

President Paul Kagame on Thursday highlighted the growing role of sports in driving investment and tourism in Rwanda during a meeting on sports investment held ahead of the Basketball Africa League (BAL) finals.

Kagame spoke at the “BAL Investors Summit” at the Kigali Convention Centre on May 22, 2026, where he said sports have helped boost Rwanda’s visibility and tourism sector by attracting visitors for conferences and major events.

A message posted on the official X account of the President’s Office, Village Urugwiro, indicated that Kagame shared insights with participants about opportunities in sports.

“Sports are important because they bring people together. For Rwanda in particular, we have seen many benefits,” Kagame said. “You can see how it has increased tourism numbers, with people wanting to come to Rwanda, those coming for conferences, and those coming for events like this.”

He added that collaboration in international sports competitions helps expand markets and increase economic benefits across participating countries.

The meeting was attended by Basketball Africa League President Amadou Gallo Fall, NBA Deputy Commissioner Mark Tatum, NBA Africa CEO Clare Akamanzi, and FIBA Africa President Anibal Manave.

NBA Africa has projected significant long-term growth for the league, estimating its economic output could rise from about \$250 million to \$4.5 billion over the next decade, with potential to create up to 650,000 jobs, according to Akamanzi.

The BAL, which brings together top basketball clubs from across Africa, is holding its finals in Rwanda, marking the latest edition of the competition hosted in Kigali.

Following the summit, the 2026 BAL season tipped off with Senegal’s ASC Ville Dakar defeating Egypt’s Al Ahly 93-90. Rwanda’s RSSB faced Morocco’s FUS Rabat in a later game.