanctions and the authorities had confirmed that it was. However, from the bank's perspective, that did not change the issue. A number of other options had been investigated and pursued to facilitate the transfer by both the Russian ministry and WADA. WADA had also consulted with various banks it used outside Switzerland. The most recent attempt had been made by the Russian Government, which had explored the possibility of transferring the funds through a bank that was not subject to sanctions. Discussions were ongoing with WADA's banks to assess the likelihood of that option being possible. WADA would actively continue to explore other alternatives, but remained highly concerned. It was important to note that the annual contributions of close to 1.3 million US dollars equated to a total sum of 2.5 million US dollars owed to WADA for 2023, given that the Russian contribution was matched dollar for dollar by the IOC. If that issue continued and could not be resolved, there was a risk of not receiving the 2024 contributions as well, to the sum of 1.3 million US dollars from Russia. With the IOC matching, that would go up to 2.6 or 2.7 million US dollars. Hence, the total sum at stake considering 2023 and 2024 together, in addition to the IOC matching, was at that time 5.2 million US dollars. Further updates on any progress would be provided but, in the absence of any positive news, the public authorities might be called upon more broadly to intervene and assist. That concluded the update on that item.

MR KEJVAL thanked Ms Chung very much for the report, which he understood was a serious situation. WADA had an interest in and was looking at possibilities on how to obtain the contributions from Russia. The situation entailed some risk for WADA given that the figure amounted to over 5 million US dollars with the dollar-for-dollar matching by the IOC. That had strong implications on the budget for at least 2024. He asked when a decision would be taken on changing the 2024 budget if there was the risk of not securing the 5 million US dollars and what solution would be provided for that situation.

MS MARACINEANU welcomed the efforts undertaken to discuss with Russia the payment of its debt; nevertheless, she sought further clarification on what was meant by involving the states in the discussion. She thought that it would be difficult to make the governments go back on their decision to impose banking sanctions, and they did not wish to do so. She hoped that a solution would be found so that Russia could pay what it owed.

DR GUPTA wanted to focus on the ability to be able to receive those monies and was sure that other international organizations were experiencing a similar process with Russia. He encouraged WADA to try to receive the monies as quickly as possible through the available mechanisms, as that would avoid having to think about other alternatives.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL wished to reply firstly to Mr Kejval that it was an absolutely valid question. If it were assumed that the issue was merely technical, hopefully it could be solved in the coming months, as a number of actions were under way, including with the bank, in order to try to find a channel for that money. As Ms Chung had mentioned, the Swiss authorities had already confirmed that the sanction did not apply to WADA and so it was legally entitled to receive that money. It was henceforth a matter of finding a channel that was possible, either through the banking system or other channels. But, as Dr Gupta had remarked, other international organizations were receiving money from Russia and it was also known that litigation was going on with Russia, for example, in Switzerland, and he was sure that the lawyers were getting paid. It was clear that there were people receiving money from Russia, but WADA had not yet found exactly how to do it. Work was ongoing on that. If it had not been solved by the time of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting, a discussion would be held on the situation and with regard to the implications on the revised budget for the rest of the year. The deadline was June, when the Finance and Administration Committee would next meet.

In response to what Ms Maracineanu had said, WADA would do everything it could to find the way through and he hoped that Europe would be supportive of the current situation. It could clearly result in an imbalance in the global contribution from Europe, but he remained optimistic and hoped that the matter would be solved and the money received. He thought that, certainly, by the time of the next Executive Committee meeting, the picture would be much clearer and by June it would be known what the plan B was if necessary. In response to Dr Gupta, he reiterated that work would continue on that matter and would hopefully be successful.

DECISION

Government/IOC contributions update noted.

- **5.2 Timelines/approach for 2024 approval of 2023 year-end accounts and quarterly account updates**

MS CHUNG noted that that was perhaps a lighter topic. Due to several contributing factors, namely the change in date of the Executive Committee and Foundation Board meetings, as well as the new Risk and Audit Committee, the RAC, which had been onboarded late the previous year, and had a role to play in reviewing the audited financial statements of the fiscal year 2023, in order to confirm they were presented as per IFRS and reflected a fair, balanced and accurate position of the financial statements. Lastly, as per Swiss regulations, it was compulsory to complete an annual management report, which included the filing of the approved financial statements and the annual activity report with the Swiss authorities by 30 June. Prior to 2023, it had been possible to utilize the May meetings and have the Foundation Board approve the statements in real time; however, due to all the changes that she had just mentioned, it was necessary to further adapt the process for that year and future years in order to successfully fulfil the required obligations. The documents given to the members included a detailed timeline, a table listing the actions and touch-points with the various members of the RAC, the Executive Committee and the Foundation Board that would take place from 16 May to 21 June. Once the RAC had endorsed the audited financial statements, the Executive Committee and Foundation Board members would come in and the Executive Committee members would have two-and-a-half

weeks to review and then for the Foundation Board to approve the financial statements and the annual activity report. She therefore invited the members to refer to the timetable, which was quite self-explanatory and set out all of the dates for future reference.

As for the quarterly accounts, the same applied due to the change in meeting dates and the reasons mentioned previously. It was not possible to include on the agenda the report of the first quarter at the Executive Committee meeting in March, as opposed to prior years, when the quarterly accounts had been included at each meeting. Therefore, with the current change, Q1 and Q2 year-to-date June statements would be submitted by the Finance Department to the RAC to review around July and August, and the same year-to-date accounts, once reviewed, would go into the September Executive Committee meeting, and for the Q3 accounts, which were the year-to-date September statement, once the RAC had reviewed them, around October, November, the same statement would go to the meeting in December. Once again, all the tables with the details were in the members' documents.

She noted lastly that the agency's annual financial statements did not have to be endorsed by WADA's Finance and Administration Committee. Such a role and responsibilities were granted to the RAC in that regard in accordance with their terms of reference. As had been the case in the past, the annual financial statements would continue to be shared with the Finance and Administration Committee to support its work as described in their revised terms of reference. It was anticipated that the statements audited but not yet approved by the Foundation Board would be shared with the Finance and Administration Committee at its annual meeting in June and the quarterly accounts would also be shared in due time. That concluded her report.

DECISION

Timelines/approach for 2024 approval of 2023 year-end accounts and quarterly account updates noted.

6. World Anti-Doping Programme

- 6.1 Annex B4 – International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories

MR HAYNES recalled that he would provide an update on Annex B4 of the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories. At the previous Executive Committee meeting in November, the ISCCS had been presented for approval. Some of the public authorities had raised concerns with Annex B4 at that meeting which sought to clarify and limit government representatives covered under the definition of representatives as used in the ISCCS consequences of non-compliance. As a result, the ISCCS had been approved apart from annex B4. Following the meeting, the WADA Director General had written to the public authorities via the European representative to seek further feedback on the content of annex B4 and, as of that day, as no alternative had been provided, he was requesting approval that annex B4 come into effect with the rest of the revised ISCCS on 1 April 2024. That concluded his very short intervention and he would be happy to answer any questions.

MR DE VOS stated that, after the very interesting conversations held at the previous Executive Committee meeting, the members would not be surprised that, on behalf of the sport movement, he fully supported the approval of the reviewed but unchanged annex B4.

MS MARACINEANU stated that, at the previous meeting, she had requested the possibility to provide additional observations in relation to the list. It had not been possible to do so, which was why she was in favour of adopting annex B4 as proposed, but she noted that Europe would like to be able to continue the discussion in the framework of the Code revision, when it would be possible to submit individual contributions.

THE CHAIRMAN asked the Executive Committee members whether they were in agreement to approve Annex B4 of the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories coming into effect on 1 April 2024, alongside the revisions to the standard already approved in November 2023.

DECISION

Annex B4 of the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories approved.

- **6.2 Interim update following stakeholder engagement and first drafting phases**

MR HAYNES was pleased to provide an interim report on the World Anti-Doping Code and International Standards Update Project, in particular on activities undertaken since the November meeting of the Foundation Board, where he had also provided a brief update. At the end of 2023, the stakeholder engagement phase had closed, with very encouraging feedback provided on the concepts presented for each document. The quality of submissions had been very high from the 1,500+ comments received, and although the stakeholders had certainly supported the update approach based on fine-tuning and continual improvement of the framework, approximately 10% of comments received had referred to areas not covered by the concepts. In mid-January, the comments received had been published on the WADA website and the first drafting phase launched at the same time. He was pleased to say that all drafting teams had either already met in person or were planning to meet on the fringes of the symposium that week, and therefore, the work was on track to issue the first draft of documents in mid-May for stakeholder consultation. Alongside those first drafts would be a summary of modifications to help stakeholders to clearly understand the amendments made. To further support signatures and stakeholders, the Code Implementation Support Programme would also be ramped up in early 2025, once it was clear what the changes to the documents were likely to be. The purpose of the CISP, as it was called, was to identify those changes and provide resources such as templates, webinars and guidelines to stakeholders to help them implement all the changes into their anti-doping programmes. That had certainly been successful for the 2021 Code implementation process. The purpose of starting it earlier for that Code cycle was to provide further help and assistance to the relevant stakeholders in implementing the new policies and procedures. That concluded his update on the Code project.

MR DE VOS firstly thanked Mr Haynes very much for the update and wished to use the update following stakeholder engagement to make some comments on behalf of the sport movement. First of all, it was important to focus not only on athletes, but also on their support personnel, the so-called 'entourage', and the networks that facilitated access to prohibited substances. Regarding substantial assistance, the sport movement supported WADA assessing opportunities to increase access to valuable intelligence and to establish stronger networks between law enforcement and anti-doping organizations. Another point was regarding the 'uncorrectable' non-conformities, which remained a strong concern for the sport movement and, in its opinion, should not be included in the Code update. The WADA resources should focus on the cases that required urgent action and that were correctable. The sport movement believed that WADA should not use resources for procedures that would lead to nothing, or would even lead to the sanctioning of anti-doping organizations that implemented good governance and addressed their non-conformities. In other words, sanctioning a body that did the right thing was, in its view, not correct. Regarding the International Standard on Code Compliance by Signatories, the sport movement reiterated the need to continue working on additional consequences so that the system better targeted those who were responsible for the non-conformities, rather than others who were not responsible, to bear the consequences. With those comments, the sport movement of course looked forward to the continuation of the process of stakeholder consultation and the drafting, and to seeing the first drafts.

DR SANGENIS wanted to support the points raised by Mr De Vos, especially regarding the importance of the entourage. So many cases had been declared by previous world champions or elite athletes that it was necessary to look more profoundly at what was happening with the entourage, especially with minors. She had been very shocked, as she thought most of the members had been, to read the Operation Refuge report. She reiterated her support for what Mr De Vos had said and

deemed it very important that WADA focus on the entourage and the support personnel and looked forward to the outcome of the investigation.

MS YANG thought that WADA and the ITA and IOC had been working on the matter of the entourage. She asked Mr Kemp to provide an update if possible.

MR KEMP commented that the work being done with the entourage was definitely a priority of the Athlete Engagement space. As the members might recall, Athlete Engagement was actually essentially a department of WADA. In cooperation with the Athlete Council, it had tried to prioritize the work being carried out in that area. As Ms Yang had mentioned, WADA was cooperating with the ITA as well as the IOC to try and find some ways and means of ensuring that it could do a better job of educating the entourage to make sure that they were supporting athletes in a positive way. But, when that was not the case, of course it was necessary to make sure they were following the rules and WADA could have an impact in that regard. To that end, in addition to the work being done with the ITA and the IOC, the Code Drafting Team and the relevant standards drafting teams were looking carefully at what else they could be doing in that space. He would continue to update the Executive Committee on that matter in the future.

MR HAYNES thanked the speaker for those comments and duly noted that they were part of the substantive changes proposed and part of the concepts. The reinforcement of those areas would certainly be passed on to the relevant drafting teams for consideration during that phase. He assured the members that they would be included.

DECISION

Stakeholder engagement interim update noted.

7. Athletes

- 7.1 Athlete Ombuds project assessment

THE CHAIRMAN recalled that the item was for decision and noted that, from his and WADA's perspective, the athlete-focused project was very important. It had been initiated by the former Athlete Committee and was a long-awaited project, so he hoped the Executive Committee could support the idea.

MS HENRIE said that she was pleased to be there to discuss the Athletes' Anti-Doping Ombuds Programme. While the members would have received the detailed assessment paper and the detailed update paper, she wanted to take a few minutes to achieve three objectives. Firstly, she hoped to briefly reiterate the decisions being requested that day. Secondly, she would present a few key points regarding the background and the proposed approach for that programme. Thirdly, she sought the members' feedback and would answer any questions on the Ombuds programme.

The decision to be taken that day was really for the Executive Committee to agree to extending the current Ombudsperson's contract until 31 December 2024, and secondly to determine or to agree to determine the long-term status of the Ombuds programme at the September 2024 meeting. To provide a brief background, the Ombuds programme was a project requested by athletes for athletes. It had been conceived and proposed by WADA's former Athlete Committee, currently the Athlete Council, to support athletes in helping them navigate the sometimes very complex anti-doping system. While the first Ombuds had been appointed in March 2023, a significant portion of the Ombuds' time at the beginning of her mandate had been spent on establishing the administrative framework for the office, developing and implementing an IT system and, to a lesser degree, informing the anti-doping community of the availability of that service within the European anti-doping community, as it was a pilot project based in Europe. Although the Ombuds had begun work in March 2023, the required processes, IT platforms and systems had been launched on 5 September 2023. Therefore, the Ombuds services really had begun for athletes and any individuals seeking the Ombuds assistance in September 2023, approximately six months previously. Although the programme was already deemed

to have proven a success, as stated in the Ombuds update, the platform had been accessible for only six months, so more time was requested to really demonstrate the impact of that service and outline a robust plan moving forward. If the Executive Committee supported the decisions requested that day, the approach proposed for 2024 would be, firstly, to expand the reach of the Ombuds. Although there were no restrictions on who had access to the Ombuds, the aim was to be able to present it as a global versus a European ombuds. In line with that, it was proposed to increase promotion and awareness-raising of the WADA Ombuds service outside Europe and to work with several partners to do so. WADA had recently partnered with the IOC and Athlete365, who she wished to thank for promoting a great article about the Ombuds on the Athlete365 platform.

The goal was to continue to have what she had called a global Ombuds, which, in addition to helping athletes and their entourage with their questions, would also develop a strategy to leverage, collaborate and support existing entities, working with organizations that wanted to develop their own programme at their own cost. While that required a needs assessment or a mapping exercise to be conducted in order to understand the needs and existing gap, she wanted to make it clear that neither WADA nor the current Ombuds were suggesting the creation of sub-offices, or sub-branches of the global Ombuds. A global ombuds was deemed necessary since many areas of the world did not have access to such a service, while developing a strategy, best practices and guidelines that would help fill the gaps around the world. As stated in the document, she thought there were very successful areas within WADA that had a similar approach, one within the Education Department, which developed several resources available to the whole anti-doping community within the ADEL platform, but also supported the development of other resources by other anti-doping agencies. Similarly, the Intelligence and Investigations Department had developed a global SpeakUp platform available to any individual across the world, while also supporting the development of similar units or platforms with other anti-doping organizations. Those were two successful models for inspiration to be considered.

In order to support that work and to provide sound guidance with the development and the direction of the strategy, the proposal would be to reconstitute the Ombuds Advisory Committee, as was explained in the terms of reference of the current Ombuds.

She wished lastly to make one point on the budget. The budget for 2024 had already been approved by the Executive Committee and was therefore in place. Part of the strategy would be to explore private funding opportunities as much as possible, to continue to support the work of the Ombuds. Despite what could be seen as a small window of operation, there had been significant uptake of the Ombuds service within that six-month period, again considering the limited promotion of the service. Specifically, the Ombuds had received over 60 enquiries from over 27 countries and on such diverse topics as needing help with a positive case, needing help understanding whereabouts failures and needing help with therapeutic use exemption applications. If the number of enquiries and global uptake did not provide sufficient initial data to support the decision requested, she would also highlight that several recent meeting outcomes, publications and assessments clearly pointed to a real need for that programme. Specifically, at the previous Athlete Council meeting in November, there had been a clear request for that programme to continue and to be expanded. The principles outlined in the Athletes' Anti-Doping Rights Act clearly highlighted the importance of equal opportunity and the right to legal aid. The preliminary findings of the Initial Human Rights Impact Assessment outlined the need for access to justice, and finally, the recent outcomes of Operation Refuge noted that there was a need for athletes, but in particular minors and their entourage, to have greater assistance in navigating the anti-doping system. She hoped the Executive Committee agreed that the Ombuds programme filled those gaps.

Finally, as an organization whose strategic priority was to be athlete-centred and athlete-focused, supporting the continuation of the Ombuds programme offered a meaningful, athlete-centred and athlete-focused initiative, which had already demonstrated a significant return on a fairly modest investment.

In conclusion, she reiterated that, if those two decisions were accepted that day, between that time and September 2024, the proposal would be that the work of the Ombuds continue as per the current terms of reference, that promotion and awareness-raising outside Europe be stepped up, that the Ombuds Advisory Committee be reconstituted and support the development and the direction of the strategy, and that the plan for the long-term strategy be presented to the Executive Committee at the September meeting. She was grateful for the opportunity to make that presentation and would be happy to answer any questions.

MR PINI thanked Ms Henrie for her detailed report and was very encouraged by the progress being made. He wanted to thank Ms Anna Thorstenson for driving the Ombuds project, which had a direct and positive impact on athletes' rights in anti-doping. The Athlete Council agreed with the suggestion made to move forward with the programme and would welcome that agreement by the Executive Committee members. The current perception survey results indicated positive strengths in the perception of WADA's ability to be athlete-centred. The Ombuds project certainly had made its contribution in that feedback. The Ombuds project had priorities to ensure that athletes' rights were protected, so it had achieved significant results in the previous year or six months, as Ms Henrie had said. A global ombuds programme would not only help to strengthen global efficiencies, covering the awareness of athletes' rights in anti-doping, but also to strengthen the WADA strategic priority of being athlete-centred, which looked set to continue. That could also strengthen the perception of athletes within NADOs and anti-doping organizations of protecting athletes' rights in existing national or regional entities or within federations. The feedback from the Asia Oceania Conference, which the Japan Anti-Doping Agency had covered in December, was feedback from ADOs that had been questioning how to raise awareness and improve athletes' perceptions of NADOs, which he thought that project could assist with globally. Although athletes' perception was important, he highlighted that the Ombuds project was a very real project to focus on athletes' rights.

He also took that opportunity to thank the anti-doping organizations that had promoted it through all available means and conveyed particular thanks to the IOC through the Athlete365 platform for its promotion of the project, which reached thousands of athletes and entourage members. Such support from the IOC was excellent.

MR BISHOP thanked the speaker very much for the report. New Zealand supported the development of the global Ombuds programme and would like to see an evaluation before the September meeting to make a well-informed, evidence-based decision on an extension. He supported the recommendations that had been put to the Executive Committee on the extension of the contract until the end of the year but wanted to make a full, comprehensive decision in September based on an evidence-based evaluation report.

DR GUPTA reiterated his early comment that the public authorities were very encouraged by the progress of the Ombuds and the useful data generated from that work. They too supported a final report in September. However, it was widely understood that an adverse analytical finding was highly consequential and an upsetting moment in any athlete's life, especially if exposure had been accidental. At those difficult times, athletes needed and deserved a neutral source of expert information and advice, which the Ombuds could offer. Although new, the Ombuds clearly already provided the necessary support to those who had questions or concerns and might not have previously felt they had an appropriate, confidential way to seek information and advice. The intent of fostering more national and regional ombuds was a prudent way forward. He congratulated Ms Thorstenson and WADA on the progress made to date. He looked forward to seeing how that important initiative developed over time.

He concluded that the public authorities wanted to reiterate how important it was that the Ombuds had full independence to do her work as effectively as possible.

MR LALOVIC thanked Ms Henrie for a very comprehensive report and presentation. On behalf of the sport movement, he firstly wanted to say that he fully supported the extension of Ms Thorstenson's

mandate until the end of 2024. The proposed approach for the future programme responded fully to the comments that had been made in the past by the sport movement. If he was not mistaken, the Ombuds Advisory Committee had previously been called the Ombuds Working Group. He strongly encouraged the process and possibilities for athletes to have those services available outside of Europe, which was often a problem. He supported the guidance to be provided to the Ombuds Advisory Committee in view of identifying opportunities to work on national capacity without that becoming a compliance requirement, and fully supported the whole plan and programme.

DR SANGENIS thanked the speaker for her report. She would strongly support the global spread of the Ombuds and the Ombuds project because it was not so comprehensive everywhere. Not everyone in the world fully knew what the Ombuds or Ombuds project meant. She requested further information on what was meant by private opportunities.

MS BENNETT thanked Ms Henrie for her comprehensive report. She echoed the comments of people around the table that day and at previous meetings in relation to the necessity and benefits of the Ombuds project. She also echoed the comments by Dr Gupta and Mr Bishop as to an independent or evaluative report, and requested that, if such a report were to be prepared for the September meeting, which of course would be before the pilot programme would end, if the decision were made to extend it, perhaps steps might be taken to identify private partners for cost sharing before that time, and to provide that information in a report.

On behalf of CAHAMA, MS MARACINEANU wanted to support the proposal to extend Ms Thorstenson's contract until 31 December 2024. Her role, which was to ensure that athletes' human rights were respected, was extremely important, both in terms of when an athlete had doped and a sanction had been handed down and implemented, and ensuring their return to competition or to their life, but above all, given all the efforts undertaken to ensure that WADA's work could be athlete-centred, she hoped that the Ombuds and the Athlete Council and all of the athletes present in the WADA governance could engage actively and use the strategic plan to really engage athletes so that they could exercise their right to compete in clean and fair sport, because that would be a way of ensuring that the fight against doping in sport could go even further. It was necessary to ensure the accountability of athletes, on an international, national or regional level, who were those most concerned, so that they could convey, together with WADA, that message of the right to fair and clean sport. She hoped, in order to ensure the feasibility of the long-term status of the Ombuds programme, that at the Executive Committee meeting in September 2024, it would be possible to ensure the full independence of the person occupying the post, as the work that the Ombuds did was extremely necessary.

DR MUROFUSHI echoed Dr Gupta's comments. Coming from Asia, he appreciated Ms Thorstenson's great work and fully supported the extension. However, he also believed that, as it was still a pilot study, it was necessary to evaluate and scrutinize it carefully. He hoped there would be a chance to see the final version of the report. Progress had been made in Europe and, like other speakers, he wanted to see it expanded worldwide. It was necessary to do further analysis and examine the final report. With those comments he welcomed the initiative.

MR DE VOS thanked the speaker very much. He supported the proposed decision and had two minor questions. Firstly, he wanted to know more about the budgetary impact of the extension and reinstatement of the Ombuds Advisory Committee. Secondly, was there any risk in extending it from a European to a global perspective at that time? It of course made sense; however, there might be another request in September for an extension in order to understand the full impact on a global scale.

MS HENRIE thanked all the members for their comments and feedback. Before answering the questions, she had taken due note of the evaluation to be presented to the Executive Committee, ensuring the full independence of the office, and the support for reconstituting the Ombuds Advisory Committee which was appreciated. Indeed, the intention was not to make the Ombuds a compliance requirement at all. With regard to the question on private funding, the goal was to be able to work with the WADA private funding unit to explore any partners who might be interested in working together and

supporting the Ombuds programme so that it might at some point be removed from WADA's budget, or to strike a balance between the two. Hence, the goal would be to explore those opportunities from a private funding and private partner perspective.

On the budget implication for the Ombuds Advisory Committee, according to the current terms of reference, the committee was not a formal WADA committee. Therefore, joining the committee would be on a voluntary basis and would not have any impact on WADA's budget.

Regarding the risk of expanding the project, the needs and demands of the programme would be closely monitored and the Executive Committee would of course be informed of any challenges or issues with that.

THE CHAIRMAN asked the Executive Committee for the record if it was in agreement with extending Ms Thorstenson's contract until 31 December 2024 and determining the long-term status of the Ombuds programme at its September meeting.

DECISION

Ombuds update noted and proposal to extend Ms Thorstenson's contract until 31 December 2024 approved.

8. Compliance

- 8.1 Compliance Review Committee Chairman's update

MR GOURDJI said that he would provide a summary of the main activities undertaken by the Compliance Review Committee since the November 2023 Executive Committee meeting as reflected in item 8.1 before moving on to item 8.2 on non-compliance cases for decision. The Compliance Review Committee continued to be quite busy in its interactions with WADA, providing independent advice and guidance on compliance matters. Since the previous November, it had been continuously kept abreast of WADA's monitoring activities and the support provided to signatories. The Compliance Review Committee had recommended reinstatement of the following non-compliant signatories following a referral from the WADA management based on the completion of outstanding non-conformities: the Olympic Council of Asia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea NADO and the Gabon NADO. In all three cases, the Compliance Review Committee had put forward a recommendation to the Executive Committee, which had agreed, and the signatories had since been reinstated.

The Compliance Review Committee had held its first meeting of 2024 virtually on 8 and 9 February to discuss new cases of non-compliance, which were detailed in agenda item 8.2 under non-compliance cases, which he would address forthwith.

Firstly, he wished to summarize the compliance activities that had specifically been reviewed by the committee at its previous meeting. It had addressed signatories currently on the watch list, the current non-compliant signatories, signatories whose cases had been referred to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and, with respect to the Ukraine NADO, as the members were well aware, that NADO had a compliance procedure that had been suspended by force majeure. The Compliance Review Committee continued to receive updates on the operations of the NADO and testing activities on Ukrainian athletes who were still competing.

With regard to guidance and oversight, the Compliance Review Committee continuously provided the guidance and oversight of WADA's compliance programme with satisfaction. Its last meeting had focused on the 2023 Compliance Annual Report as well as the Compliance Taskforce activities. Further details were available in his written report under item 8.1.

DECISION

Compliance Review Committee Chairman's update noted.

- **8.2 Non-compliance cases**

MR GOURDJI informed the members that, with regard to the non-compliance cases referred to under agenda item 8.2, they would note from the documentation that the report had been revised and the latest version was dated 8 March. The document had been updated for the purpose of closing two compliance procedures, for the Indonesia NADO and the International Ski Mountaineering Federation, the ISMF. That was always good to see and he believed it was a reflection that the mechanism WADA had put in place to actively engage and work with signatories continuously was working quite well and that the signatories had been very active up to the time of that meeting. He had prepared a one-page slide to explain those cases. The new non-compliance cases could be categorized into two groups. There were the legislation cases. The Compliance Review Committee would be recommending that the Vietnam NADO be put on the watch list and given automatic non-compliance after four months if the non-conformity was not resolved. Then there were the Code compliance questionnaire cases for the Bahamas, Cameroon, Peru and Sri Lanka NADOs and World Wheelchair Rugby. With regard to the rule-related case, paragraph two referred to the WADA management and the Compliance Review Committee position on cases related to legislation. The Compliance Review Committee had felt it was important to reiterate the reasoning as to why WADA needed to monitor legislation, since the relevant obligation for NADOs was to ensure implementation of a legal system in line with the Code as set out in article 20.5.2. Furthermore, regarding paragraph two, there was currently an annex 1 to the report that provided details on how the approach had been followed and was consistently followed for the case in question that day. He thought it was worth mentioning that many countries had successfully been assisted in adopting legislation without the need for compliance procedures. The Director General's report presented that morning provided further details on compliance. He believed that WADA was currently supporting 40 countries with the development of new or amended legislation. Since the May 2023 meeting, 12 countries had adopted legislation into their national legal system that was in line with the Code. With that context, there was one rule-related case to address that day. Section A, on page five of the document, concerned the new case related to the implementation of the Code in the legal system of the Vietnam NADO. The details of that case were found in A1. Essentially, that NADO had made good progress. Draft amendments in line with the Code had been finalized, including providing a calendar for adoption within four months of the Executive Committee meeting. Therefore, the Compliance Review Committee recommended that the Executive Committee put the Vietnam NADO on the watch list with the consequences and conditions of reinstatement as reflected in section A, on pages five and six of the document, to be applied at the expiry of the four-month deadline if the non-conformity was still pending.

With reference to the Code compliance questionnaire cases, the details of those cases were found in section B starting on page eight of the report. B1 was the Bahamas case and, when it had come before the Compliance Review Committee, the Bahamas NADO had not yet implemented three critical corrective actions, all in the area of testing. B2, also on page eight, addressed the Cameroon NADO. At the time of the Compliance Review Committee meeting the previous February, and to date, the Cameroon NADO had not yet implemented four critical corrective actions in the areas of testing and resources. B3, which was found on page nine, addressed the Peru NADO, which had not yet implemented three critical corrective actions in the areas of testing and resources. B4 was also on page nine and referred to the Sri Lanka NADO, which had not yet implemented two critical corrective actions in the area of testing. Finally, B5, which was on page ten, addressed World Wheelchair Rugby (WWR), where one critical corrective action had yet to be addressed in the area of testing. The Compliance Review Committee had discussed those five cases and decided to recommend to the Executive Committee to watchlist all four NADOs and the WWR, with the consequences and conditions

of reinstatement as reflected on pages 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the document, to be applied at the expiry of the four-month deadline if the non-conformities were still pending. In all of the aforementioned cases related to the NADOs, the Compliance Review Committee was proposing additional consequences after 12 months if the reinstatement conditions had not been met. Those additional consequences would be that the state flag would not be flown at specific events. That approach was slightly different from previous consequences that had been proposed. The Compliance Review Committee was constantly reviewing its own processes for non-compliance cases to ensure that proportionality was also applied. The decisions for the Executive Committee were summarized in paragraph one of the paper, which was on page two and summarized on that one-page slide. That concluded the Compliance Review Committee's presentation to the committee and he would be pleased to answer any questions the members might have.

MS MARACINEANU thanked Mr Gourджи for all of the information provided. Nevertheless, CAHAMA wished to request further details on the reasons, in particular regarding the matters linked to legislation which had resulted in the non-conformity decision and the related consequences, to enable the Executive Committee to make an informed decision. Nevertheless, she approved the proposed list of decisions regarding the non-conformities and the watch list, and recalled Europe's position, which had already been stated previously and which was that WADA's legislative assessment should be limited to the implementation of the Code and the drafting of legislation was the sole prerogative of the governments.

MR DE VOS welcomed the update. On behalf of the sport movement, he congratulated the Compliance Review Committee on the reviewed approach. He supported the watch list for four months, and also the possibility of more severe sanctions involving the national flag coming into effect only after one year, which would hopefully allow those organizations to resolve and correct their non-compliance and amend, where necessary, national legislation. He thanked the Compliance Review Committee for that reviewed approach, which was very important for the sport movement. Having said that, he also welcomed the efforts made to exhaust all opportunities for dialogue with the NADOs to resolve the matters before initiating a non-compliance procedure, which should, as agreed, be a last-resort option. However, the sport movement remained very concerned by the increased number of NADOs disputing their compliance cases at the level of the Court of Arbitration for Sport. But, to be very clear, the sport movement supported the proposed decisions by the Compliance Review Committee.

DR GUPTA noted that there had been a robust discussion on the issue of sanctioning NADOs for the failure of governments to take legislative action at the previous Executive Committee meeting. He believed that, after that dialogue and the very good report that had been presented that day, there seemed to be an emerging consensus that he wished to briefly describe in the hope that some agreement could be reached that day. All stakeholders believed that sanctions on NADOs should be and were already a last resort to ensure the necessary legislative changes. Governments understood that WADA was not going to give up the ability to sanction NADOs, since it was an enforcement tool that WADA found at times to be necessary. They also understood that, although governments were not signatories to the World Anti-Doping Code and were not legally required to enact legislation, when government legislation was inconsistent with the Code, it presented real challenges that had to be addressed. Nonetheless, sanctioning NADOs had cascading consequences not just on them, but also on athletes, international federations and the National Olympic Committees. Therefore, efforts to further reduce the need for sanctions should be explored, as his colleague had mentioned. With that goal in mind, public authorities would request either putting down in writing the existing protocols for communicating with governments on legislative gaps or working through the Code review process. Hopefully, when the Executive Committee members reviewed the protocol, they would be able to offer some constructive suggestions. Dealing with those types of legislative issues was part of the daily work in government. In addition, Executive Committee members such as the USA would welcome the chance to use the influence to help governments in their region better understand the urgency of taking appropriate action when a compliance issue arose. It was also recognized that there would surely be

some variation amongst Executive Committee members on how they approached their regional colleagues. But, as regional leaders, it was appropriate that they were notified of a potential sanction so that they could be helpful. His question was whether the WADA management and other Executive Committee colleagues would accept the concept of the WADA staff either working through producing a confidential written protocol or working through Code rule changes that could be shared and feedback provided back to WADA.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked the members for their comments and questions and noted that he had heard their concerns about the process. He thought there was room for development and improvement on WADA's side, particularly regarding the approach to compliance cases related to the implementation of the Code into the legal framework. He proposed coming back to the Executive Committee in September with further clarifications and solutions to be discussed. He thought it was a good time for that, given the ongoing discussions on updating the Code and standards. A small internal working group could also be established to work on improving internal processes and examining other ways to improve the existing compliance procedures. He thought that September would be a good time to discuss what could be changed and what could be improved in that process to strengthen the whole procedure.

MR GOURDJI thanked the members for their interventions, especially about the legislation cases. He had taken them on board and would ensure that the next report gave further details on legislation cases. He thought the report did provide quite a bit of background and reminders on all the additional activities that WADA had been undertaking with the signatories on legislation matters and all the good progress that many of the signatories had achieved to make the necessary amendments. Hence, the process was working. He had also taken on board the fact that it took time to amend signatories' laws, depending on how they were structured. That was why more proportionality was being sought in the proposals for consequences, as was evident in the latest recommendations. The only thing that the Compliance Review Committee was doing was applying what was currently approved in the standards. If there were any future amendments on how legislation matters were being monitored, of course, the same approach would be applied.

MR DE VOS thanked Dr Gupta for his intervention and for the offer of support to the NADOs of his region. He thought that such support should be extended to all regions to help them to improve their compliance and anti-doping systems. He believed it was also a good point, since there was apparently no longer any discussion, which was good, about the fact that WADA needed to monitor legislation, because that was essential to have a fair, consistent anti-doping system and to provide a level playing field to all athletes. He welcomed that approach and proposed working together to make the necessary improvements within the NADOs and governing bodies.

THE CHAIRMAN asked the Executive Committee members for the record if, in relation to the implementation of the Code into the legal framework, they were in agreement with the following decisions: to instruct WADA to provide a four-month watch list starting from 11 March 2024 to correct the outstanding non-conformities, failing which WADA would automatically send the following signatory a formal notice alleging non-compliance and proposing the consequences and the reinstatement conditions recommended by the Compliance Review Committee, detailed in the Executive Committee paper: Vietnam NADO.

In relation to the implementation of anti-doping programmes monitored through the Code compliance questionnaire, he asked if they were in agreement with the following decisions: to instruct WADA to provide a four-month watch list starting from 11 March 2024 to correct the outstanding non-conformities, failing which WADA would automatically send the following signatories a formal notice alleging non-compliance and proposing the consequences and reinstatement conditions recommended by the Compliance Review Committee, detailed in the Executive Committee paper: Bahamas NADO, Cameroon NADO, Peru NADO, Sri Lanka NADO and World Wheelchair Rugby.

DECISION

Proposed non-compliance cases approved.

9. Education

- 9.1 Education Committee Chair update

MS KANOUTÉ thanked the esteemed members for the opportunity to report on the activities of the Education Committee following very exciting recent weeks at the Global Education Conference. The report would be articulated around four items: Education Committee meetings, the Social Science Research Grant Programme (for which she was honoured to be supported by the WADA Education Director, Ms Amanda Hudson, who would provide more details about that), the Global Education Conference and future meetings. There had been a perfect opportunity to hold the first in-person meeting of the committee during the series of events in preparation for the Global Conference in Cannes. It had also provided the opportunity to hold a joint meeting with the Social Science Research Expert Advisory Group, which had also been in attendance. That interaction had enabled them as experts on the practitioner side to have good discussions with the Social Science Research Expert Advisory Group members on the grant programme and to ask them questions about the review process, as well as to provide clear recommendations on the applications put forward. It had therefore been an excellent opportunity that she welcomed. Furthermore, as stated in the papers in the binders, the committee had been able to meet the following day to discuss some key points regarding the Code review process, as well as to assess ADO capability and look into digital learning and how that was advancing with the ADEL programme.

One very important tool within the setup of the committee was the work plan that was put together, which also enabled new members to be engaged and to select the programmes to which they could bring their expertise. Three new members had been received on the committee. Ms Dora Hegyi was the athlete representative from Hungary, who would be also the link to the Athlete Council, which the Education Committee hoped to have constructive cooperation with in the future. Ms Vanessa Hobkirk was an IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations) representative from World Cricket and from India. Ms Alexis Cooper was from Sports Integrity Australia. They had brought fresh new eyes and a great layer to the expertise needed on the committee.

Social science comprised the backbone of what the committee wanted to do with programmes that were informed by a scientific background. She deemed it very important that, in partnership with the Côte d'Azur University in Nice, in a merger of that very important conference, the Social Science Research Symposium had been held for the first time. Some 60 researchers from all around the globe had attended that first meeting to exchange on some of the challenges that might be encountered, but also to discuss mentorship opportunities and the future of social science research immediately prior to the start of the conference.

Another matter of importance was the Social Science Research Grant Programme, which Ms Hudson would provide more details and a proposal on after her intervention. To explain the process, the initiative was led by the WADA Education Department, where Mr Tony Cunningham was leading the new research strategy. It was then taken to the Education Committee after going through the Social Science Review Panel, and would be proposed to the Executive Committee for approval at the end of that intervention.

With regard to the Global Education Conference, she warmly thanked the WADA President for his engagement and enthusiasm, and the Director General, Mr Olivier Niggli, for his presence and meaningful involvement throughout the conference. She also thanked the Vice-President, Ms Yang, who had not been able to attend but was very supportive of all matters related to education. She thanked France for staging an amazing venue, and even rolling out the red carpet of the Cannes Film

Festival for the event. She believed it to be paramount in the education world to have seen over 400 participants from all over the globe, including NADOs, IFs, governments, athletes, RADOs (Regional Anti-Doping Organizations), researchers and suppliers taking an active part in those discussions and debates. Athletes had also played a key role as test cases in an exercise called 'empathy mapping'. The team had cultivated its collective creativity and she was happy to share some of the key outcomes from the conference. There was collective commitment to a global clean sport education agenda, which she would like to report on in more detail at the following Executive Committee meeting in September 2024 as it had been adopted by the community after the conference. Diversity had been embraced and collective wisdom harnessed to develop comprehensive and culturally-appropriate education. The conference had recognized the International Standard for Education, the fact that it worked and that the education community was strong and would continue to evolve. Joint advocacy would continue for increased human and financial resources and to encourage governments to engage and embrace education. The complexity of the anti-doping system was acknowledged, in addition to its contribution to athletes' vulnerability. Action was taken through policy and practices to better protect minors in sport. There was an education mandate for athlete support personnel, given their influence, with a commitment to making evidence-based, informed decision-making in anti-doping, and an anti-doping prevention mindset to enable the purpose of education to be about clean sport behaviours. Those were some of the key outcomes that had been outlined after the conference.

For future meetings of the Education Committee, it would hold a virtual meeting at the end of April 2024. The International Standard for Education drafting team was also anticipating an in-person meeting at the end of March. She thanked the Executive Committee members and would answer any questions they had before Ms Hudson provided more details about the Social Science Research Grant Programme.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Ms Kanouté very much for her report and, before opening the floor, wished to thank her and the Education Committee and of course the WADA team led by Ms Hudson, for an excellent conference and agenda. It had been a huge pleasure to participate and hear all those discussions. With more than 400 participants, it had been the biggest number in the history of the conference. After Sydney, there had been a very successful and very well-organized event. He warmly thanked the AFLD (Agence française de lutte contre le dopage) and the French Government for hosting it in Cannes. Many important people had been involved to make sure that the event and conference would be very successful.

DR MUROFUSHI thanked the speaker and expressed full support and congratulations. He thought it was a very important move that education was together with science. He believed the future would be far more science-based.

MS BATTAINI-DRAGONI noted that she had a splendid recollection of what had happened in Australia two years previously. She was very impressed by the increasing interest and growing numbers of attendees. It was very good news and she wanted to convey her compliments and thanks for everything that had been done in the previous weeks and during the conference.

MS YANG thanked Ms Kanouté and Ms Hudson for their excellent work. Unfortunately, she had not been able to attend, but she had heard all of the very good feedback from the conference. She reiterated her congratulations. She had one question about protecting minors, since it was widely known that education was an important tool for prevention. Minors were quite young and were not yet elite, but how could they be reached to be educated before they got into problems? She would like to hear if any concrete ideas had come out of the conference on that.

MS CESSOUMA also wished to congratulate Ms Kanouté on her work and the presentation. That year, the African Union had been working on the theme of education. Might it be possible to cooperate on a university level? There were also athletes at the Pan African University. How might it be possible to broaden the scope of WADA's activities, also regarding the implementation of the Year of Education? She reiterated her congratulations.

DR GUPTA joined his colleagues on behalf of the public authorities in welcoming the excellent work completed on the new round of social science research projects. The new research would further refine and improve current efforts. He was grateful for the excellent work done by the WADA Education Committee members and their very talented chair in sorting through the many proposals offered and selecting the very best.

MS KANOUTÉ was very grateful for all the comments, on behalf of the education community. She thought that the Chairman had also highlighted that education was the future of anti-doping. That future looked bright given the engagement and support that had been received after such an event. She noted that a host was also being sought for the following event, especially in regions where it had not been held to date which included the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East. She thanked the Executive Committee for all its support and eventual interventions to help. She also thanked the Vice-President for her question on the protection of minor athletes, which had already emerged as a key topic in the discussions. One of the key outcomes of the Sydney edition had been the goal of providing education from the playground to the podium and acknowledging every profile of athlete who could be educated. Her dream was to see that process through the life journey of athletes being implemented at all stages. There was currently a new profile of athletes, not only minors, coming onto the anti-doping landscape who had not previously been focused on, such as e-sport participants. The profile of such athletes was currently being examined with a view to setting up a working group to consider the approach to take. The Education Committee highly recommended the protection of minor athletes and education of minor athletes, but also of athlete support personnel throughout the process, as per the standard. She thought that would also be highlighted. The committee wanted to seek and see minor athletes in the Code review process as a key priority pool of athletes to be educated in the future, and for that to also be recommended strongly within the Code, because currently it referred only to elite athletes. She did not know if Ms Hudson wanted to add anything.

She also thanked Ms Cessouma for her support. She thought that collaboration with universities was very important. Prior discussions had been held on having clean sport universities that could collaborate on education efforts and the Education Committee was looking for expressions of interest. If the African Union could provide support and perhaps a list of potential universities or scholars interested in really supporting those efforts in education, she would be highly appreciative.

DECISION

Education Committee Chair update noted.

- **9.2 Social science research projects**

MS HUDSON began by clarifying that she would leave the technical documents to her science colleagues, but would talk about the research, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. She would merely give some brief highlights about the Social Science Research Grant Programme as part of the formalities that day. More detail could be found in the documentation. She thanked the members for their patience with the documentation, which had been submitted late. As Ms Kanouté had explained, the meeting had been held only two weeks previously so it had been a bit of a rush to circulate the paperwork. In addition, she had to own up that it had been her fault for including the draft outcomes from the GEC in that paper which had subsequently been changed.

She would briefly explain for the new members around the table some of the changes that had been made to the grant programme, as seen on the screen. A comprehensive review had been performed in 2020, in line with the social science research strategy that the Executive Committee had approved in the same year. They were simple changes that had a big impact. One was to ensure that the research priorities and interests were actually communicated. Three tiers of investment had been included that better accommodated the stage of development of the academic community, looking at research in that field at the time. Concentrated efforts had been made to better communicate the process, provide better guidance and run webinars in each region to explain the opportunities that

could be afforded to NADOs and the academic community through the grant programme. Those changes had thus far had a positive impact. In particular, there had been a target to ensure that there was a redistribution of funding beyond Europe. The target had been 35% and she thought that the figure currently stood at about 50%. Therefore, more of that grant money was going to countries interested in research beyond Europe. As a reminder, she showed the members the process. She had to admit that the process had had to be truncated slightly that time because of the movement of that meeting. In practice, what that really meant was that the expression of interest (EOI) phase had been dropped. Typically, people would be encouraged to submit an expression of interest in order to be able to assess quite quickly whether it was worth the time and money and investment to go through the full application process. But, due to time, that had been dropped. The highest number of applications to the grant programme had been received that year: 90 in total with 24 for tiers one and two, comprising the higher investment projects, and 44 for tier three. When applications were received, they were put through a rigorous peer review process. The tier-one and tier-two projects had between two and three peer reviews. Those were independent of the team and indeed the expert advisory group. A third review was usually requested when there was a significant divergence of opinion between the first two peer reviewers. There had been 184 peer reviews of the tier-three applications, and those had been done by members of the expert advisory group because those projects were typically smaller in nature, very specific to a country or a specific population. The recommendations were discussed at the Social Science Research Expert Advisory Group. As Ms Kanouté had mentioned, a joint discussion was then held with the Education Committee before finally presenting recommendations for funding to the Executive Committee.

Following an administrative review, conducted by her team, 90 applications had been reduced to 68 that had been deemed viable and worthy of review. There were six applications that her team was requesting be directly funded. The details of those projects, which she would shortly summarize, were in the folders. The Education Committee was also looking to work with five other applicants to combine some of their research ideas and utilize the WADA research package, which already included validated questionnaires. She would speak a bit more about that, but it seemed to be a good efficiency mechanism to make sure that the resources were used wisely. The total requested thus far was 334,000 US dollars, with a note regarding the tier-one project, which she would explain.

Regarding the distribution of that funding, in terms of tier-one projects, they were the larger projects: multinational, multi-sport projects. The project in question met all of the requirements on research team credibility, relevance and quality of the methodology being used. The original request had been for 133,000 US dollars. The expert advisory group had recommended that WADA fund the first phase. That was a novel research project looking at the protective factors (the term used in the literature) to describe things that could protect athletes from the vulnerabilities of doping. That one was looking at the psychological aspects, in particular mindfulness. Research had already shown that psychological strength or coping mechanisms, i.e. the ability to have strong mental health, were protective factors that could help protect athletes against the vulnerability to dope. It was across ten countries in the PAN-RADO region. She was very happy to see research being conducted in that region, which did not happen very often. A report would be posted on that pilot phase prior to examining the remaining funding.

There were two tier-two projects. The Jackman project also considered protective factors. She supposed that it would build on the work that WADA had carried out a couple of years previously with help from the sport movement on athlete vulnerabilities. It would look specifically at three sports, and it had been co-designed with NADOs and sports at national level. It would look to gain some insight into the sports of boxing, rugby and weightlifting, considering what the vulnerabilities might look like in those sports and identifying any education considerations. The NADO community had conveyed, and she had experienced it herself, that in some sports like boxing, literacy levels and understanding could sometimes be different. Therefore, different educational approaches might be needed to reach those athletes.

Of particular interest was a project by Dunn, from Australia, which had arisen in discussion with the expert advisory group and the Education Committee. It looked specifically at performance- and image-enhancing drug use in women's sport. She thought the Executive Committee members could all accept and see the growth in women's sport in recent years and indeed its commercialization. It would therefore be good to start looking at what risks might exist because of those two factors.

Lastly, there were three tier-three projects. Those were the smaller, more localized projects. There was investment in understanding the factors and elements that needed to go into a Paralympic disciplined education framework. It was also pleasing to see an independent evaluation of a NADO's education programme. The third project by Ho from Asia was looking specifically at the talented athlete level and looking at the sporting and non-sporting influences that might make athletes vulnerable to doping. The significance of that for Singapore was that the university system was where all of the talented athletes were being funnelled, so it would be interesting to see the outcomes on that.

Lastly, there were five studies that had been received from those countries which had merit. The recommendation, however, was that, rather than use the money for them to develop their own questionnaires, WADA already had validated questionnaires that it had invested in, so the recommendation was to bring those five applicants together, provide some support and invest in them as a group to conduct their research using the validated global tools that existed. That would enable more efficiency with resources, but also yield comparative data because everybody would be using the same validated mechanisms.

That was the proposal for those five additional projects and, if the Chairman agreed, she would hand back to Ms Kanouté to formally ask for approval.

MS KANOUTÉ thanked the Chairman and thanked Ms Hudson for a very insightful and detailed review of the process. If the Chairman was in agreement, she would formally request approval for funding for the projects that had just been presented.

THE CHAIRMAN opened the floor for any comments or questions on that item.

DR MUROFUSHI appreciated the explanation. He thought the social science research was very important. He knew about performance enhancement but had also recently learned that image-enhancement drugs were an issue and raising awareness about that issue was very important. Also, there were increasing numbers of women in sport. He thought that the research would illustrate future problems to predict and drugs to analyse for medical side effects but also the social and life impact. He thought that the evidence would back up the value of anti-doping. He believed that the research projects selected were very appropriate.

MS BENNETT thanked Ms Hudson for her comprehensive analysis of the social science research grants. She had noted in the budget for that year that the amount put aside for grants was 500,000 US dollars and that the allocation was significantly less than that, and not very much less than that if the secondary funding for the tier-one project was taken into account. She also noted that only effectively 11 out of 90 applications had been granted funding. If the secondary component of the funding for the tier-one project was not applied, was there scope to fund other applications, or was the reason why a limited number had been selected because of the quality of the applications received? Perhaps that was tied to the EOI process being dropped?

THE CHAIRMAN gave the floor to Ms Hudson to respond, as there were no further comments or questions.

MS HUDSON replied that, on the study on performance- and image-enhancing drug use in women's sport, part of that study would seek to interview female athletes who had been found guilty of doping to understand the factors that had led to that and whether it had been performance- or image-enhancing. She hoped that would be successful. It was always difficult to recruit past dopers, but hopefully it would be very insightful.

She thanked the members for their questions, which were very valid. In full transparency, she thought that what had been realized that year was that the known friends, so to speak, in the academic community who were experienced in anti-doping research in the social science field were busy doing the research. There had been a significant ability to fund real research with the change in the structure and having that tier-one investment. There had been a noticeable drop in quality that year, largely because there were new and upcoming early career researchers who were excited about taking on research in that field. Discussions had been held before with the Education Committee and the expert advisory group on what mechanisms could be put in place to support those early career researchers to continue their efforts. Interestingly, that tier-one project was a resubmission from the previous year on which feedback had been provided. The Education Committee did take the time to provide feedback on studies that were of merit, and shared the peer reviews upon request. It was therefore very pleasing when researchers took that feedback on board and came back for a second time. The Education Committee would take that away and address the mentoring programmes that had been experienced before. Regional seminars had been held. There was some possibility of an Asia and Africa research seminar taking place, which would actively be supported. The committee was very invested in helping those early career researchers to understand the level of quality and the scrutiny they would be under.

Regarding the budget question, it would be necessary to wait and see upon phase one of that tier-one project whether it would move forward. She hoped it would. If not, other projects would then be looked at. There were some in reserve that would be revisited. Equally, as Ms Kanouté had said, following the Global Education Conference, a concerted effort had been made to shift the outcome of education programmes to be about behaviour rather than knowledge gain. More research was probably required into those clean sport behaviours that were needed to ensure athletes could navigate the complexity of the system. Other applicants would therefore be considered first. If none was deemed suitable, some research might be commissioned that would help the development of the international standard and education programmes.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Ms Hudson very much. As there were no other questions or comments, he believed it was time to approve the recommendation of the WADA Education Committee for the social science research grants. He asked the members if they were in agreement with approving the recommendation. He thanked the speaker very much.

DECISION

Proposed social science research projects approved.

10. Legal

- 10.1 RUSADA update

MR WENZEL noted that he would try to keep things as brief as possible, also because the report was full and not much had changed with respect to November. As usual, he would deal with that in three sections. The first was the reinstatement of RUSADA under the CAS award. The second was the case relating to the non-conformity of the sports legislation. The third was Operation LIMS. He would also say a few words about the Valieva case, because the decision had been delivered at the end of January.

First of all, regarding the reinstatement under the CAS award, the situation was the same as in November and that was that the strong recommendation of the Compliance Review Committee, but also of members of this committee and endorsed by WADA, including the Intelligence and Investigations Department, was that in order to assess the reinstatement criteria, an in-person visit to RUSADA's premises would be necessary, and it was considered that that was not possible for reasons that he would not spell out again at that time. Hence, the situation was the same as in November.

With respect to the federal legislation case, that had just been filed with the CAS shortly before the meeting in November and was still pending before the CAS. Frankly, it had not advanced on the substance a great deal. There had been a number of procedural wranglings with respect to arbitrator appointments, intervening parties and the like, but that case was still pending and advancing, albeit not at breakneck speed.

With respect to the LIMS matter, the members would have seen the table at the end of the paper, section four. He would not go into great detail, save than to mention that the number of sanctions that had arisen from Operation LIMS continued to increase. The number stated in that table was 237 in February of that year. It had risen to 250 in the previous month or so. Those cases continued to be resolved and many of them with sanctions.

On the Valieva case, as he had mentioned, the decision had been handed down by the Court of Arbitration for Sport at the end of January. He was pleased to say that WADA's appeal, as well as the ISU's (International Skating Union's) appeal, had been substantially upheld. Ms Valieva was subject to a period of ineligibility of four years, backdated to the date of the violation in December 2021. The CAS had endorsed almost all of WADA's arguments with respect to the insufficiency of the contamination scenario that had been put forward on behalf of Ms Valieva and had even gone as far as to say that there was a coherent basis for the argument that WADA had made, namely that, bearing in mind the evolving nature of that explanation and the lack of evidence of it, it was one that had been put together rather than corresponding to any sort of factual reality. So that case had been resolved. Since then, the athlete had appealed to the Swiss Federal Tribunal. That case had been filed only very recently and, as had been made public, there were also a number of cases and appeals arising out of the decision of the ISU, the international federation, to re-jig the medal table, as it were, for the Olympic competition. Those cases remained pending as well, and WADA was not a party to those. It was not directly involved.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked the speaker very much and saw no comments or questions.

DECISION

RUSADA update noted.

- **10.2 Consequences due to voluntary withdrawal of funding**

MR WENZEL stated that on that item he was happy to say that, after what had been a long process, a concrete proposal had been put forward, as described in the papers. He understood that the proposal from the working group had the support of both sides of the table, not as a final document to adopt, but to approve the moving forward with the next phase, which would be drafting and further consultation and discussions within the discussion group. The plan, as had been mentioned, was to work on the drafting and propose something for adoption at the latest by the Foundation Board meeting in December of that year in Saudi Arabia. He would not go through the detail of the paper unless asked to, but would perhaps just draw attention to the two tables that were set out in that paper. The first table dealt with the consequences that would be potentially imposed in the event of a voluntary withdrawal of funding. What had perhaps changed from previous papers was that they were graded into three different categories: low, moderate and high. The idea would be that they would be indeed imposed in a graded fashion, so that only if payment was still outstanding after a certain period of time would one move from the low to the moderate and from the moderate to the high consequences. Again, all of those consequences were set out in the table, so he would not read through them. He would just draw attention to the process, which was set out in the table at the end of section C in the paper. It started very much with a dialogue phase in which WADA and the various authorities sought to procure payment before anything moved on. Only if that was not successful would they move forward to recommendations of consequences and, indeed, as he had mentioned, the consequences themselves, if adopted by the Executive Committee, would then be imposed in a graded fashion. As with the rationale of compliance, he thought that the consequences would be seen very much as a last resort,

particularly the severe consequences, which would come at the end of the process. That was all he had to say but he would be happy to answer questions.

MR DE VOS appreciated the update. It was good to see that it was moving forward. It was not the easiest topic. It was very delicate. He had one question regarding the sanctioning under the label 'high', which referred to government officials or governments not being able to attend or to bid for world championships and Olympic and Paralympic Games. He was wondering because there were not that many Olympic and Paralympic Games, every two years with not that many candidates, and world championships were also not that intensive. So had consideration been given, and it was just a question, to extend it also to regional and continental games and championships?

MR WENZEL thought that that sort of detail was something that would need to be bottomed out in the next phase. What had been referred to thus far was major events such as world championships and Olympic and Paralympic Games. He certainly saw no reason why it could not be extended to regional and continental events, which was the case for some of the compliance consequences. There was certainly no issue with that on his part and he would be very happy to take that to the discussion group during the next phase, assuming it was approved by the Executive Committee.

MS MARACINEANU spoke on behalf of Europe to say that Europe understood the concerns that WADA had related to its financial sustainability. Nevertheless, Europe wondered about the validity of the legal base all of the consequences, particularly the financial consequences, and wished to request a legal opinion on WADA's power to unilaterally impose such consequences on the governments in the event of non-payment of voluntary contributions. The request had already been made, although she understood that there was no issue related to the payment of dues by the sport movement. Nevertheless, Europe asked that the document or the working group responsible for the matter look into the consequences to be envisaged for the governments and at the same time for the sport movement and agreed that the discussion group could continue its work, on the condition that it focus on the consequences with the public authorities around the table.

DR GUPTA wanted to second that point on behalf of the public authorities. He thought that it was very important to ensure a legal review of the effectiveness of holding true to executing the idea through legal grounds as well.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Dr Gupta. He understood the concerns about imposing the financial consequences on the governments as additional consequences. For the sake of the discussion and taking into account the time and efficiency of the process and as that issue had been under discussion for a long time, he thought it was time to adopt it. His proposal was that the additional payments should be dropped and not considered for the next phase of that project. He was referring to the additional financial consequences which could be imposed on the governments. The proposal was to withdraw that part of that document. He gave the floor back to Mr Wenzel if he wanted to add something.

MR WENZEL thought with respect to the legal opinion that it was clear that, as the concept was drafted, it would be necessary to consult with external counsel, in particular Swiss counsel, with respect to the legalities. He understood that it was a delicate area. Of course, there was no contract between WADA and the governments directly for the payment of those amounts. If a government chose not to pay (again, WADA was dealing with situations that were in the control of the government), he supposed what he would say was that it chose to forego some of the benefits that came along with that payment. He had noted the comments that the Chairman had just made with respect to the additional amounts; but, of course, there would be further legal scrutiny, including external counsel, which would look at that as it worked through the next phase.

With respect to Ms Maracineanu's comment about the consequences or the proposal applying also to the sport movement, all he would say was that, at the current time there were consequences, albeit only one, attached to non-payment by a government. There was nothing in the statutes with respect to non-payment by the sport movement. In addition, the issue that in practice had arisen was not on the sport movement side and not by coincidence, he thought, but because of course, due to the nature of

the payment, it was fragmented on the public authority side; it was in bloc on the sport movement side. He noted that it had not been on the table thus far and did not feature in the paper or the proposal. He believed the aim was to deal with what WADA saw as a concrete risk based on past experience. That risk was not perceived at the same time on the sport movement side, and indeed it was not currently dealt with in the existing legal framework in the statutes, which applied only to payments by the governments.

MS MARACINEANU understood what Mr Wenzel was saying when he explained that WADA did not deal with both issues at the same time because the sport movement payment was made in bloc by the IOC and the head of state decided on behalf of the country to make the payment. She suggested a broader idea regarding what voluntary non-payment by a state meant. It might be that there was a lack of confidence in WADA and, although it was not exactly the same thing, although it was comparable, she referred to what had been discussed at the start of the meeting, the organization by other sporting bodies of events that truly jeopardized the confidence of the public in WADA, such as the Friendship Games and the Enhanced Games. Although it was not the withdrawal of money from WADA, it was still a danger zone that needed to be considered and thought about in the same way. The gesture made by a government to voluntarily withdraw payment from WADA was similar to what might happen when the organizer of a sporting event, out of mistrust, decided to organize a parallel event to one that the sport movement had undertaken to organize by funding and organizing the sporting event. She thought that the point should be considered beyond the mere financial contribution.

MR DE VOS believed that the conversation on that topic was very interesting. First of all, he thought that nobody could be against asking for legal advice to be better informed. On the other hand, he wanted to say that the discussion there was about the voluntary withdrawal of funding. It was not about voluntary funding. He thought there was a big difference between those two concepts because, historically, WADA had been created as a kind of a commitment from governments, public authorities and the sport movement. And the commitment meant that they needed to be committed. And the consequence of that was that they contributed. The voluntary withdrawal of funding could be for many reasons, although there were too many to mention there. He was a bit surprised to hear the President's proposal to withdraw the financial consequences or sanction from the list of sanctions, because it was important to be careful about ensuring that, in the end, there was still a sanction, and the financial sanction was probably the strongest one. He would suggest that, for the time being, it be maintained in the discussions because he had not heard anybody really speaking against it. He was a bit surprised about the proposal to withdraw it and would propose maintaining it for the time being in the conversations and then see where it landed in the end. To take it out then and there was probably premature, in his view.

MR WENZEL noted the very interesting points raised by Ms Maracineanu but, of course, with respect to the Friendship Games and the Enhanced Games, they were from actors that were not within the sport movement under WADA's umbrella. That was either something organized by a government with respect to the Friendship Games or, with respect to the Enhanced Games, by a completely outside actor. He would of course defer to the President with respect to the additional payment issue. A few points had been made very strongly by the public authority representatives throughout that process, which had gone on for some time, which were that, if there was to be any sort of financial consequence, in the view of the public authorities, it would really have to be not a fine but rather limited to interest or an administration fee. Frankly, at that level, if that was where they were to land, if it remained on the table, he was not sure that it would be a huge deterrent factor, but he would defer to the President with respect to how to move forward.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked the members for their comments and remarks. He proposed looking at the case and the additional payment from a legal perspective. If it was going to be difficult from a legal perspective, then that additional payment would be dropped. The most important thing at that stage was to move forward with the document. Hence, he requested its adoption. It would then be possible

to look at that concrete issue from a legal perspective and come back to the committee with a clear recommendation. He asked if there was agreement with that approach.

DR GUPTA wanted to emphasize that one had to understand the motivation of the public authorities in order to have some encouragement to prevent voluntary withdrawal or to secure payments. A financial punishment was not one of those motivations. In fact, it could work the other way around. From the public authorities' perspective, there were a number of things that could help motivate that, as had been mentioned, and there were multiple reasons sometimes for withdrawal, but he did not believe that additional fines on members of Congress or legislative bodies was something that positively encouraged them. It was sometimes a case of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face, and he recommended that the Executive Committee look at that.

THE CHAIRMAN saw no other comments or questions so proposed approval of the discussion group moving forward to the next phase of the project and on the basis of the attached paper. He thanked the members and the speaker.

DECISION

Proposal regarding next phase of project approved.

11. Science and medicine

- 11.1 Technical document – EPO

THE CHAIRMAN noted that the item was for decision but, before proceeding, he drew the members' attention to the fact that an updated version of the document had been provided on Friday 8 March following a late change request from the Chairman of the EPO Working Group. However, approval that day of the document was still sought given the time sensitivities in the lead-up to the Olympic Games in Paris in 2024. He therefore gave the floor to Dr Barroso to explain the document in detail.

DR BARROSO wanted to present the main modifications in the technical document on EPO which dealt with erythropoietin (EPO) and its analogues, and also included a new sub-class of substances, which was already reflected in the title of the document that had been modified to include the TGF-beta signalling inhibitors. Those substances were basically analysed with the same type of methods as EPO and its analogues. In the introduction, there was a mention of a new example of a darbepoetin preparation that was a highly glycosylated EPO analogue. The changes to the acronym were obviously minor changes. The second article dealt with the pre-analytical procedures (sample preparation) before actually submitting the aliquot to the final analysis by gel electrophoresis. The requirements in the technical document had been simplified by simply referring to the comparable requirements in the International Standard for Laboratories. Furthermore, there was additional guidance given to the laboratories to minimize the degradation of EPO during sample storage and a very specific recommendation for the performance of the B-sample confirmation procedures, if required, within the shortest possible time frame. The recommendation there was to not go beyond one month, because that increased the risk of EPO degradation during storage, in particular for recombinant EPO preparations. Finally, additional sample pre-analytical conditions for the use of DBS samples had been included for the analysis of EPO and its analogues.

In the part on analytical testing, some technical modifications were needed regarding the use of Dynepo as the reference preparation for recombinant EPO. Dynepo was a preparation that had been produced in a human cell line and was no longer available. Its production had been stopped. Therefore, that material was running out and, for that reason, an alternative solution had to be included. In that case, some of the existing recombinant preparations of epoetin-alfa might be used, which was one of the forms of recombinant EPO.

Also, a minor detail regarding the way the files for interpretation of results had to be prepared to ensure the highest possible resolution and proper interpretation of the results.

Further on, in the analytical testing section, there were very important technical changes. First of all, some performance requirements for the analysis of the EPO in DBS samples had to be included because that had not been done thus far. That was starting in a limited number of laboratories. For the so-called initial testing procedure, which was the first procedure to which the samples were subjected, the possibility had been included of using an internal standard preparation to check for any deficiency in the first stages of a sample preparation (immunopurification). For the confirmation procedures, it had been established as mandatory that the confirmation procedure had to differ from the initial testing procedure in one or another aspect. Examples had been provided in the technical document about where those differences had to be established. There was also a minor requirement that, during confirmation analysis, all lanes in the gel had to be flanked by empty lanes. That was to avoid spilling or bleeding of EPO between lanes, and was represented in the figure on the left of the page. Some of the members might recall that IEF-PAGE was the first method initially developed for analysis of EPO. It currently remained only as an alternative additional method for confirmation of recombinant EPO, but was only to be applied upon request by second opinion providers. In the following slides, he would explain what the difference had been in the revised second opinion process, which was probably the most important change in that technical document. Finally, in terms of technical modifications, again, looking at the figure on the left, it was necessary to adjust the intensity of the EPO signal between the different lanes, including the sample and the applicable negative and positive controls to also facilitate the interpretation of the results.

Section three dealt with further clarity about the process of ERA result review within the laboratory before seeking second opinions from external experts and how the findings had to be interpreted to be reported as adverse analytical findings, atypical findings or negative findings.

Section four contained very important recommendations for the laboratories in order to provide further guidance to the testing authorities. EPO was a molecule or a substance that was known to be labile and subject to degradation in storage. Therefore, to minimize that possibility and to actually be proactive, the laboratories were being asked to report or to recommend the testing authorities to further collect samples from the athletes or to analyse already collected samples for which EPO had not been requested, in cases of non-confirmed presumptive adverse analytical findings after the initial testing procedure, in cases when the signal intensity of EPO was very low, or when there was an atypical finding reported for any of the ERAs.

Section five simply referred to the existing methods for the analysis of the new substances included in the technical document, the TGF-beta signalling inhibitors.

The most important part was the second opinion procedure. To date, laboratories had had to ask for one second opinion from an expert of the WADA EPO Working Group. Henceforth, they would have to ask for two second opinions independently, but the whole process would be managed by WADA. The next slide contained a diagram that represented that process. It was important to note that an adverse analytical finding would be reported only when the two experts coincided in their opinion about the presence of an ERA in a sample. If they disagreed, it would not be an adverse analytical finding.

The last change, which had been recently tabled and to which the Chairman had alluded, was that, nevertheless, the laboratories were responsible for how they reported their own results. That was an ISO 17025 requirement for testing laboratories that WADA could not ignore. It meant that, if a laboratory disagreed with the opinion of the second opinion experts, it might report the finding differently as it deemed appropriate, but of course it would have to take responsibility for how it reported those findings and be able to defend its conclusions. He would not go into the details of that because it would take half an hour at least; but, as could be seen on the slide, the WADA logo was in the middle of the process. It meant that WADA was going to be mediating and managing how the second opinion process was conducted, including the reception of results from the laboratories, provision of the results

to the second opinion providers, and their return to the laboratories to report the findings. The lower part of that diagram showed that the findings would be reported as an adverse analytical finding only when the two experts agreed and, obviously, the laboratory agreed. If there was any disagreement between the two experts, the finding would be atypical. If the two experts agreed that there was no ERA in the sample, the findings would be reported as negative. He stressed that the process applied not only to recombinant EPO, but to any of the ERAs or so-called erythropoiesis receptor agonists.

Finally, regarding the process of management of variant EPO, which the members might have heard of, there was a different form of EPO protein produced endogenously and, thus far, the evidence indicated that it affected only athletes of East Asian origin. However, that variant EPO might migrate similarly on gel to recombinant EPO, especially for urine samples. It was therefore necessary to establish if the finding had been caused by recombinant EPO use or by the endogenous expression of that variant EPO. The changes in the last technical document were mainly caused by two very recent technical developments: the possibility of doing DNA analysis not only in venous blood, but also in urine and in DBS, and a new method developed by the Beijing laboratory that made it possible to determine whether the athlete expressed the variant EPO or not directly in the sample under investigation, and also to establish whether VAR-EPO expressors had been using recombinant EPO or not, because obviously they might also attempt to use recombinant EPO for doping. Thus far, it had not been possible to establish the difference, so it was a very recent development and he congratulated the Beijing laboratory. He added that it had just won the big prize at the Cologne workshop for that work recently. That concluded his presentation on the technical document on EPO and he would be happy to answer any questions.

DR GUPTA wished to ask two questions. One, were those two experts working independently of each other? Two, with increased treatments for cancers and other things, younger people might actually be on EPO for management of their disease. Was there a way to differentiate that from artificially using EPO agonists?

DR BARROSO replied that the two experts worked independently from one another. As a principle, if an athlete needed to use a prohibited substance, they would have to get an approval for a therapeutic use exemption (TUE). If the question was whether there were any differences between cancer patients and athletes, it could be that, in some cases, the production of EPO in cancer patients was affected and there would not be much of it. But that had not been seen in the analysis. It was the first time he had heard of such a situation. But in any case, the athlete would have to have a TUE, otherwise they would not be able to use the prohibited substance.

MS BENNETT asked her question with some trepidation because it was obviously quite a technical document. She thanked the speaker very much for explaining the technicalities in such detail. But there was a significant change between that document and the previous iteration in terms of the involvement of two experts within a WADA framework, essentially within WADA, and she wondered what had necessitated that change to the technical document.

DR BARROSO considered it a very good question. First of all, it was a qualitative analysis. He wanted to make a clarification that not every WADA expert could provide a second opinion. The list of experts in the WADA Technical Working Group on EPO was very limited. As it was a truly qualitative analysis, it was heavily dependent on expertise. It was comparable to a pathologist doing a biopsy and sometimes obtaining different answers. It might happen that, in some cases, in some very difficult to interpret cases, that level of expertise was really needed. In the past, sometimes the experts had disagreed, so the aim was to make a more robust and clear process in the evaluation of the results until and if it was possible to come up with more quantitative criteria for the determination of recombinant EPO.

THE CHAIRMAN asked the members for the record if they were in agreement with approving the TD 2024 EPO version 1.0 to come into effect on 15 June 2024. He thanked the speaker very much.

DECISION

Proposed TD 2024 EPO version 1.0 approved.

- **11.2 Technical Letters – 23 and 24**

THE CHAIRMAN noted that that was an item for decision and gave the floor to Dr Barroso.

DR BARROSO promised that that item would be shorter and easier. There were two technical letters. One dealt with growth promoters, which were substances that were used for the growth of cattle and might appear as contaminants as a result of eating meat contaminated with those substances. It concerned basically technical changes to ensure harmonization of analysis by laboratories. Those were substances that were subject to a minimum reporting level (MRL) of five nanograms per ml. If it was above it was an adverse analytical finding, and if it was below it was an atypical finding. It was necessary to make absolutely sure that the laboratories were testing for exactly the same analytes. Hence, the changes included in that technical letter were simply to specify which were the target analytes to which those minimum reporting levels applied for each one of the substances. The other changes were simply cosmetic, so to speak. Some of the information in the initial versions did not need to be there anymore, because it was currently in another technical document.

The second technical letter was the one that dealt with diuretics that might also be found as contaminants in some pharmaceutical preparations, and the changes were essentially the same. It provided more clarification on the target analytes for the application of the corresponding minimum reporting levels, plus the addition of mixed martial arts to the list of sports with weight classes, because in those cases there was no MRL applicable. Those were basically the main changes.

THE CHAIRMAN noted that there were no further comments or questions and asked the members for the record if they were in agreement with approving the technical letters 23 and 24 to come into effect on 1 April 2024. He thanked the speaker very much and adjourned the meeting for lunch.

DECISION

Proposed Technical Letters 23 and 24 approved.

12. Strategic plan 2025-2029 update

- **12.1 Draft 2025-2029 strategic priorities and key initiatives**

No minutes were taken for this agenda item.

13. Any other business and future meetings

THE CHAIRMAN invited Ms Cessouma to take the floor.

MS CESSOUMA thanked the Chairman for giving her the floor. She thanked all those involved in organizing the meeting, which had been so interesting that she had not noticed the time. The last session in particular had been fantastic.

She wished to inform the members that the African Union was organizing, from 8-23 March, the 13th edition of the African Games, the theme for which was 'Experience the African dream', with particular regard to sport. She wanted to thank the President and welcome the work done by WADA. She had seen for herself the commitment to safeguarding the integrity of ethics in sport, in Africa and worldwide. Those efforts were welcome because they sought to promote clean sport and fair competition, as well as protecting the athletes' rights, which was commendable and should be supported. She thanked WADA because WADA currently had a team doing an excellent job in Accra, including the Director of the WADA Africa Regional Office, Mr Swigelaar, and she thanked him for his work. The agency had an office working in the field. She had initially been concerned; but, having seen

the work done by the WADA team, she had understood the importance of the work. She had been able to see for herself the work done in the field and why it was necessary.

On the side-line of the games, Africa had tried to think how to better involve people from the world of sport and beyond and had organized an African forum on anti-doping. There had been over 100 participants, including ministers, representatives of the sport movement, African athletes, athlete representatives, RADO representatives and NADOs, all key actors in the fight against doping in sport. She thanked the President in particular for his video message during the opening ceremony. The games would take place in Ghana with athletes who would be properly tested and qualify for the Olympic Games in Paris. A declaration had been adopted at the forum, and the participants had requested that the forum take place regularly and on a formal basis, which would be done. The first recommendations and decisions would shortly be submitted to the ministers for a decision for greater engagement on the African continent to fight against doping in sport. She launched an appeal for formal recognition, and would work with Ms Kanouté to engage the athletes themselves and educate them, so that Africa would be at the forefront of the fight against doping in sport.

That was what she had wanted to say to the members. She thanked them and wished them all the very best in their undertaking to bring about greater integrity, fairness and transparency for clean sport on the continent, to inspire future generations of athletes. That was why she underscored education, which was an essential part of the fight.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked Ms Cessouma for her comments and compliments. WADA had been engaged from the very beginning to make sure that the African Games would be clean and very well prepared from the anti-doping perspective. He thanked the African Union, Ms Cessouma and the High Commissioner for their engagement. It was very important when one saw the highest political body in the continent so engaged in anti-doping policy. It was very encouraging and he thanked them for everything that they did for anti-doping in the continent.

Were there any other comments or initiatives or questions remarks? If not, he would move on to the last point: future meetings and technical information. The next meeting would be hosted on 12 September in the Republic of Türkiye by Professor Erdener. The early December Executive Committee and Foundation Board would be in Riyadh on 4 and 5 December. He looked forward to the members experiencing the WADA Annual Symposium over the next couple of days, including, of course, some special highlights to celebrate WADA's 25-year anniversary.

Last but not least, he wished to thank the WADA staff for planning and supporting the conduct of the meeting that day. He also thanked the interpreters for their hard work. He thanked the speakers very much and would see them later on.

DECISION

WADA Annual Symposium – 12 and 13 March 2024,
Lausanne, Switzerland;
Executive Committee – 12 September 2024, Belek,
Republic of Türkiye;
Executive Committee – 4 December 2024, Riyadh,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
Foundation Board – 5 December 2024, Riyadh,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
Executive Committee – 17 March 2025, Lausanne,
Switzerland;
WADA Annual Symposium – 18 and 19 March 2025,
Lausanne, Switzerland.

The meeting adjourned at 4.12 p.m. GMT +1.

FOR APPROVAL

MR WITOLD BAŃKA
PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF WADA

MR OLIVIER NIGGLI
DIRECTOR GENERAL AND RECORDING SECRETARY