

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF
CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS AT THE OPENING OF THE
WORKSHOP ON SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

September 3rd, 2019, Kigali Convention Centre, Kigali

Chief Executive, Centre for Sport & Human Rights;

Chief Executive, Commonwealth Games Federation;

Head of Sport for Development and Peace, Commonwealth Secretariat;

Executive Officer, Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council;

Chairperson of the National Commission for Human Rights

Commissioners,

Colleagues Government's representatives,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

Allow me to first join colleagues who spoke before me, to once again welcome you all to Rwanda and wish you a pleasant stay. We also wish to express our sincere thanks to the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions for inviting us to be part of this important workshop focusing on this important topic of sport and human rights.

At the outset, let us remind ourselves that, this workshop is taking place alongside the annual meeting of the Commonwealth Games Federation. It comes at the time Rwanda is marking the ten-year anniversary of Commonwealth membership and a year before Rwanda hosts the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 2020. We are so much pleased as a country, to see all these important events being hosted here.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sport and human rights are interlinked concepts. Participation including taking part in sport is a human right. It is an entitlement for each and every human being. Every person regardless of age, gender, disability, religious belief, social background, political opinion, race, ethnicity or nationality has the right to meaningfully participate in sport.

The first principle of the ten '**Sporting Chance Principles on Sport and Human Rights**' developed by the Centre for Sport and Human Rights represented here today makes it clear that sport can help promote human rights and sustainable development, and foster cooperation, solidarity, fairness, social inclusion, education and health at the local, regional and international levels.

The principles go further to remind each and every one of us that, the governance and delivery of sport should at all times be based on international human rights instruments, principles and standards. Furthermore, the principles call upon actors in sport to commit to the protection and respect of internationally recognized human rights through their activities and business relationships.

Distinguished participants,

Without dwelling much on these important principles, which I believe, will be discussed at length during this workshop; let me briefly note that the principles cover some other important aspects in relation to sport and human rights. These include aspects such as taking human rights into account at all times during sporting events; strengthening the voice of those affected by sport; access to effective remedy to those whose human rights have been negatively impacted by the activities or business relationships of the actors involved in sport to name but a few.

Distinguished delegates,

Friends,

As you are all aware, twenty-five years ago, Rwanda suffered one of the most tragic events in recent human history; the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. This unfortunate tragedy costed lives of more than a million of Rwandans. It destroyed every aspect of our country including the sports sector.

The worst side of it was that on one side, actors in sport were involved in killings, and on the other side, many others were victims of the killings. It is without doubt that such violent and criminal conduct defeats the very essence of sport. By its nature, sport has great potential to recognize diversity, to promote tolerance and mutual understand among fellow human beings, which are also attribute of human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While regretting the negative role that actors in sport played during the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, it is important to note that for the last two decades, sport has played a crucial role in the re-building of Rwanda. It has been key in restoring unity and social cohesion among Rwandans alongside many other Government's programmes and initiatives.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate, the Government of Rwanda's commitment to maintaining and strengthening the already existing and widely recognized linkages between sport and human rights at domestic, regional and international level. With these remarks, I would wish to once again thank you and wish you a fruitful workshop and wonderful stay in Kigali.

Thank you!