

**READ OUT ON THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SPORTS/ UGANDA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE ONLINE
ENGAEMENT MEETING ON WELLNESS AND HEALTH IN SPORTS: DURING AND POST COVID-19' ON
SATURDAY 23 MAY 2020**

The National Council of Sports (NCS) in conjunction with the Uganda Olympic Committee (UOC)/ Commonwealth Games Association of Uganda (CGAU) on Saturday 23 May 2020, hosted an online zoom engagement that featured a panel discussion on the topic, ' Wellness and Health in Sports: During and Post COVID-19.' A panel of eminent medical practitioners and sports administrators from Uganda and abroad discussed this topic. The panel members included, Dr. Nana Nakiddu Head of UOC Medical Commission Dr. George Galiwango NCS Council member, Ms Ann Muguni Secretary General/ CEO Zimbabwe Olympic Committee and Dr. Andrew Etuket Timneth Wellness Hub. William F. Blick the President of the UOC/IOC Member made opening remarks of the session that was attended by 114 participants (33 female, 81 male) drawn from the National Council of Sports, national federations/association, academia, guests from the International Olympic Committee (IOC)/Olympic Solidarity (OS), Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA), the National Olympic Committees of Sao Taome, Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi as well as the media. Mr. Yassine Yousif from the IOC/OS made remarks as well. Mr. Joao Manuel de Costa 1st Vice President ANOCA participated .Dr. Ogwel Patrick the General Secretary NCS and the NCS Chair /SG UOC Dr. Donald Rukare also made concluding remarks at the end of the session. Re-known media personality/Journalist Mark Namanya moderated the highly interactive session. The audio file of the online meetings available at <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/4pdxFJKv5nNIR4mXzWruWPcoPo3IT6a8hykf86ILxR0iDyc8wZlwXJG sDZAivfW> - Password: 2u#0945?

The poster is light blue with white and yellow text. At the top right are the NCS and UOC logos. The main text reads: 'NCS in conjunction with UOC would like to invite you and your athletes to a zoom online engagement on: **'Wellness and Health in Sports: During and Post COVID-19'** Saturday, 23 May 2020 11am-12.30pm'. Below this is a 'SPEAKERS' section with four circular portraits and names: Dr. George Galiwango (NCS Council member), Ms. Ann Muguni (S.G. CEO Zimbabwe Olympic Committee), Dr. Nana Nakiddu (Head of UOC Medical Commission), and Dr. Andrew Etuket (Timneth Health Hub Wellness Expert). A circular graphic on the left lists 'The topics to be covered are: 1. Critical health issues in sports in Uganda, 2. Wellness and health during COVID-19 lock down, 3. Injury and illness prevention, 4. Standard Operating Procedures for Sports : what to know?'. At the bottom, it says 'Zoom details to be communicated'.

Panelists

William F Blick UOC President/IOC Members welcomed the participants to the online engagement. He noted that COVID-19 has disrupted sports but was optimistic that sports would bounce back. He pointed out that various countries abroad were gradually lifting their lockdown measures. Uganda was also opening up in phases and therefore there is need for the sports sector to prepare for the post COVID-19 period. He called for more vigilance even when the restrictions have been lifted as there is still no cure for COVID-19.

Yassine Yousif from the IOC/Olympic Solidarity Head of Coaches Section (Africa) revealed that the IOC staff was working from home and would probably resume work on 6th June 2020. In Switzerland lockdown restrictions were in place until two weeks ago. Sports in general are still not allowed though not more than 5 people are allowed on the field of play for some sports. Contact sports are not yet permitted while some sports where social distancing is possible are permitted. The IOC has a lot of information available on their website which can be shared with athletes.

Dr. Andrew Etucket structured his presentation around three main pillars of nutrition, exercise and sleep. He provided several practical healthy living tips as well as how to engage in safe home based exercise. He called for striking a balance between appropriate nutrition, adequate exercise and sufficient sleep.

Dr. Nana Nakiddu focused on the critical health issues in sports during this time. She outlined who is responsible like the athletes, athletes support personnel and sport leadership. Dr. Nakiddu highlighted the key activities of the UOC medical commission as well as the various capacity building programs in place. She also provided links to anti-doping tools on the UOC website which athletes could use.

Dr. George Galiwango stated that the lockdown has not stopped injuries and several athletes went into the lockdown carrying injuries. He noted that post COVID-19 there will be a change on how injuries will be managed and treated. Most Doctors will have to first test patients before treatment and this may present challenges. Categories of who will be seen and treated will take place i.e. critical, high and low as well as who needs to come for treatment and those that can be managed remotely at home. Fewer face to face meetings are happening now. Greater use of technology will occur during the post COVID-19 period.

Ms. Ann Muguni highlighted that the initiatives in Zimbabwe were based on a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Zimbabwe Sports Council, Zimbabwe National Olympic Committee, Zimbabwe para sports and the Ministry of Health. She acknowledged that responding to COVID-19 was in the main a health response and the Ministry of Health brought in that specialized focus. Each sporting code had developed its own specific standard operating procedures and a general resumption of sports and recreation SoP had been issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in conjunction with its key stakeholders. Cognizance was taken of the international federation SOP were available as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. Sports had been classified as low, medium and high risk with contact sports in the high risk category.

Following the presentations an interactive and lively discussion ensued and below are some of the issues raised:

1. Mr. Robert Sebugwawo a fitness and exercise expert called for individual responsibility, discipline and consistency on wellness and exercise on the part of athletes and all.

2. Mr. Leonard Lubambula Games Master Horizon International School and table tennis coach inquired whether marijuana/weed were a prohibited substance under the WADA code and also whether use of masks during training was advisable for athletes? It was noted that under the WADA prohibited list marijuana is listed and therefore prohibited in competition. As for the masks they are used to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
3. Dr. Aya Nakitanda asked whether the NCS had a strategy on athlete health. It was reported that NCS was working with UOC on this issue.
4. Mr. Duncan Allen wanted to know chiropractors specialists exist and whether the swimming federation promotes aqua therapy for various sport related injuries. It was noted that there a variety of advanced medical training in sports medicine, nutrition and physiotherapy, Ice therapy is good for injury prevention and treatment.
5. Mr. Robert Jjagwe President Uganda Table Tennis Association asked whether a local herb known as mulondo was a prohibited substance and what its scientific name was. The biological name of mulondo is not known at this point.
6. Agatha Namirembe National Council of Sports Council member, proposed that the first aid training be provided at club to athletes , coaches and teams
7. Mr. Moses Mwase President Uganda Swimming Federation agreed that aqua therapy was encouraged for injury treatment. USF was putting in place SOPs for swimming and also waiting from guidance from the Ministry of Health and NCS.
8. Mr. Joseph Kabogoza from USF, wanted to know whether use of masks was ok for those working out. It was pointed out that there some risks associated with use of masks during exercise.
9. Mr. Karali Ezera sought clarification on use of supplements like creatine and betaine. It was noted that use of approved and safe supplements was advised.
10. Mr. Kato Idrisa from Baseline Swim Club asked about blood groups of individual vs exercise and food intake. In response it was reported that some practitioners have linked blood groups to type of nutrition/exercise and are using this modality though some have discounted this approach. Following some research studies that have found no coloration.
11. Dickson Niwagaba President VX Association of Uganda asked whether UOC was working on the issue of mental health during COVID. Mental health in sports and in general is rather neglected it was reported. The need therefore to focus on it was stressed.

Issues to follow up going forward include inter alia:

- i. Operationalize the joint committee that will develop the SOPs
- ii. Request national sports associations/ federations to prepare sports specific SOPs
- iii. Convening joint stakeholder engagements with Ministry of Health COVID coordinator, Government officials in charge of policy formulation
- iv. Continue with similar discussions on various themes

Dr. Patrick Ogwel the General Secretary of the National Council of Sports thanked all that participated in the very lively discussion. He noted that government strategy is hinged on safety of all. As the country lifts some of the restrictions there was need to prepare for life and sports post COVID. In this regard NCS in collaboration with the UOC was going to work on developing SOPs for sports. This would

be done in collaboration and consultation with all key stakeholders. To this end a committee has been put in place to develop SOP for the sports sector. He called upon sports federations/association to begin to developing their specific sport SoPs. He confirmed NCS and governments commitment to promoting athletes health.

In closing Dr. Donald Rukare NCS Chair/ UOC Secretary General thanked all for participating in the online discussion as well as the panel members together with the guests from the IOC, ANOCA, Sao Taome, Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi as well as the day the moderator. He called upon all to promote wellness and health for all. He looked forward to the development of the sports specific SOPs in a collaborative and participatory manner.

Dr. Donald Rukare
May 23 2020.