

Ghana's Herbert Mensah has been elected as the new President of Rugby Africa after easily beating his only rival, Uganda's Andrew Owuo, and has promised to launch a new programme to revolutionise the sport on the continent.

The head of the Ghana Rugby Association (GRA) polled 30 of the 32 votes available at the election in Cape Town, with Owuo gaining one and one spoilt ballot paper.

Mensah succeeds Tunisia's Khaled Babbou, who stood down after serving only one term.

"As we embark on this journey, I want us to project rugby as an alternative team sport, gain financial independence and improve the World Rugby Elite Programme," Mensah, President of the GRA since 2014, told delegates.

"My aim is to make Rugby Africa the gold standard for sports administration in the African continent.

"My vision for the next four years is to foster an all-inclusive competition framework that will provide members equal opportunities to grow and develop.

"I am also determined to build a positive and strong brand for Rugby Africa, expand the women's rugby programme, and provide a national stadium for each Member Association."

Among Mensah's first aims will be to get World Rugby to invest more funding into Africa.

South Africa is one of the sport's most important nations having lifted the Rugby World Cup three times, including the last edition in Japan in 2019, but the rest of the continent has struggled to make much impact.

"Last year, World Rugby awarded just \$2 million to promote the sport across the whole African continent," Mensah said.

"This is an absurdly small amount for a whole continent, but what is more telling is the way it undervalues the African continent more than anything else.

"We see evidence of this when this same organisation is willing to award \$5 million, or \$6 million dollars per year, to a Rugby Europe country while leaving the entire African continent with scraps to promote Rugby to a population of over 1.2 billion.

“This fact alone is telling of how little respect is given to African rugby by the world and it is inevitable that we ask ourselves, if that respect shouldn’t first come from us, Africans.

“The world of rugby sees Africa as one big poor country.

“This must end.”

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