*By Jejje Muhinde;*

One of the biggest challenges faced by the success of aquatic sports in Africa is the lack of swimming infrastructure.

In Rwanda for instance, 60 percent of national team swimmers train from Lake Kivu and Muhazi while the rest train from local hotel swimming pools after paying a monthly subscription fee.

In an effort, the Association of National Olympic Committee of Africa (ANOCA) and the International Swimming Federation (FINA), has formalized a partnership to support the aquatics on the continent.

Both ANOCA and FINA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the ambition of improving and supporting aquatics in Africa.

ANOCA President Mustapha Berraf joined FINA President Husain Al-Musallam at Egypt's National Olympic Committee headquarters in Cairo to formalise relations in the hope that permanent cooperation can be established in the swimming discipline.

The MoU aims to make aquatics more accessible in Africa and to improve the continent's performances in every discipline.

The agreement also targets the promotion of greater understanding and interests through elements like exchanges and training.

This initiative targets African nations like Rwanda that do not have Olympic-size swimming pools.

The MoU was also meant to explore the development of swimming in Africa and in particular, FINA's top priority program 'learns to swim for health and life'.

Earlier this year, RSF started talks with FINA to help in constructing a swimming pool that meets international standards.

The lack of an Olympic swimming pool in Rwanda was part of the challenges that RSF president Pamela Girimbabazi presented to FINA president Husain Al Musallam, who was in Rwanda last month on a two-day visit.

Meanwhile, under the FINA Scholarship Programme, both ANOCA and FINA plan to set up an initiative to support athletes who aspire to participate in the FINA World Championships and Olympic Games.

Training camps for aquatic athletes have been proposed to aid performance during Olympic Games and World Championships qualifiers as well as support FINA development centers in the Senegalese capital of Dakar and the South African town of Franschhoek.

In June this year, Girimbabazi said that they will submit an application to FINA for All – Swimming for Life", a special program with the goal to teach children how to swim and promote physical activity through swimming.

ANOCA and FINA aim to improve the number of coaching certifications and coaching development opportunities.