The National Basketball Association has named Claire Akamanzi as its top investment lawyer to oversee the sport and its business on the African continent.

Clare Akamanzi, who headed the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) for six and a half years until she was replaced in September, will become NBA Africa's chief executive officer on Jan. 23, according to a company statement Wednesday.

She will replace inaugural CEO Victor Williams, a former investment banker at Goldman Sachs Group Inc., who joined the NBA in 2020 to oversee its expansion into Africa and steps down Dec. 31.

She will report directly to Mark Tatum, the NBA Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer.

In her new capacity, Akamanzi will supervise the NBA's business and basketball development endeavors in Africa.

In addition, her responsibilities include advancing the popularity of basketball, the NBA, and the Basketball Africa League (BAL) across the continent.

This involves initiatives such as grassroots basketball development, media distribution, corporate partnerships, and social responsibility programs aimed at enhancing the well-being of African youth and families, as stated by the NBA in a Wednesday night announcement.

Having served as the CEO of RDB, Akamanzi played a pivotal role in driving Rwanda's economic growth by fostering private sector expansion.

Under her leadership, the RDB implemented numerous business policy reforms and initiatives, resulting in substantial investments and development for the country. Notable partnerships during her tenure included collaborations with the BAL, Arsenal FC, Paris Saint-Germain FC, FC Bayern Munich, and TIME Magazine, among others.

Speaking about her appointment, Mark Tatum expressed confidence in Akamanzi's qualifications, citing her business acumen, international experience, and familiarity with basketball and the NBA.

He believes that under her guidance, NBA Africa and the Basketball Africa League will continue to flourish, bringing transformative impacts to economies,

communities, and lives across the continent.

Akamanzi herself emphasized the positive impact of sports on businesses, families, and communities in Africa. She acknowledged the NBA’s successful efforts in growing basketball and its economic impact across the continent, expressing excitement about the significant opportunities ahead to build on that momentum.

Prior to her role at the RDB, Akamanzi held positions such as Chief Operating Officer of RDB and Head of the Strategy and Policy Unit at the Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda.

She previously worked for the Rwandan Government at the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, and at the Rwandan Embassy in London, England. Akamanzi’s global exposure includes work or study in seven different countries, and she holds an honorary LLD from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, recognizing her impactful contributions in Rwanda.