

Rwanda's sports minister has urged African nations to invest more heavily in sports, warning that the continent is falling far behind in tapping into the global sports economy.

Speaking Tuesday at the SportsBiz Africa Forum 2025 in Kigali, Nelly Mukazayire said Africa's contribution to the world's sports market stands at just 0.5%, compared with 2.5% in other regions.

"The global sports market was valued at \$480 billion in 2024 and is projected to surpass \$630 billion by 2028," Mukazayire said. "Why can't Africa raise its share from 0.5% to 2.5% — and even beyond to 5% or 10%?"

Mukazayire described sports as more than entertainment, calling it a driver of economic growth and social unity. She said Rwanda's own investments in stadiums and training facilities had already demonstrated tangible results.

"Sports should be a pillar of national development," she said. "In Rwanda, building infrastructure has boosted the economy and strengthened our unity. I know of a family that reconciled inside a stadium after years of conflict. That is the power of sport."

The minister pointed to limited infrastructure and low levels of private investment as key barriers to growth, saying investors should see Africa as an untapped opportunity. "We have no time to waste. Let's leverage what we already have and turn it into more opportunities," she said.

The SportsBiz Africa Forum, now in its second edition, was organized by Rwanda Events at the Kigali Convention Centre. The two-day gathering brought together athletes, policymakers, investors and business leaders to examine ways to expand Africa's share of the sports economy.

Panelists discussed opportunities ranging from sponsorship deals and sports tourism to media rights and talent development. Organizers said the forum is part of a broader effort to position Africa as both a producer and beneficiary of sports revenue, rather than just a source of athletes for other markets.

Mukazayire emphasized that Rwanda intends to play a leading role. The country has hosted major international competitions, including the Basketball Africa League and cycling championships, and is investing in facilities designed to attract global

events.

“Africa is ready for its sports economy to grow,” she said. “The question is whether we are willing to invest enough to make it happen.”