



**MINISTRY  
SPORT AND RECREATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**SPEECH ON THE IAAF SUMMIT BY MS. TOKOZILE XASA (MP) MINISTER OF  
SPORT AND RECREATION SA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA,  
TSHWANE, GAUTENG.**

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**THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2018**

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Good Morning Ladies & Gentlemen

I must first thank the department of Sport and Recreation South Africa in collaboration with the department of Private Law and the Centre for Sport Law in Africa in the faculty of Law, University of Pretoria for organizing the conference, under a theme ***“Eligibility to participate in Women’s sport.”*** We hope to be enriched by the best brains in this conference. I hope the best brains that are assembled here will assist us to unpack an analysis of the scientific evidence that suggests women with elevated levels of testosterone have unfair competitive advantage, as well as the human rights aspect. It is therefore only fair that we state what IAAF says its objectives are.

Article 4 of the IAAF constitution, states among its objectives:

- To encourage participation in Athletics at all levels throughout the world regardless of age, gender or race.

- To strive to ensure that no gender, race, religious, political or other kind of unfair discrimination exist, or continues to exist or is allowed to develop in athletics or any form, and that all may participate in athletics regardless of their gender, race, religious or political views or any other irrelevant factor.
- To promote fair play in sport, particular to play a leading role in the fight against doping both with athletics and externally in the wider sporting community and to develop and maintain programmes of detection deterrence and education which are aimed at the eradication of the scourge of doping within sport.

Following the end of World War 2, nations of the world crafted the “*The Atlantic Charter*,” then President of the ANC Doctor AB Xuma assembled a team of African thinkers to craft the African version of “*Atlantic Charter, the African claims in 1943*.” The African Claims are enshrined in our constitution as the Bill of Rights.

I have highlighted both what is on the objectives of IAAF as well as our historical task of human rights that seek to ensure that no gender, race, religious, political or other kind of unfair discrimination exist in our country. Therefore we are not here to question science but to reaffirm our commitment to Human rights. I therefore hope and wish that IAAF science and its regulations are not discriminatory and therefore incompatible with both its constitutional objectives and our national human rights.

We have strived to ensure that our athletes stay out of doping while competing at the highest level, we do this not for compliance sake but as firm believers on fair play as equally enshrined in the IAAF constitution. We therefore seek no special favors for our athletes but **FAIR PLAY**.

I must formally thank the South African Law Professor Steve Cornelius for being a humanist. Prof Cornelius resigned from the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) following the announcement of new testosterone regulations. In his resignation letter to IAAF Prof Cornelius makes the following assertion, “*Sadly I cannot in good conscience continue to associate myself with the organization which*

*insist on ostracizing certain individuals, all of them female, for no reason other than being what they were born to be. The adoption of the new eligibility regulations for female classification is based on the same kind of ideology that has led to some of the worst injustices and atrocities in the history of our planet.*" The good Professor further reaffirms the centrality of human rights and fair play enshrined both in our constitution and that of the IAAF.

As we converge today, it is only appropriate that invoke the wisdom of our former President, Tata Nelson mandela when he said, "*Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.*" Sport has done more to unite people of the world therefore we must at all material times use it as an instrument to unite rather than divide humanity along racial and gender lines. In our country a symbol of racial superiority the Springbok emblem has been used as a symbol of unity that is the power of sport, it is in sport that we truly become a nation.

We must do more for women sport in the world, in our country The Commission on Gender Equity has mandated us that we must introduce educational awareness activities to promote sport for the girl-child and to address gender equality in sport. That in our plans we must indicate the need to promote and support women in sport and put measures in place to address gender parity in sporting codes and infrastructure. That we must put systems in place to ensure all sports are accessible to women and girl-children.

We are currently crafting the Women in sport policy, the policy should address itself to:

- Incentives for companies sponsoring women in sport in the form of higher tax rebate.
- Recognition & accolades for companies sponsoring women sport in the form of Awards & Annual recognition certificate.
- Lobby ICASA for Sport Broadcasting Regulations to include a system for women sport coverage.

We therefore should be focusing more attention on gender parity in sport where men and women must be treated equal, for long we have been distracted by a disproportionate focus on racial dynamics in sport at the expense of women's participation.

Sport is not only about teamwork and competition but also about pushing one's skill and performance beyond one's comfort zone in the pursuit of excellence. It is this pursuit that builds self-belief and confidence. A girl child with a strong sense of self and confidence will be in much better position to make good life choices. We are not here to plead a case for Caster Semanya, we have made our position very clear in that regard. To us Caster is not just an athlete, she represents hopes and aspirations of rural poor and downtrodden. She is an affirmation of black excellence. She undermines a stereotype that nothing good will ever come from the rural villages. The regulations must never make rural children feel that they are inadequate as humans, poverty is already doing that. We therefore ought to invest in girls' participation in sport to build more role models but also make them benefit from life skills associated with sport participation, that of teamwork, improve social interaction, communication and leadership.

National sports federations must account about how they are creating more opportunities for the participation of girls in sport, especially beyond the urban boundaries. The demographic profiles of leadership like boards and CEOs reflect culture and value set of sporting codes. Therefore we need to transform sport not only in the playing fields but in the decision making. The next transformation report (EPG) which is a guide to transformation will have a dedication for women. We must not only transform race, we have a duty to transform gender. We can only end gender struggles only when we affirm women in positions of responsibilities.

I acknowledge that women are more visible in sport today but has this increased visibility led to greater equality or appreciation of performance excellence or to a more sexualized version of a female athlete? We need only look at the descriptive monikers some used in the media to describe the athletic performances of the likes of Caster Semanya and the Williams sisters to realise that not all respect the pursuit of sporting excellence by women.

Sport must advocate values of respect for women and acknowledge that space must be given for the girl-child to participate and excel in sport. For too long, these values that have been promoted to boys, contained elements of denigrating women and violent rhetoric. We are paying the price every day for not correcting these values, when we read about the sexual violence perpetrated against our girls.

I hope this gathering will take time and reflect the road we have travelled as humanity to affirm the struggles of women in sport but like Madiba said in his Long Walk to Freedom, ***“I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious Vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities.”*** There is still a long way to women emancipation in sport. Let us use sport to create hope to the rural youth, that they too are adequate. Let us use sport to unite people of the world.

Like President AB Xuma in 1943, I too *“I am confident that all men and women of goodwill of all races and nations will see the justice of our cause and stand with us and support us in our struggle”*

I wish you well in your deliberation, I am looking forward to some of the decisions and conclusion that will come from this gathering and I hope it will advance the cause of humanity that seek human rights for all.

I thank you

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