

## Suspect and Protect: Concussion awareness campaign

### FIFA Member Association media release

FERWafa is pleased to support FIFA and the World Health Organization (WHO) in launching *Suspect and Protect*, a campaign designed to raise awareness of concussion – a brain injury which should always be taken seriously.

Football continues to be a popular sport in Rwanda but is a contact sport, and therefore concussion is a risk to every player on the pitch. While FERWafa is proud to see approximately fifty-five thousand (55 000) people participating in football at all levels in Rwanda being aware of concussion can help to make it even more enjoyable.

*Suspect and Protect* aims to raise awareness of the fact concussion is a brain injury and is a risk to every player on the pitch. It is designed to increase sign and symptom recognition, highlight that symptoms may take up to 72 hours to show, and offer guidance on how to return to play safely following a suspected or confirmed concussion. Clubs and teams at all levels throughout Rwanda will be sent campaign materials to spread the message, including promotion on social media and display in training centres and sports facilities. Rwanda national teams will also be given educational resources, for the benefit of everyone involved with our national teams.

Mr. Adolphe KALISA, FERWafa Secretary General “We are pleased to partner with FIFA and the World Health Organization in sharing vital education around concussion, and hope it helps to raise awareness throughout our football ecosystem, from national teams and elite through to the grassroots community – as everyone playing at any level can benefit from knowing the signs and symptoms.

“We would like to thank all clubs and leagues who will help to share the message throughout the country.”

### Notes to Editors:

The campaign is built upon three main action points for audiences within national teams, professional clubs and leagues and amateur and grassroots communities.

**BE AWARE:** Whether a player, coach, team doctor, parent or carer, it is important to understand that concussion is a traumatic brain injury and should always be taken seriously. Everyone should know the common signs of concussion as well as when to seek urgent medical advice.

**SUSPECT:** Anyone who sustains a direct or indirect impact to their head, face, neck or body, should be assessed for concussion symptoms. Symptoms may take up to 72 hours to present. The symptoms include headache or ‘pressure’ sensation, nausea or vomiting, problems with balance, dizziness or being unsteady on feet, distorted/blurry or double vision, sensitivity to light and/or noise, memory problems (difficulty recalling the traumatic event, and/or events before or after), feeling drowsy, confused or unable to focus, sleep problems.

**PROTECT:** Anyone presenting with one or more concussion symptom should leave the pitch immediately. A doctor must be seen as soon as possible and within 24 hours. Symptoms of concussion may appear days or weeks after the traumatic event. Some symptoms require urgent medical attention. Follow medical guidance on return to play. No match is worth the risk.

**ENDS**