

STATEMENT BY MUSA HASSAN BILTY ON THE POOLING OF BROADCAST & MARKETING RIGHTS TO THE FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS 2022 AND 2026

I have seen both a cover letter from FIFA to the 54 African Football Associations (FAs) plus a draft mandate for the collectivization of all broadcast and commercial rights on the African continent for the FIFA World Cup qualifiers 2022 and 2026.

The cover letter places the official timeline for sign-off and return of the signed mandate at within a week, leaving individual FAs with insufficient time to consult on the same.

Every year, the National Governments of each of the 54 African FAs spend millions of dollars in direct support to the National teams of these countries to participate in these CAF and FIFA events.

At the very least, their default expectations are that those qualifiers for which they have spent precious taxpayer money, may be made available to the National broadcasters of their respective countries and its citizens, at little or no cost.

Unfortunately, Government or taxpayer interests are NEVER represented whenever CAF, FIFA and African FAs arrogate themselves the role of dishing out the commercial and broadcast interests of those same football matches.

During our CAF EXCO meeting of September 2018, it was unanimously agreed:

"The rights for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will not be centralized by CAF. Each Federation will be free to look for its own sponsors. CAF will be able to support the member associations in their research."

I continue to believe that the current unfolding events surrounding the so-called CAF-FIFA cooperation are primarily geared towards the exploitation of the commercial properties of CAF, with the unwitting acquiescence of the CAF FAs.

This new commercial agreements has the capacity to relegate existing partnerships to the periphery, with serious legal and reputational consequences for the FAs.

FIFA continues with its plan for the sale of the global football rights to Middle-East interests, starting with the gullible African Confederation.

Under ordinary circumstances, this would be a matter that ought to have been discussed by the CAF EXCO in the first instance, and forwarded to CAF General Assembly for ratification, and thus acquire formal fiat.

Both were regrettably ignored!

Currently, through a process at the Court of Arbitration of Sports, I have challenged the entire "CAF – FIFA cooperation" on the basis of illegality, which therefore implies that any decisions taken by or contracts signed with the illegitimate General-Delegate, will be a nullity *ab initio*.

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