

The world football body, FIFA on Friday inaugurated a Regional Development Office in Kigali to be used for long-term development of the game in east Africa.

Before the inauguration event FIFA President Gianni Infantino signed the Host Country agreement with Rwanda's Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Minister, Vincent Biruta.



The event was attended by the Minister of Sports, Aurore Mimoso Munyangaju, President of Rwanda Football Association (FERWAFA) Jean-Damascene Sekamana and other football dignitaries including the President of the Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA), Wallace Karia, President of the Central African Republic Football Association, Célestin Yanindji, and Presidents of FOFA member associations from the region.

"I would like to thank President Paul Kagame and the Rwandan government for facilitating the opening of this office, as it sets the scene for us at FIFA level to be able to help all the associations at the regional level to develop football," the FIFA President said. "Infrastructure, competitions, development and education, these are the key areas which FIFA is focused on, and the task of this office will be to implement the FIFA Forward programme in the region.

"This means to support the development, to coordinate the programme, to help organise competitions for boys and girls, to foster women's football, to ensure that the investment that FIFA is making is channelled in the right place, and to make sure that east African football will shine on the international stage. The talent is here. The passion is here. And together with the federations and the governments in this part of the world, we are creating the conditions for a better future."

In 2017, FIFA took the decision to establish FIFA Regional Development Offices around the world in order to better serve its member associations and to be closer to their needs. Four of these offices are located in Africa, namely Dakar in Senegal, Johannesburg in South Africa and the soon to be inaugurated one in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo.

"The Rwandan Football Association is grateful for the establishment of this office in the region, which proves the extent of FIFA's commitment to the development of football in Africa, and we are profoundly grateful that Kigali has been chosen to be

the home of this FIFA Regional Development Office,” said FERWAFWA President, Jean-Damascene Sekamana. “We are extremely thankful for the Government of Rwanda and FIFA for reaching an agreement to host the regional office in Rwanda. By approving this agreement, the Government of Rwanda demonstrated its visionary leadership and its objective to gradually achieve an acceptable living standard for society through all sectors, including football and sports, in general.”

Subsequently, the FIFA President met with the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, to discuss the development of football in the country and in the region.

“I was delighted to meet Mr Kagame again. He is a truly devoted football fan who is committed to promoting sport and football as a symbol of peace and means to drive important social values, especially among the young people in the community,” the FIFA President said. “From FIFA’s perspective, we are also appreciative of the support that the Rwanda government is giving FERWAFWA and football locally. It is helping to build solid foundations for football in Rwanda to prosper.”