

16 May 2016

Dear Wendy,

My heartfelt congratulations to you on your recent appointment as one of the first two independent directors to serve on the new World Rugby Executive Committee. On behalf of UN Women and me personally, it gives me great pleasure to see you on the Executive Committee of one of the world's most popular sports.

Your appointment comes at a critical time, as international sport federations increasingly recognize the benefits of a diversified leadership and including women in decision-making positions. World Rugby couldn't have made a better choice. I applaud your work as a pioneering social entrepreneur and business woman, and very much appreciate your commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. I have no doubt you will champion women's leadership and gender equality in the new governing body.

At UN Women, we understand the power of sport to empower women and girls and to advocate for gender equality. For example, we are proud of our long-standing partnership with the Georgia Rugby Union, which allows us to work with prominent rugby players to reach a new audience and amplify our messages on ending violence against women and girls, and engage men and boys to achieve gender equality. A traditionally male-dominated sport like rugby can be a powerful avenue to change social norms and people's mindsets. I would welcome a discussion on possibilities of upscaling the model of our partnership in Georgia to the global level through World Rugby.

I'm also pleased that Rugby Sevens will return to the Olympics in 2016. We have a great partnership with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), I will have the honour of being in Rio at the beginning of the Olympics, if you are attending I might see you there or even before that.

On behalf of UN Women, I congratulate you again on your appointment and look forward to working together towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It was great to be at your congratulations dinner in Johannesburg.

Yours sincerely,



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director

Ms. Wendy Luhabe
Chairwoman and Founder
Women Private Equity Fund
Johannesburg