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Rwanda welcomed as full member union of World Rugby

World Rugby Council has approved the application by the Rwanda Rugby Federation (RRF) as a full member union, bringing the total number to 103 full members and 17 associates.

The RRF became an associate member of World Rugby in April 2004 and is a full member of Rugby Africa, the regional association. The union actively partakes in regional activities and participates in a range of Rugby Africa tournaments. It is recognised by its National Olympic Committee and fulfils World Rugby's full membership criteria.

The RRF runs a national 15-a-side team and, in total, has 10 teams participating in a domestic 15-a-side league with more than 300 registered adult male players, 60 adult female players and nearly 7,000 youth players. The union is a structured organisation, administered by a full-time CEO and a number of volunteers.

The application was supported by the World Rugby Executive Committee, Rugby Africa and World Rugby's Rugby Services Manager (Africa).

World Rugby Chairman Bernard Lapasset said: "We are delighted to be welcoming Rwanda as a full member of World Rugby. These are very exciting times for our sport with unprecedented growth and interest around the world. With today's announcement, we look forward to a strong, well-organised game in Rwanda and we are glad that the union is now ready to join the global rugby family as a full member and continue its work growing the game in Africa."

Rugby Afrique Chairman Abdelaziz Bougja added: "These are exciting times for rugby in Africa and Rwanda's admission as a World Rugby full member union is reflective of a region where participation has doubled in the past eight years and where rugby continues to reach and attract new audiences. We look forward to continuing our work with the RRF and being part of the game's success story there. As rugby in Africa overcomes the challenges it faces, the game's character-building values remain very much to the fore."

This decision is subject to a review being conducted within 24 months in order to confirm that the union has progressed and is worthy of retaining its full member status.

JAMES FITZGERALD

Media Manager, World Rugby

T: +353-1-240-9237 / +353-86-1723-570

E: james.fitzgerald@worldrugby.org

WorldRugby.org

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