



# 2019 SPORTING CHANCE FORUM

MEETING REPORT

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### HOSTS

The [Centre for Sport and Human Rights](#) brings together an unprecedented alliance of intergovernmental organisations, governments, sports bodies, athletes, hosts, sponsors, broadcasters, civil society representatives, trade unions, employers and their associations, and national human rights institutions to collectively address human rights challenges within the world of sport.

The 2019 Forum was co-hosted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) - both founding members of the Centre’s Advisory Council - as well as the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG)

### IMAGES

Photography from Millar Cole Photography



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OPENING REMARKS AND KEYNOTE SESSION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THE ROLE OF SPORT IN RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CORPORATE PARTNERS: CONNECTING CORPORATE PURPOSE WITH RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>REMEDYING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SPORT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>THE CASE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION: IMPACT FROM THE FIELD</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>CHILD RIGHTS IN SPORT</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING ADULT ATHLETES AND CHILDREN IN SPORT: WHERE TO START?</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CRAIG FOSTER IN CONVERSATION WITH HAKEEM AL-ARAIBI</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>IMPACT OF REGIONAL BODIES ON POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>THE ROAD AHEAD: CLOSING PANEL AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>REMEMBERING JIN SOOK LEE (1966-2020)</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>ANNEX: FULL 2019 AGENDA</b>	<b>38</b>



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Video feed of a speaker, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a white shirt, speaking into a microphone.



*Click this icon to watch each speaker's remarks, recorded live from Geneva.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sporting Chance Forum 2019 (SCF 2019) was convened on 21-22 November at the United Nations (UN) Palais des Nations in Geneva during the week that commemorated the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). SCF 2019 continued the process begun in 2016 of building bridges between the worlds of sport and human rights, and supported the aims of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights (the Centre). The worlds of sport and human rights share common values and both operate with a strong level of independence. SCF 2019 showed these two communities working more closely together to achieve common objectives.

This Sporting Chance Forum brought together 350 participants and signalled a shift from previous years. Until now, the SCF has concentrated on galvanising sport and human rights stakeholders to join forces behind a common challenge, sharing new tools to address these challenges in sport, and giving a platform to victims of sport-related human rights abuse – including athletes, workers, fans, human rights defenders, and other affected communities. SCF 2019 deepened this work with a greater focus on practical action and the positive human rights outcomes now being pursued, including under the umbrella of the Centre and through the work of the diverse constituency of stakeholders on its Advisory Council, and also focused on creating a “common language” to further bridge the worlds of sport and human rights.

The policy and legal landscape in which sport operates is strengthening from a human rights point of view. During 2019 a number of new instruments were adopted of relevance to sport including ILO Convention 190 on eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work, the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, and Guidelines on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Child Prostitution and Pornography (OP-SC).

In addition, more human rights and political bodies have started developing policy frameworks to partner with sport at the regional level, including the African Union and Council of Europe, which are cascading their policies down to the national level. Many International Sports Federations (IFs) have developed toolkits to integrate child safeguarding into their operations, while the World Players Association has developed new declarations and other measures to ensure athlete rights are cemented in sport.

Sport continues to be a powerful vehicle towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and many themes explored at SCF 2019 - such as the empowerment of women and girls, decent work, the rule of law, and increasing access to justice - dovetail with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 Targets. In addition, this year's SCF saw greater participation, both among speakers and participants, from the Global South, and placed a particular emphasis on youth voice, bringing under 30s from around the world to share their perspectives on the themes being discussed.

Without the courage of affected people to speak out about their experiences, little of the work of the Centre, or on sport and human rights generally, would be possible. SCF 2018 had showcased the voices of powerful survivors of sexual abuse across sports, genders and continents, including from the Afghan Women's Football Team who, in 2019, found a measure of justice with the President of their Federation fined and now banned for life from the sport. SCF 2019 gave a platform for individuals like Hakeem al-Araibi to share their experiences and put a spotlight on the emerging sport and human rights movement that played a significant role in his release from jail and safe return to Australia. The Centre and wider movement will continue to mobilise collective action, and to help all actors involved in sport take the necessary actions to respect human rights.

The language of human rights, and concepts like remedy and safeguarding, can be both unfamiliar and intimidating to those in sport, and so it was important that SCF 2019 showed how both the worlds of sport and human rights can stand to benefit from sharing knowledge and good practices and by working collectively.





# OPENING REMARKS AND KEYNOTE SESSION

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Since its inception in 2016, the Sporting Chance Forum has highlighted the role sport - at its best - can play as a force for good in society. Co-host of the SCF 2019, **Tatiana Volovaya**, Director General of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) noted sport provides opportunities for cross-cultural communication, and for the hosts of its landmark events a driver for job creation, urban development or renewal.

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“ *Sport remains an important connective tissue that binds people together across and within societies* ”

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At the same time, sport is not immune from societal challenges such as increased fragmentation, racism and violence. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights **Michelle Bachelet** remarked that in the wake of sexual abuse scandals in US Gymnastics and Afghan women’s football, many athletes continue to endure sexual harassment and assault. Fans and players still confront discrimination and persecution. Such crimes are going unreported and often without recourse to remedy.

Collective action and uniting behind the Sporting Chance Principles offers a way forward.

“ *Just as we in the human rights community are increasingly reporting affronts to, and attacks on, the basic shared principles of human rights law, the world of sport is seeing manifestations of violent hatred and rule breaking* ”

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Speakers highlighted the symbolic significance of the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2019 in France attracting a record one billion viewers from around the world, and incremental advances like the chance for some women spectators in Iran - after years of being banned from the country’s football stadiums – to finally attend matches. Specific examples of collective action are also on the rise.



Director General **Guy Ryder** drew attention to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) efforts to assist the Qatari authorities to fulfil worker rights obligations ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which is resulting in improved working conditions, particularly for migrant workers, and has led to the introduction of a non-discriminatory minimum wage, the abolition of exit permits and the criticised kafala system.

**Jeffrey Schlagenhauf**, Deputy Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) noted the role increasingly being played by the OECD's network of National Contact Points (NCP) in receiving sport-related complaints of alleged human rights violations. Policy level opportunities are also on the rise. ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment adopted in June 2019 offers new opportunities to combat human rights abuses in sport. The ILO's [Global Dialogue on Decent Work in Sport](#) in early 2020 was also signposted as another chance to make sport more inclusive.

SCF 2019 underscored the link between corruption in sport and human rights abuses. Jeffrey Schlagenhauf cited the collective efforts of the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS)<sup>1</sup> which has developed new policies to pre-empt corruption in the procurement processes related to sport event infrastructure and the selection of sporting event sites, and has set up a group to work with sports bodies and law enforcement activities. [The Recommendation of the OECD Council on Global Events and Local Development](#) adopted in 2018 also offers an additional framework for ensuring events respect labour and human rights across the sport event lifecycle, and deliver sustainable development and value for money.

Speakers cautioned against complacency. For example, more work is still needed to guarantee human and labour rights are respected in Qatar ahead of and during the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Full and equal access for women in sport, including gender parity pay, is still some way off. Racial abuse continues to be inflicted upon football players across Europe with shocking regularity, and many sports federations are reporting increased attacks on referees. Human Rights Advocate and former international footballer **Craig Foster** raised concerns about whether sport is delivering on its social contract with stakeholders on the promise to foster positive change and equality of opportunity. Until sport routinely puts human rights commitments into practice, even in challenging contexts<sup>2</sup>, the risk is that trust in sport will ebb and cases like those

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1 An informal network of international organisations, sports bodies and governments working to combat corruption in sport.

2 In October 2019 Shanghai was awarded the FIFA Club World Cup 2021. China is also due to hold the 2022 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing. FIFA faced criticism from human rights groups over its choice including for failing to implement its own requirements with regard to human rights risk assessment of contexts.



involving Hakeem al-Araibi<sup>3</sup> and Sahar Khodayari<sup>4</sup> will reoccur.

Frameworks like the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) offer ways to understand the harms that can arise from sport activities, and a roadmap to address them. There are good reasons for sports bodies to recognise international human rights standards and embed good practices across their operations. Craig Foster noted that doing so:

- 1) Legitimises the social contract between sports bodies, governments and their commercial partners;
- 2) Mitigates the growing risks sports bodies face of doing business in countries where human rights abuse is pervasive, and across sport's own operations and;
- 3) Provides a bulwark for sport and all within to lean on for protection in the face of commercial and other pressures to look away from human rights abuses. International human rights standards and mechanisms equip sport to advocate for the equal dignity of all people in keeping with its values.

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3 Hakeem al-Araibi is a former Bahraini football player who spoke out against the persecution and torture of fellow football players during the Bahrain uprising of 2011. Shortly after he was arrested for vandalizing a police station – an act of vandalism he could not have done because he was playing in a televised football match at the time of the incident. Fearing for his life, he fled to Australia where he was granted asylum. In November 2018, he was arrested while on honeymoon in Thailand on the basis of an Interpol “red notice” issued by Bahrain, which should never have been recognised due to his status as a refugee. Hakeem was freed from prison and allowed to return to Australia in February 2019 following an extraordinary international campaign, led by former Socceroo Craig Foster.

4 Sahar Khodayari, also known as “Blue Girl”, was an Iranian female football fan who, in March 2019, disguised herself as a man in order to watch her team play at Azadi Stadium in Tehran. She was caught, arrested, and released 3 days later on bail to await her court case. After being told she would face six months in prison, she set herself on fire outside the courthouse in September 2019 and died from her injuries several weeks later.





# THE ROLE OF SPORT IN RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

## Key Takeaways

- In order to embody its own values, sport must work to advance human rights
- Sport can be part of the solution, including by working to fill gaps in national development plans by contributing to the construction of infrastructure and resource constraints when hosting an event
- Before hosting an event or running its development programmes, sport has a duty of care to protect and respect people
- Players and athletes increasingly want to be part of these conversations, and coaches and other stakeholders should be aware of that and support it
- In order to survive and flourish, sport needs to resonate with children as the future of sport, and be culturally relevant to all their stakeholders, which sometimes means having difficult conversations

**Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein**, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, posed several questions at the start of the session. Can we strengthen the human rights movement by bringing sport closer to it, or does that risk overburdening a system already under strain and threatened by the rise of populism? Sport has the potential to activate the public in support of human rights like little else, but is it right to expect the world of sport and its visible ambassadors, the athletes, to put human rights activism ahead of sporting excellence? Is sport a suitable partner for the global human rights movement or could it drag it down – given the tribalism that often exists between different teams and national rivalries, and stress on competition that can fuel rule-breaking.

**François Croquette**, Ambassador at Large for Human Rights for the Government of France spoke of practical ways in which sport is already advancing the human rights agenda. The Paris 2024 Olympic Committee aspires to put human rights, specifically women's rights, at the



very core of its games. To do this it plans for absolute parity between the number of men and women participants and for strict wage equality, respect for union rights via its social charter for inclusion, and engagement with affected groups, including LGBTI organisations. The Paris 2024 Olympic Committee hopes its ambition will spill over into other events, like the next Rugby World Cup also being hosted by France and the Youth Olympic Games set for Dakar, Senegal in 2022. Sport and human rights has bolstered France’s overseas development aid campaigns in Senegal, where, by enlisting star footballers like Zinedine Zidane to front its efforts, the work to encourage young people from all backgrounds to attend school and get an education is magnified. Player activism has also led the French Football League in a campaign to drive out homophobic abuse across all stadiums in France. Sport and human rights actors can work together and such efforts need not be a burden, provided sport embodies its own values. This of course will raise difficult questions in some cases, such as the conditions under which countries hosting major events should be penalised for significant shortcomings in implementing their own human rights obligations.

**Zeina Mina** of the Comité International des Jeux de la Francophonie (International Committee of the Francophonie Games) outlined the work of the Francophonie to promote human rights<sup>1</sup>. The decision to award Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, as host of the next Francophonie Games (2021) gives the DRC a chance to improve the country’s image internationally, but also affords an opportunity to help address gaps in domestic infrastructure, human resources and to meet the sporting requirements of the various International Sports Federations (IF). The Francophonie now also requires all countries bidding to host the Games to demonstrate respect for human rights, and the DRC has been using the Games to promote physical education and healthy-living to combat chronic disease.

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“ *If you do not uphold your duty of care, you have failed before you have begun* ”

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**David Grevemberg** of Commonwealth Sport (CS)<sup>2</sup> spoke of his organisation’s journey over 10 years from embracing human rights by accident, to now – through its human rights policy, management training, and developing human rights strategy - by design. CS has realised that whether hosting an event or delivering on its development programmes, first and foremost sport has

a duty of care to respect and protect people. Though it is tempting to advocate first on the compelling human rights issues of the day, unless sports bodies first meet their “duty of care, you have failed before you have begun”.

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1 The Francophonie works across 88 countries. It has dedicated human rights department that is recognized by the UN. The Francophonie Games are held every 4 years and need over 4,000 people in the host country to deliver.  
2 Commonwealth Sport comprises 71 nations and territories nearly all of whom were formerly in the British Empire.



**Karl-Erik Nilsson** from UEFA suggested that sport and football are part of the solution in addressing human rights abuses, even as its work to combat racist, sectarian and homophobic behaviour linked to sport all continue to be significant challenges. Today players and stakeholders in football want to be involved in this discussion, and no longer see it as too political. UEFA is taking practical steps to recommend that clubs and national associations do not go to places or have connections with countries that are not inclusive, such as those that don't allow women to play or to be spectators. UEFA has instituted measures so all players and clubs feel welcome in any country where they play the game. More needs to be done to educate and impose sanctions for racial chanting and other violations, but as football is a reflection of society the answers need to come through collective action.

While athlete activism on specific social issues is on the rise, speaking out on broader human rights concerns remains challenging. Grevemberg tracked sport's human rights journey from Tommie Smith's Black Power salute at the Mexico Olympics, through to the sporting boycotts to end apartheid in South Africa in the 1960s-80s, to more recent activism in sport on human rights. Commonwealth Sport now understands that to survive and flourish, it has to resonate with children and be culturally relevant to all its key stakeholders. CS's historical ties to legacies of post conflict and colonialism means it cannot shy away from its vulnerabilities, but needs to confront them with difficult conversations. This means giving athletes, communities and others a chance to have their voices heard. This approach is helping CS become better informed and connected to its movement. While CS faced some criticism for what was viewed as politicising sport by allowing athletes to speak up at the 2018 Gold Coast Games, the ability to voice such concerns constructively can benefit all.

Athletes today are more aware of the common values of sport than critics imagine. They need to be supported though, and in Swedish football for example, civil rights defenders are now being invited to give briefings to players and coaches on the countries in which they are due to play key matches or tournaments. This has helped them understand the historical context, and feel better informed, safer and more comfortable. UEFA recommends prospective bidders to work with the Centre to ensure that their bids are in line with UEFA's own human rights expectations .



# CORPORATE PARTNERS: CONNECTING CORPORATE PURPOSE WITH RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

## Key Takeaways

- In many cases, corporate partners are leading by example on human rights and sport should take lessons from their experience
- The consumer market is changing, and there is an increasing interest by consumers to only buy from companies that reflect their own values
- Collective action is critical – in most instances, corporates are facing similar challenges and it is easier to confront them together. Similarly with regard to leverage, corporate partners will have greater influence if they communicate with one voice
- Hosting an MSE shines a spotlight on practices in that country, and corporate partners should be prepared to confront those challenges

Sport and business are inseparable. Sport is now a USD \$1 trillion business in its own right, representing 1% of the global economy. It relies heavily on revenues derived from its business relationships, including with auxiliary services providers such as sponsors and broadcasters as well as the hospitality sector that accommodates travelling fans, sports officials and VIPs. Tensions often arise around these relationships. Is the betting industry an appropriate sponsor for sport? Is enough thought given by sport to its choice of long-term sponsors? The IOC's recent deal with Airbnb for example, prompted French hoteliers to suspend their collaboration with the 2024 Paris Olympic organisers over fears of unfair competition<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, sport's corporate partners are in many cases leading by example on human rights and sport can take lessons from their experience.

<sup>1</sup> Union of Hotel-related Trades and Industries (UHTI) suspended its relationship with Paris '24 in November 2019 over the Airbnb sponsorship. It wants Airbnb to be held to the same stringent security and other conditions as hotels.



**Andrés Peñate** of ABInBev spoke of the need for all sectors, including brewing and sport, to take a human rights approach. As a major Colombian football sponsor, ABInBev was brought face to face with human rights issues when it launched a campaign to distribute 700,000 footballs across the country in the team and brand's colours. The company knew it needed to assess the human rights impacts of its football procurement from Asian factories, but because of incomplete human rights risk assessments at the time, it was unprepared for a protest by domestic artisanal football producers who faced financial ruin and loss of livelihoods if thousands of footballs were going to be distributed for free. ABInBev saw it had a duty of care and abandoned the campaign. Since then, it has worked with the Centre, Shift Ltd and others to apply the UN Guiding Principles across its operations and business relationships. This has given the company a new lens - as well as policies, processes and connections - to spot human rights issues it may have missed previously, and be better prepared. Such cases highlight new realities in sports sponsorship and the brand-relationship that exists between sport and its sponsors. For fast moving consumer goods companies, marketing is critical. Today's consumers are sophisticated and increasingly interested in associating only with brands that bring meaning and reflect their values.

**Moira Oliver** from BT Plc<sup>2</sup> discussed efforts to embed the UNGPs in the sporting context within its BT Sport division (the second largest pay-TV sports broadcaster in the UK). Through work with the Centre and its network of fellow UK broadcasters, BT took the lead in 2018 on developing a set of guidelines for broadcast and compliance teams to assess human rights risks linked to the coverage of sport events. The 2019 UEFA Europa League Final in Baku, Azerbaijan was an early opportunity to put these guidelines into practice. BT conducted a high-level country analysis of the event's human rights risk profile, and identified risks to BT's broadcast team and for travelling fans. BT Sport – as a relatively small broadcaster with no news team – was struggling to gauge the context on the ground. By reaching out to the Centre, it was possible to convene a meeting of broadcast partners and forge a clearer picture of the potential challenges and how each broadcaster might respond. BT Sport worked with ITN's newscasters to access news on the ground so representatives would be in a position to react appropriately if human rights related concerns arose. This collective action facilitated by the Centre enabled BT Sport to share pertinent information with the ex-football players it employs to commentate on matches so they could raise human rights issues live on air to an audience of several million UK viewers, an opportunity that would have been missed without such collaboration.

Another example was provided by **Madhu Rajesh** of the International Tourism Partnership<sup>3</sup> who works with 16 of the world's largest hotel companies, many of whom operate in Qatar. As attention turns to human rights issues beyond the construction sector in Qatar, ITP has responded by engaging with the recruitment agencies it uses to hire staff and subcontractors to fulfil operations, and is working to address risks of human trafficking and forced labour linked

2 BT Sport was set up in 2013 has over 5 million subscribers and rights to broadcast in the UK and Ireland.

3 ITP represents 25 % of the industry by volume, including brands like Hilton, Marriot, and IHG, and smaller chains.

to unethical recruitment practices. ITP sees that no one hotel can solve the problems alone, and so is working collectively with the ILO, the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) and other actors to address challenges associated with weak mechanisms to monitor working conditions in the recruitment supply chain. ITP is attempting to cascade good practice to others in the industry in Qatar and in different geographies.

The spotlight that comes with hosting mega-sporting events (MSEs) can create pressures to enact human and labour rights reforms that might not occur otherwise, as has been the experience in Qatar. Panel moderator **Steve Gibbons** (Ergon Associates) noted that a challenge confronting sponsors, broadcasters and hoteliers is the extent to which they can exert individual and collective leverage through their business relationships to drive positive human rights change in other countries hosting such events. For ABInBev and BT, such leverage is stronger in places where they command a substantial percentage of market share and can insert human rights clauses in procurement contracts. When it comes to sport sponsorship and broadcast relationships however, the task is harder. Sponsors appear to have visible points of leverage over awarding sports bodies, but in reality each sponsor is only one of many, and unless several sponsors who share a human rights vision can join forces, their leverage is minimal. Similarly, broadcast companies bid for broadcast rights as they are presented with contractual frameworks providing little if any scope for change. Collective action is increasingly seen as the solution to such realities, and a way to have conversations in a safe space. Collaborative efforts also offer scope to popularise the human rights due diligence called for in the UNGPs in places where they still may not be the norm, like Japan, host to the forthcoming Tokyo Olympics. To maximise impact, more sponsors, broadcasters and corporate partners need to come together and add numbers to raise the bar in sport and human rights.





# REMEDYING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SPORT

## Key Takeaways

- Access to remedy is too often unsatisfactory. In sport this is because few of the existing mechanisms would consider taking on a role in a human rights case and many of the arbitrators within these mechanisms do not have human rights expertise
- Even where a formal remedy mechanism does not exist, remedy can still be provided
- Remedy must be culturally relevant, underpinned by human rights principles, be financially accessible and be rooted in dialogue so that athletes can engage in the process
- Mutual trust is built when civil society organisations see that sports bodies are serious about putting their human rights commitments into practice
- Systems can be tailored to a sports body's operations – they do not need to be expensive or resource intensive. There are many free tools which explain how this can be done.

What are the unique challenges around ensuring access to effective forms of remedy for people adversely impacted in some way by their involvement in sport? What steps are needed to bring meaningful remedy to those affected, whether they be athletes or other individuals? The concept of remedy and the range of grievance mechanisms that are of relevance are not well understood in sport circles as **Rachel Davis** of Shift explained. Remedy essentially boils down to making good on a harm – e.g. a human rights abuse. It is often an uncomfortable and emotionally charged conversation for all concerned: those affected, those in civil society who support individuals who are seeking remedy, and for those who have a responsibility to provide effective forms of remedy for any abuses they may be associated with through their actions or inactions. All too often, access to and assurance of adequate remedy is unsatisfactory. Filing a complaint can be hard and time consuming, victims invariably lack confidence in the outcomes, and for these and other reasons, many do not even bother to lodge complaints in the first place. Prevention is easier, but in an imperfect world, things go wrong, so all of us owe it to those who





have experienced abuse of some kind to have honest, professional conversations on this critical subject

Grievance mechanisms are tools via which individuals can achieve remedy for harms caused. They can also make it possible to solve problems before they escalate – often a key driver for businesses. Until now, most grievance mechanisms relating to sport have been designed primarily to protect the integrity of the specific sport involved, rather than the athletes, or those in and around tournaments. Few existing mechanisms contemplate their role in addressing human rights abuses, and currently few arbitrators have in depth human rights expertise. Strengthening remedy in sport may mean adjusting existing mechanisms to make them fit for purpose to respond to human rights concerns. It may also mean adding new mechanisms where needed, or taking an ecosystem approach through a smart mix of State (government) mechanisms, mechanisms run by sports bodies, and others that work collectively to ensure access to effective remedy from the grassroots up. For sport, a key starting point is to see remedy in a more positive light rather than something to be feared.

Sports federations – even those with good systems in place – can find themselves involved in cases where human rights abuses have occurred, and many people in and around sport experience or witness harms. In past years the SCF has explored the range of human rights abuses often arising in sport: from forced evictions of families around new stadiums, to arrests of human rights defenders and journalists who expose wrongdoing, and from preventable deaths of migrant workers on sport-related construction sites, to cases of sexual abuse of young athletes, and discrimination in sport. SCF 2019 highlighted emerging efforts to remedy past injustices now coming to light.

**Minky Worden** of Human Rights Watch (HRW) highlighted the example of how the International Olympic Committee (IOC), when provided with evidence of non-payment of worker wages on Sochi Olympic sites, conducted investigations and ensured all workers involved were paid back-dated wages amounting to USD 8 million. This experience shows that even in the absence of formal human rights systems and related structures it is possible to provide remedies for specific harms. Individuals can play a role too. When members of the Afghan women’s football national team, including teenagers, needed to complain of sexual abuse by the President of the Afghanistan Football Federation, they turned to their coach, Kelly Lindsay, for help. Lindsay brought their cases to FIFA and to the judicial system, and in June 2019, FIFA banned the official from the sport for life and issued a fine of CHF 1 million<sup>1</sup>. The longstanding stadium ban confronting Iran’s female football fans was also highlighted, initially involving FIFA actions making it possible for Iranian women to hold signs at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia to publicise their case. After several warnings, FIFA issued an ultimatum to the Iranian federation that finally resulted in women gaining access to Iran’s football stadiums.

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1 The adjudicatory chamber of FIFA’s independent Ethics Committee found Afghan Football Federation President Keramuudin Karim guilty of sexually abusing female players and his position. The chamber found Karim had breached FIFA’s Ethics Code article 23 – protection of physical and mental integrity – and article 25 – abuse of position.



**Gregory Nott** from Norton Rose Fulbright South Africa discussed South African middle-distance runner, Caster Semenya, whose case before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in 2019 was widely followed.<sup>2</sup> The CAS ruled in favour of the regulations that suspended Semenya from competition, yet simultaneously declared the regulations to be “discriminatory” – a factor many believe was not given adequate consideration during the hearing and which underlines current shortcomings in the human rights capacity of CAS, as well as the need for remedy to be culturally relevant, to be underpinned by human rights principles, financially accessible (Semenya is from the poorest province in South Africa and under other circumstances would have been unable to pursue justice), and rooted in engagement and dialogue, so that athletes can speak before the platforms ruling on their case.

Building and Wood Workers’ International (BWI) campaigns to achieve safe and decent working conditions for construction workers on sport-related sites. **Jin Sook Lee** spoke of how remedy has been central to BWI’s fruitful engagement with FIFA. While governments have a duty to provide remedy, sports bodies have responsibility to use their leverage to affect change. With FIFA’s intervention, the Qatar Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy signed an MOU with BWI in 2016. This has resulted in new mechanisms to address worker complaints (e.g. receiving salaries on time), and allowed for joint inspections, so that BWI was able to conduct worker interviews, audit site safety, make recommendations (e.g. to improve the maintenance of safety harnesses used by workers at height) and return for follow-up inspections. BWI’s experience ahead of the Tokyo Olympics has been less positive. Despite Japan’s established human rights mechanisms and trade union laws, BWI’s offers to conduct joint audits or bring documented evidence of worker violations to the Tokyo organisers have been rejected and Tokyo Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (TOCOG)’s grievance mechanism has repeatedly thrown out complaints as being unjustified. BWI is turning to the IOC as the umbrella body for the Games, hoping they will step in as FIFA did in Qatar.

**Andreas Graf** of FIFA spoke of how work relating to remedy brings him into close contact with affected people. Since FIFA began its human rights journey in 2016, it has prioritised prevention of its most serious (salient) human rights risks – e.g. in Qatar, or with member associations on child safeguarding. FIFA’s approach to remedy has been to respond as if it contributed to any harms itself. It promotes access to remedy for victims when they are tied to FIFA’s third party relationships. FIFA clusters this work according to: i) Links to tournaments, e.g. its intervention on behalf of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists ahead of the men’s 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, ii) Football governance – e.g. FIFA’s player rights dispute resolution mechanism, or the work of its Ethics Commission, and iii) Grievance Mechanisms for FIFA staff e.g. to address workplace bullying or harassment. FIFA deploys a mix of grievance mechanisms,

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2 Caster Semenya is a middle-distance South African runner who was suspended from international competition following her 2009 World Championship win after she was forced to undergo a sex verification test to prove she was female – the test found that she was hyperandrogenous and had a high, yet naturally occurring, level of testosterone. The case has since been subject to considerable debate on whether it is fair for Semenya to compete in female competition, which culminated in the 2019 CAS ruling upholding the regulations banning Semenya from competition, yet acknowledging the regulations were discriminatory.

ranging from its own systems that fill particular gaps, to appropriate links with third party and State-based mechanisms. FIFA is striving to adapt and make existing mechanisms, such as the Ethics Commission, fit-for-purpose to handle human rights issues.

Dilemmas remain. For athletes, there is doubt over the extent to which cases can be pursued to completion outside of CAS, and whether the choice of CAS arbiters is meaningful if human rights expertise remains limited. In addition, ways have to be found to protect the identity and safety of those who report abuses in sport, especially where they risk putting their careers or lives on the line for reporting wrongdoing. Andreas Graf discussed the challenges in Afghanistan where members of the women's football team faced death threats for reporting the abuse they had endured, and FIFA had to ensure their safety and anonymity.

For affected people and sports bodies this can seem daunting. Civil society and the Centre are there to help, and FIFA confirms that as it has gained in confidence, they now routinely turn to such actors for advice<sup>3</sup>. Equally, as civil society groups see that sports bodies are serious about putting their human rights commitments into practice, mutual trust is built. SCF 2017 heard from Semyon Simonov, a human rights defender who documented worker rights abuses involving 2018 Russia World Cup construction sites. A turning point in the relationship between Human Rights Watch and FIFA came by having Andreas Graf sit in on Simonov's case after he was detained on the Volgograd stadium site. Even for sports bodies that lack the same resources or profile as FIFA or the IOC, it is still possible to prevent and remedy human rights harms. Systems can be tailored to the scale of the sports body's operations, and costs need not be prohibitive, with guidance materials now freely available online. For athletes, affected people and sports bodies, civil society and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) can be a great source of advice. The Centre is dedicated to providing free support for sports bodies on how to get started, and can signpost where help is available. Being open-minded and joining the conversation is the start.

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3 FIFA also seeks guidance from its independent Human Rights Advisory Board, chaired by Rachel Davis, which includes civil society experts, and among other issues advised FIFA on ways to handle the Hakeem al-Araibi case.





# THE CASE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION: IMPACT FROM THE FIELD

## Key Takeaways

- As many national sports federations are small with minimal resources, partnering with human rights organisations can be a useful way of working towards common goals and bringing in much needed expertise
- Sport has proven to be a unique avenue to explore and promote issues such as gender equality, child rights and integrating people with disabilities

**John Morrison**, Deputy Chair of the Centre, outlined how national level sports bodies and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from two post-conflict contexts, Northern Ireland and Rwanda, discussed insights and how they have pursued collective action to promote human rights .

NHRIs in many countries help educate the public about human rights, conduct investigations and take legal action where necessary<sup>1</sup>. **David Russell**, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) discussed how his office forged relations with the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council (CGC) when Belfast was awarded the 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games. Northern Ireland’s complex history of sectarian division has clouded perceptions of human rights, but the CGC understood the importance of a preventative approach. Though the Games were subsequently lost – due to a breakdown of devolved Government – the relationships forged at the start left a positive legacy. For example, the [London Declaration on Sport and Human Rights](#), developed in partnership with other members of the Centre’s Advisory Council, is rooted in human rights principles and the values

1 National Human Rights Institutions (sometimes called Commissions or Ombudspersons) are cornerstones of the international human rights landscape. Globally there are 78 independent National Human Rights Institutions, i.e. they are recognised as being independent of Governments and have “A status” under the Paris Principles.



of sport and outlines opportunities for Commonwealth NHRIs and sports bodies to use sport as a vehicle to promote human rights, and to embed human rights concerns in sport. The NIHRC and CGC also established a Forum that regularly brings together major national sports federations in Northern Ireland. After some initial hesitancy, the Forum now provides a safe space for sharing good practice and discussing some of the challenges members recognised they had in common. This is not always easy, as **Conal Heatley** of CGC stressed that most national sports bodies do not understand human rights language at first, and find it intimidating. As many member associations<sup>2</sup> are small (the CGC for example only has one staff member and a Board) and poorly resourced, it is really only through acting collectively that progress is possible.

Twenty-five years ago Rwanda experienced genocide, which destroyed every aspect of national life, including sport. **Festus Bizimana** from the National Olympic Committee of Rwanda, **Silas Sinyigaya** of the National Human Rights Commission of Rwanda, and **Naickey Ijimbere** also of the National Olympic Committee of Rwanda shared their insights about the role of collective action. Today more than half of Rwanda's population is under the age of 25. Many were infants when the genocide happened and grew up without adult role models to teach them basic human values. The Rwandan NHRI was established to protect human rights in all areas of life in the country, and is using sport to help recover lost values and rediscover the nation's common humanity and dignity. Through sport it has been possible to promote gender equality, integrate people with disabilities, and bring children and communities back together as one people. They are also addressing challenges including child abuse, sexual assault, and discrimination within Rwandan sport. To this end, children are being educated about the risks of abuse in sports, about their rights and who to turn to for help. Training for coaches and education for parents to prevent harms have also been critical to recovery efforts. And because 56 % of the Rwandan population and 65 % of MPs in Parliament are women, work to promote gender equality has also been a priority.

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2 These include Commonwealth Games Associations (CGA), Football Associations and National Olympic Committees (NOC). CGAs and NOCs are one and the same organisation in many countries.



# CHILD RIGHTS IN SPORT

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## Key Takeaways

- Sexual abuse and exploitation of children in grassroots and elite sport shows little sign of stopping. The abuses are enabled by institutional failures on the part of both sports organisations and governments
- Harms such as sexual abuse or exploitation often happen within a child's "circle of trust", with perpetrators often being team leaders, coaches and medics. Children are especially vulnerable due the power dynamics inherent in sport
- Children can be empowered to act as agents of change if systems allow their voices to be heard
- There are significant training needs of child protection and safeguarding within the sporting community, particularly among agents who recruit children, however, good practice is emerging

**Najat Maalla M'jid**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) on Violence Against Children, highlighted the importance of sport in realising children's rights to health, education, and rest, leisure and play as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). She also spelled out the role sport can play in achieving specific SDGs linked to children, particularly SDG Target 16.2 on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children. Sexual abuse and exploitation as well as other forms of violence against children in grassroots and elite sport, shows little sign of stopping. The abuses are compounded by institutional failures, on the part of sports organisations for failing to build robust cultures of safeguarding, and on the part of governments for failing to create the necessary legal and policy environments to ensure accessible reporting mechanisms and systems for accountability and redress.



**Maud de Boer-Buquicchio**, UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, summarised her [Thematic Report on Children in the Context of Sport](#) and its Recommendations. On the sale of child athletes, she observed that despite the prohibition on the sale of children in the CRC (Article 35) and in its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, children are being sold for competitive training and eventual profit. A web of coaches, recruitment agencies, agents and high-level financial transactions exists that treats young athletes as commodities rather than children. Recruitment agents are luring aspiring young people and their families from developing countries into debt. The children are often bound to a single employer, with uncertain legal status, no clear contractual relationship, and forced to train intensively while enduring poor living conditions. Even where athletes succeed in joining big clubs, they have little or no say over their careers, and once they reach the age of 18 are often loaned to small clubs. On the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation of minors in sport, abuses are occurring in locker rooms, on training fields, and on trips away from home, and this form of abuse knows no gender or geographic boundaries. Such abuses often happen in the circle of trust and are perpetrated by team leaders, coaches and medics, where children are especially vulnerable due to the power dynamics inherent in sport and unfettered exposure to adults. MSE events are linked to child labour via sporting merchandise supply chains, and forced displacements to build new venues, with negative impacts on child schooling and health care.

In 2019, existing international legal frameworks<sup>1</sup> and a new instrument, the UN World Tourism Organisation Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, strengthened the accountability landscape in this area. The challenge lies with effective implementation. States need to do more in terms of requiring background checks on those working with children. Parents and coaches need educating to realise that abuse occurs everywhere and that everyone has a responsibility to prevent and stop such violations. Reporting conditions on this subject are rarely met, with children afraid to report for reasons of shame or fear (e.g. of losing their team place). Differing approaches and terminologies to deal with the problem lead to inconsistencies and weak protections. Sports bodies should address the problem systemically, including by implementing their responsibilities under the UNGPs and developing mechanisms for meaningful participation of children. Children can be empowered to act as agents of change if systems allow their voices to be heard.

From sports governing bodies, **Iris Hugo-Bouvier** outlined UEFA's efforts to conduct a rigorous assessment of its 55 national associations and their training and awareness-raising needs in the area of child protection. In addition to a policy to prevent abuse across the organisation and its associations, UEFA is rolling out a safeguarding toolkit developed with Terre des Hommes to ensure all stakeholders, including coaches and parents, understand the issues, know how to report concerns and to whom. FIFA's Child Safeguarding Programme and Toolkit, launched in

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1 The framework includes the CRC and OP-SC, ILO standards and UN Guiding Principles - which together set clear obligations for States and sports organisations on protection, prevention and remedy of violations. The new Guidelines were adopted in May 2019 and provide clarification on implications of this text for the world of sport.



2019, is based on the International Safeguards for Children in Sport, and spells out the need to assess gaps, develop a policy, implement clear codes of conduct on what is and is not acceptable behaviour, and set out recruitment guidelines for those interacting with child on a regular basis. On the issue of child trafficking in football, FIFA's Council is reintroducing mandatory licensing of all intermediaries and agents, and FIFA is working out what career development will be needed to ensure agents act in the best interests of children.

According to FIFA's **Kathryn Leslie**, member associations have vast training needs in this area – a challenge compounded by weak safeguarding and protection regimes in many countries. To address these and other issues, FIFA is partnering with the IOC, UEFA and others. Echoing concerns with respect to operating in contexts where national child protection and safeguarding regimes are poorly resourced or under-developed, **David Grevenberg** referred to Commonwealth Sport's (CS) work to prioritise safeguarding at its most recent Commonwealth Youth Games in Samoa and The Bahamas. CS worked with host governments and civil society with support from UNICEF, to safeguard the young athletes at the Games and contribute to strengthened safeguarding in national legislation and child protection practices. Empowering children and educating them about their rights is a legacy of the Glasgow 2014 Games, with most schools in Scotland now UNICEF awarded Rights Respecting Schools (i.e. the CRC is part of schools' ethos and curriculum).

From Government, **Maria Belén Lara Martinez** of Spain's High Council for Sport, spoke of the adoption on the eve of SCF 2019 of a first normative document with conclusions dedicated to mechanisms to protect minors in sport (this builds on the earlier White Paper on Sport at the European Commission). Domestically, Spain's High Council for Sport is disseminating a handbook developed with UNICEF Spain on safe and protected spaces for youth. Measures have been introduced to protect children and adolescents in sport and leisure activities, although there is a challenge in cascading these to decentralised authorities and ensuring capacity exists where it is most needed locally. The High Council is also working with France, Belgium and other counterparts under the ERASMUS + Sport Programme to develop materials and protocols on youth training and empowerment.

On labour aspects of child rights and sport, **Thiago Gurjão Alves Ribeiro** from the ILO, stressed the importance of preventing elite performance training of young athletes from falling into the category of the worst forms of child labour, such that it compromises children's education and risks their physical and mental health. The ILO is working with governments to ensure implementation of ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour, the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and recently adopted ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment. To combat child labour in the value chains for sport, the ILO has published information on the prevalence of child labour in the Central and South Asian textile sectors from which sports bodies frequently source sporting goods. In Brazil, the Prosecutor's office is cooperating with the swimming and gymnastic federations and others to implement reporting mechanisms and to train all relevant professionals in the context of work with minors.



The Youth Network of the European Non-Governmental Sport Organisation (ENGSO Youth) called for more awareness raising to prevent child rights violations in sport. States were urged to provide rehabilitation and recovery services for victims, not just in capital cities but also in more remote areas where a lack of qualified teachers, psychologists, or other specialists is undermining recovery programmes. Additional challenges facing indigenous children, children from minorities or from the LGBTI community also require greater attention. To deliver on the UN Special Rapporteur's Recommendations, a collective push is required to work in the best interests of children, while raising the voices of children in shaping their own destinies in and around sport.





# SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING ADULT ATHLETES AND CHILDREN IN SPORT: WHERE TO START?

## Key Takeaways

- It is increasingly understood that abuse is a systematic challenge that needs to be addressed as opposed to simply the actions of a few individuals
- A survey of young people revealed that their number one request was for everyone involved in sports-based programmes to be educated in safeguarding and to know how to respond when abuses are discovered
- Safeguarding is an extension of athlete voice – if athletes had been better represented in decisions affecting them, current abuse crises in sport could have been averted
- Young people should also receive safeguarding training as it allows them to understand what is unacceptable behavior and empowers them to come forward

Safeguarding in sport has come a long way in the last two decades. Speakers in this session noted that abuse is increasingly understood as a systemic challenge rather than the result of a few rogue individuals. Athlete and child voices are no longer absent. A [recent survey of young people](#) revealed that their top demand was for all persons involved in sports-based programmes to be educated in safeguarding and to know how to respond when abuses are discovered.



Yet **Anne Tiivas**, Chair and Director of Safe Sport International, asserted that some still accept the scope of the challenge and what needs to be done to address it.

Collective action offers reasons for hope within the International Safeguards for Children Initiative, and within the work of Safe Sport International, and other specialist athlete protection agencies and survivors. The [International Safeguards for Children in Sport](#), which underpin the IOC's guidance document for IFs and NOCs and the FIFA Guardians Toolkit, fortifies much of the work in this space. This is bolstered by initiatives like the Start-to-Talk campaign, the VOICE project that hears from children affected by abuse in sport, and I-Protect in Sport that helps clubs, coaches and parents take action, as well as policy statements such as the Declaration for Safe Sport (2014) and World Players Association's Declaration of Athlete Rights (2017).

**Aine Power** of the International Equestrian Federation and **Siret Luik** from the World Archery Federation, spoke of the impetus for their work on safeguarding coming from the IOC Consensus Statement, but above all from a realisation that neither of their sports would likely be immune to the scandals facing others in the sector. To address this, World Archery has adopted a policy, and conducted a baseline survey of staff and other stakeholders – including athletes - to gauge, and measure, future levels of awareness on safeguarding. The Equestrian Federation has found moving from policy to creating implementation procedures the biggest step up. They turned to Safe Sport International for advice and help with training HQ staff as well as a tribunal panel, which built understanding on safeguarding and highlighted the importance of small practical steps, like training receptionists to handle and escalate reports of abuses.

Roll-out of safeguarding procedures is not easy. World Archery, as one of the smaller IFs based in Lausanne, has relied on peer-learning with other IFs in Switzerland to bring collective action to bear and to overcome resource constraints. World Archery is planning to work with its Athletes Commission on roll-out. For the Equestrian Federation, a key learning was that some staff members had difficulties with the subject matter, and feared cultural sensitivities would hinder efforts to cascade safeguarding policies to national associations. In practice, the national affiliates wanted to learn more. The importance of preserving the independence of the case-management team from undue political interference was stressed, as was giving the team authority to provisionally suspend officials and even Board members. Operating in multiple jurisdictions, especially when the criminal system of a country does not align with the Federation's approach, is a challenge as is the need to make case reporting mechanisms accessible – i.e. available in different languages, culturally relevant and informative.

World Players Association (WPA) views safeguarding as an extension of its work to build the athlete voice into its rights-based advocacy with sports bodies. **Gigi Alford**, representing World Players (and coordinator of the Sport and Rights Alliance) argued that if athletes had been better represented in decisions affecting them, current abuse crises in sport might have been averted. WPA has developed its own policy instrument, the [Declaration on Safeguarding the Rights of](#)



[Child Athletes](#), which aims to protect child athletes from early professionalisation and violations of their fundamental rights. To address the current lack of data on children’s experiences in sport, which makes advocacy with sports bodies hard, WPA, together with Loughborough University, has launched [Project CARE](#) – a Census of Athlete Rights Experiences. Starting with a survey of the childhood experiences in organised sport of current professional athletes, the project seeks to understand what contributed to children’s rights being protected or violated in sport, and create an evidence base from which to push for concrete action.

On the issue of stakeholder consultation, **Aaron Smith**, Young Ambassador, Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council, made a robust case for consulting young people not in a tokenistic ways, but consistently (e.g. to involve them in governance and every-day operational issues of sports bodies) and to follow-up with them on outcomes. He pointed to recent research by UEFA showing that young people are far more likely to report cases of abuse to youth coaches and young volunteers than they are to senior coaches or teachers. This is the kind of intelligence that sports bodies could glean from direct and regular interactions with young people in sport. Smith spoke of being empowered by contributing to the London Declaration for Sport and Rights and travelling to Rwanda for the Commonwealth Games Federation’s General Assembly, where he was able to interact with other like-minded young people and was inspired to be part of a collective push for new models in sport and society built on human dignity.

On safeguarding training, Aaron Smith questioned the assertion that under-18s should be “protected” from information and training on such issues. He explained how training about abuse and human rights at the age of 15 in fact gave him and his peers a better understanding of what was and was not acceptable behaviour, and left them feeling empowered and safer. UNESCO’s Youth and Sport Task Force for the Asia-Pacific Region called for more awareness-raising on safeguarding, particularly among coaching staff, and stressed the need for training materials to be culturally and regionally relevant.



# CRAIG FOSTER IN CONVERSATION WITH HAKEEM AL-ARAIBI

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**Hakeem al-Araibi** and **Craig Foster** shared a platform to discuss Hakeem's experiences, the campaign to release him from jail in Thailand where he was held for 77 days (pending deportation to Bahrain) between November 2018 and January 2019, and lessons for the emerging sport and human rights movement.

Hakeem spoke of how he dreamt of playing football since he was a small boy growing up in Bahrain. Shortly after his call up to the Under-17 national squad, he was mistakenly arrested and jailed for several months. He was then arrested and tortured again following his call up to the senior national team and was held in jail for a further period thereafter, before facing a bail hearing on trumped up charges (for a crime he could not have committed as he was playing a televised match at the time). Upon bail, Hakeem went to Qatar to play a match and immediately fled the region, before eventually seeking asylum in Australia, where he was subsequently granted refugee status and began playing football .

After reflecting on his early life and experiences in Bahrain before seeking asylum in Australia, Hakeem explained how he and his wife flew to Bangkok in November 2018 for their honeymoon, only for him to be arrested on the tarmac, and sent to jail pending deportation to Bahrain on the basis of an Interpol 'red notice' issued by the Bahraini government. It was later confirmed that the notice should never have been issued given Hakeem's official status as a refugee. Hakeem believes the extradition case was brought because he had previously spoken out against the ruling Sunni family in Bahrain on human rights related grounds. While in jail in Thailand, during which he spent periods without food and in shackles, Hakeem met Craig Foster. Craig spearheaded a campaign to secure Hakeem's release, which was backed by many famous footballers and supported by the Sport and Rights Alliance, the Centre and the many representatives of its Advisory Council. The campaign led to the extradition case being dropped and Hakeem reuniting with his wife in Australia, and later being granted Australian citizenship. Hakeem has since taken up the cause of refugees, and is working with Football Victoria to help

refugee children play football, but he continues to fear for his safety.

When asked what advice he would give others facing a similar experience, Hakeem stressed the need to follow your dream and be true to yourself and family. Craig Foster additionally highlighted the emergence of the sport and human rights movement, and the fact that there is now a network of sports bodies, governments, sponsors, intergovernmental bodies, civil society groups and others ready to mobilise into action again at a moment's notice should another case like this arise. He thanked fellow athletes for their activism, but encouraged more to take similar actions and for more sport's bodies to be comfortable with such forms of advocacy. A key theme of SCF 2019 was framed by Craig Foster, who said: "Policy is not action [and] statutes are not commitment, merely the starting point."

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“ *Policy is not action  
[and] statutes are not  
commitment, merely the  
starting point* ”

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# IMPACT OF REGIONAL BODIES ON POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

## Key Takeaways

- There is a strong link between sport and the SDGs, and regional bodies have critical roles to play in advancing human rights through these processes
- There is a strong focus on gender equality among many regional bodies
- While many regional bodies are well-placed to integrate human rights into sport policy and sport into human rights and sustainable development action plans, there continues to be a disconnect across many jurisdictions

Regional bodies have critical roles to play in advancing protection of human rights in the context of sport. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for example, is of direct relevance to sport and governments have developed detailed action plans on how to achieve these goals, which must now be monitored and effectively implemented. The Kazan Action Plan – agreed at the *6th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI)*, in 2017, affirms that anyone affected by or participating in physical education, activity or sport, must have their rights protected and respected and identifies specific SDG targets where sport can make a valuable contribution to sustainable development. **Oliver Dudfield** of the Commonwealth Secretariat relayed how 53 Commonwealth Heads of Government are taking this forward through a commitment to maximise the contribution of sport to the SDGs. This stresses the importance of collective action and need for leadership from Commonwealth Sport. The Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS) has adopted a Consensus Statement explicitly addressing the links between sport, human rights, integrity and the SDGs and is working to move these commitments forward operationally.



The Ibero-American Council on Sport and its 22 member countries are seeking to provide leadership and promote collective action, including in relation to SDG 5 on gender equality, according to **Maria Jose Rienda**, Executive Secretary and President for the High Council for Sport, Ministry of Sport, Government of Spain. The Ibero-American Network for Women in Sport has developed models for co-operation among Ibero-American countries. These involve awareness raising on gender equality in sport, combating stereotypes and discriminatory practices that discourage female participation in physical activity and sport, developing strategies for greater visibility on the role of women in sport, including in sport's management and administration, and promoting information exchanges, networking opportunities and the sharing of good practices to which all member countries can aspire. In Spain, for example, the Government is developing a new, and updated, law on sport, addressing access issues for persons with disabilities, and equal rights and equal prizes for men and women. The new law aims to combat past injustices and create a level playing field for all.

**Elda Moreno** drew attention to the Council of Europe's Enlarged [Partial Agreement](#) on Sport (EPAS), which is a platform comprising 37 countries and 23 sport organisations that promotes sport policies, and advances safe, inclusive and ethical sport. Ministers of Sport convene on issues such as good governance, anti-corruption, human rights and child safeguarding. EPAS is encouraging dialogue between public authorities, sports federations and civil society to enhance good governance in sport. Youth movements are informing the Council's policy development around sport. To operationalise commitments, the Council has devised [a toolkit](#) on gender equality to help grassroots sport bodies develop country-specific approaches to the issue.

In a presentation by **Yakdan El-Habib** from the African Union (AU) Observer Mission to UNOG it was explained that the AU promotes development as a human right, and through its Agenda 2063 has a mandate to foster policy coherence towards an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. The AU's Policy Framework for Sustainable Development for Sport in Africa identifies areas for helping countries meet their development aspirations through sport, with cross-overs to gender and youth policies, good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law. The AU provides technical assistance to help member countries maximise the contribution of sport, whether to promote healthy lifestyles for people of all ages, or advance youth development and education. Separately, the AU is playing a co-ordination role in sports policy development with other regional and intergovernmental bodies, sports organisations and civil society, where a priority is to address the ongoing challenges of racial discrimination within sport and the illegal sale of child athletes. The AU is keen to work collectively across regions and stakeholder groups to make sport free of human rights abuses.

The AU's human rights architecture, as outlined by **Olawale Maiyegun**, is particularly robust by global standards. Its legal systems, protocols and supplementary protocols, e.g. the Maputo protocol on the protection of women, could be readily applied in the context of sport. Yet despite a history linking sport and human rights, exemplified by the sporting boycotts across the continent





to end apartheid in South Africa, today the world of sport and human rights on the continent are not well connected. Through the work of NHRIs and the remit of existing organisations of the AU, there is scope for more work to address sports, and for example to develop youth leadership through sport .

Much of the work on human rights, development and peace in sport in the Caribbean is civil society driven, and NGOs operate in a context of regional treaties and policy declarations developed by CARICOM and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. **Mark Mungal**, Director of the Caribbean Sport and Development Agency (CSDA) highlighted how civil society works with regional bodies, including by building relationships with key individuals and organisations. CSDA in particular partners with CARICOM to convene an annual meeting of directors of sport to update and agree actions across four priority areas, including safeguarding. A key tool is a directory of coaches that meet basic standards to work with children and young people. More work is needed to operationalise the region's policies and legal frameworks on sport, and civil society needs more capacity building support from government and intergovernmental bodies.



# THE ROAD AHEAD: CLOSING PANEL AND CONCLUSIONS

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Wrapping up the SCF 2019, speakers from the Swiss Government, the ILO, the International Organization of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) thanked the organisers and Centre team for convening this 4th Sporting Chance Forum and bringing together the worlds of sport and human rights.

At the first Sporting Chance Forum in 2016, the Centre for Sport and Human Rights had been a mere aspiration. SCF 2019 showcased that the Centre is now a catalyst in the area of sport and human rights and a trusted convener of constructive dialogue. **Pascale Baeriswyl** from the Swiss Government felt that sport - which has long been tied to the struggle for democracy and freedom - has witnessed an awakening in the role it can play in respecting and advancing human rights, with more and more athletes, sports federations, sponsors, broadcasters, governments, intergovernmental bodies, and civil society organisations now advocating for human rights and human dignity than ever before. **Moussa Oumarou**, Deputy Director General of the ILO reflected on this year's SCF being more multi-lingual, with representation from the Francophonie and Ibero-American Sports Council, and with a growing presence from Africa, the Caribbean and wider Global South. Youth movements and leaders are also becoming an important fixture at the SCF 2019 and this should continue to grow.

**Matthias Thorns**, Deputy Secretary-General at the IOE highlighted the notable wins in 2019, including the release of Hakeem al-Araibi, the end of the Stadium ban in Iran (albeit at a heavy price for Sahar Khodayari)<sup>1</sup>, and justice for the Afghan Women's Team<sup>2</sup>. Great challenges remain as well. While the Sporting Chance Forum and work of the Centre have helped raise the sport and human rights agenda in more and more countries, and the geographical footprint

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- 1 Sahar Khodayari, also known as "Blue Girl", was an Iranian female football fan who, in March 2019, disguised herself as a man in order to watch her team play at Azadi Stadium in Tehran. She was caught, arrested, and released 3 days later on bail to await her court case. After being told she would face six months in prison, she set herself on fire outside the courthouse in September 2019 and died from her injuries several weeks later.
  - 2 In November 2018, allegations were made against Afghan Football Federation President Keramuudin Karim accusing him of sexually and physically abusing players on the national women's football team. The complaint was raised with FIFA's Ethics Committee who banned Karim for life and fined him CHF 1 million. Karim was not however arrested and an investigation remains ongoing regarding culpability of other officials.



of the Centre has expanded, and as **Tim Noonan** of the ITUC recognised, there is still “active opposition of powerful people to this agenda” and others who remain to be convinced. The global situation is also not conducive with a shrinking space for civil society and existential threats including climate change.

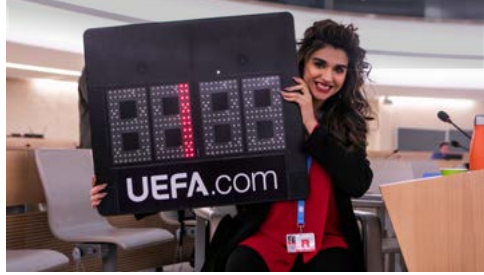
To build on the strong foundations that have been laid, Chair of the Centre **Mary Robinson** emphasised the need for the Centre to continually expand its stakeholders, particularly from the worlds of sport and government. The support of existing Advisory Council members is critical in further promoting the sport and human rights agenda. As it has in 2019, future SCF events will again need to report back on the situation affecting vulnerable people, and ongoing efforts will be needed to follow-up with those in positions of power in sport to ensure they are delivering on their promises to keep them accountable.

The SCF 2019 showcased still more examples of how collaboration between the worlds of sport and human rights can lead to positive results, whether that be in Qatar where advances have been made through partnerships involving FIFA, the Government of Qatar, and Supreme Committee, ILO, BWI and others to advance the decent work agenda, or Rwanda – where Commonwealth National Human Rights Commissions and sports bodies have come together to share learning, or among sports federations on the issue of safeguarding.



“ Sport at its best as we know is inspirational. Human rights are inspirational. The two together are a wonderful way of conveying...the importance of the challenges we face, but also the importance of the collective action that we can all do together.”

Mary Robinson, closing the Sporting Chance Forum 2019



## REMEMBERING JIN SOOK LEE (1966-2020)

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of one of SCF 2019's speakers and a close friend to the Centre, Jin Sook Lee, who lost a long battle with cancer on 7 April 2020.

Jin Sook worked with BWI since 2004 as a Project Coordinator for the Asia-Pacific Region before becoming Global Campaigns Director in 2010. Under her leadership, BWI was able to launch successful global campaigns focused on migrant workers' rights, gender equality and trade union rights.

She was responsible for shaping BWI's global sports campaign for decent work which centred on mega-sporting events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

Her negotiations and lobbying work directed to companies and governments impacted the working lives of thousands of workers. Jin Sook was a coalition builder and orchestrated many of BWI's alliance work on various issues and campaigns. In particular, a strong advocate for women's rights, she institutionalized BWI's global approach to gender equality and in raising the voice of women in our global union.

As the Centre continues its work to ensure the rights of all workers impacted by sport are respected and upheld, we will remember the path forged by our friend and colleague Jin Sook, and will do our best to continue her work and uphold her legacy.



# ANNEX



# SPORTING CHANCE FORUM

Geneva, 21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019

[www.sporhumanrights.org/scf-2019](http://www.sporhumanrights.org/scf-2019) | #SCF2019

## DAY 1 - THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2019

8AM-9AM

### REGISTRATION AND TEA / COFFEE (SERPENT BAR)

9AM-  
9.15AM

### WELCOMING REMARKS

- **Mary Harvey** (CEO, Centre for Sport and Human Rights)
- **Tatiana Valovaya** (Director General, UN Office in Geneva)

9.15AM-  
10.00AM

### OPENING REMARKS

- **Michelle Bachelet** (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights)
- **Guy Ryder** (Director General, International Labour Organisation)
- **Jeffrey Schlagenhaut** (Deputy Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)
- **Craig Foster** (Human Rights Advocate and former international footballer)

10.00AM-  
11.00AM

### THE ROLE OF SPORT IN RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Leading sports organisations worldwide face a range of social and environmental challenges requiring effective policies and practices in response. This session will feature a conversation exploring how sports bodies are seeking to ensure respect for human rights in their work.

- *Moderated by:* **Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein** (former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights)
- **David Grevenberg** (Chief Executive, Commonwealth Games Federation)
- **Karl-Erik Nilsson** (First Vice-President, UEFA)
- **François Croquette** (Ambassador at large for Human Rights, Government of France)
- **Zeina Mina** (Director, Comité International des Jeux de la Francophonie)

11.00AM-  
12.00PM

### CORPORATE PARTNERS: CONNECTING CORPORATE PURPOSE WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

Sponsors, broadcasters, and other corporate partners have a responsibility, within their own operations and throughout their supply chains, to respect human rights. Sporting events are no different from any other business relationship in terms of needing to proactively take account of potential human rights risks. Doing so requires clear communication of what they expect of their sports body partners, from bidding through to legacy and in day-to-day sport, including how sports bodies meaningfully engage with the athletes, workers, communities, fans, volunteers, and journalists affected by sport.

- *Moderated by:* **Steve Gibbons** (Director, Ergon Associates)
- **Andrés Peñate** (Global Vice President, Regulatory & Public Policy, Anheuser-Busch InBev)
- **Moira Oliver** (Head of Policy and Chief Counsel, Human/Digital Rights, BT plc)
- **Madhu Rajesh** (Director, International Tourism Partnership)

# SPORTING CHANCE FORUM

Geneva, 21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019

[www.sporhumanrights.org/scf-2019](http://www.sporhumanrights.org/scf-2019) | #SCF2019

12.00PM-  
2.00PM

## LUNCH

Lunch will not be provided due to logistical considerations in the Palais des Nations. However the lunch break period is extended to allow participants ample time to use the Palais facilities (Serpent Bar, UN Cafeteria) as well as to provide meaningful opportunities for networking. Tea and coffee will be available outside Room XX from 1.30pm.

2.00PM-  
3.30PM

## REMEDYING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SPORT

Ensuring access to remedy in the context of sport-related human rights abuses remains a challenging issue for all actors. In many cases, remedy mechanisms are either not available at all, not accessible to those affected, or not effective. This session builds on the 2018 *Strategic Dialogue on Remedy in the Sport and Human Rights Context*, illustrating with concrete examples gaps and challenges related to existing mechanisms and applying a solutions-based approach in order to advance consensus on this critical issue.

- Moderated by: **Mary Harvey** (CEO, Centre for Sport and Human Rights)
- **Rachel Davis** (Vice President and Co-Founder, Shift)
- **Andreas Graf** (Human Rights Manager, FIFA)
- **Gregory Nott** (Director, Norton Rose Fulbright South Africa)
- **Minky Worden** (Director of Global Initiatives, Human Rights Watch)
- **Ambet Yuson** (General Secretary, Building and Wood Workers' International)

3:30PM-  
5.00PM

## THE CASE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION: IMPACT FROM THE FIELD

Collective action is a critical tool in building capacities and ensuring respect for human rights in the world of sport. This session will showcase recent examples of collective action involving several stakeholders including sports bodies, national human rights institutions, and youth.

- Moderated by: **John Morrison** (Deputy Chair, Centre for Sport and Human Rights; Chief Executive, Institute for Human Rights and Business)
- **Festus Bizimana** (Vice-President, National Olympic Committee of Rwanda)
- **Silas Sinyigaya** (Vice-Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Rwanda)
- **Naickey Ijimbere** (Programs Manager, National Olympic Committee of Rwanda)
- **Conal Heatley** (Business & Operations Manager, Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council)
- **David Russell** (Chief Executive, National Human Rights Commission of Northern Ireland)

5.00PM

## RECEPTION

All participants are invited to a drinks reception kindly sponsored by the Coca-Cola Company at the Serpent Bar in the Palais des Nations.

6.00PM

## CLOSE OF DAY 1





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## DAY 2 - FRIDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2019

8.00AM-  
9.00AM

### REGISTRATION AND TEA / COFFEE (SERPENT BAR)

9.00AM-  
10.30AM

### CHILD RIGHTS IN SPORT: RECOMMENDATIONS TO AND RESPONSE FROM SPORTING ORGANISATIONS AND STATES

The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children is the most comprehensive United Nations document on the current situation of child rights violations in the context of sports. These include, among others, violations and harms related to trafficking, displacement, abuse, exploitation, sale, contracting, grooming, and labour. In addition, it includes 14 Recommendations to Sport Organisations and another 14 to Governments. The objective of the session is to raise awareness of the Report amongst sport organisations, governments and other key actors, join the gap between best practice on the ground and the recommendations by the Special Rapporteur, and provide practical courses of action and resources to sports bodies looking to do this work.

Presentation by **Maud de Boer-Buquicchio** (Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children) followed by a panel discussion where sports bodies respond to the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur.

- *Moderated by:* **Najat Maalla M'jid** (UN Special Representative on Violence Against Children)
- **Iris Hugo-Bouvier** (Football and Social Responsibility, UEFA)
- **Kathryn Leslie** (Senior Child Safeguarding and Protection Manager, FIFA)
- **David Grevemberg** (Chief Executive, Commonwealth Games Federation)
- **María Belén Lara Martínez** (Head of International Relations High Council for Sport of Spain)
- **Thiago Gurjão Alves Ribeiro** (Senior Technical Officer, International Labour Organization)

10.30AM-  
12PM

### SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING ADULT ATHLETES AND CHILDREN IN SPORT: WHERE TO START?

Safeguarding in sport is the process of protecting children and adults from harm by providing a safe environment in which to participate in sports, whether as an athlete or fan. Everyone has a role to play in keeping others safe. The session will provide an opportunity to learn about the safeguarding experiences of sport federations. It will provide those federations that may not yet have, or have only begun to establish, safeguarding policies and procedures with insights and tools that may be relevant to their circumstances.

- *Moderated by:* **Anne Tiivas** (Chair and Director, Safe Sport International)
- **Áine Power** (Deputy Legal Director at Federation Equestre Internationale)
- **Siret Luik** (Deputy Secretary General, World Archery)
- **Gigi Alford** (Sport and Human Rights, World Players Association; Coordinator, Sport and Rights Alliance)
- **Aaron Smith** (Young Ambassador, National Olympic Committee of Northern Ireland)



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12PM-  
2.00PM

## LUNCH

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2.00PM-  
2.30PM

## CRAIG FOSTER IN CONVERSATION WITH HAKEEM AL ARAIBI

In 2019 a former member of the Bahrain Men's National Football Team, Hakeem al-Araibi, was arrested in Thailand for peacefully protesting against injustice in his home country. The global campaign for his release was led by Craig Foster, a former international footballer from Australia and human rights advocate, with assistance by a wide range of football's most powerful actors, including top sponsors, leading governments, NGOs and advocates. This conversation will highlight Hakeem's story as well as lessons for all actors in protecting the rights of athletes and others impacted by their involvement in sport.

2.30PM-  
4.00PM

## IMPACT OF REGIONAL BODIES ON POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

One of the objectives of the 2019 Sporting Chance Forum is the engagement of States. Working through regional inter-governmental mechanisms (such as the African Union, the Council of Europe and the Ibero American Sports Council) is a means to engage States and advocate for human rights on issues related to sport and human rights. Some such mechanisms have a dedicated division or department for sports. Some facilitate the adoption of regional plans and policies that their member states and sport organisations commit to implement. This includes plans and policies that are within the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Kazan Action Plan.

- *Moderated by:* **Oliver Dudfield** (Head of Sport for Development & Peace, Commonwealth Secretariat)
- **Elda Moreno** (Head of the Children's Rights and Sport Values Department, Council of Europe)
- **Olawale Maiyegun** (Special Advisor, CSHR; and former Nigerian Diplomat and former AU Director of the Department for Social Affairs)
- **Maria José Rienda** (Executive Secretary of Ibero-American Sports Council and President, Spanish National Sport Council, Ministry of Sport and Culture, Government of Spain)
- **Mark Mungal** (Director, Caribbean Sport and Development Agency)

4.00PM-  
5.00PM

## THE ROAD AHEAD

- *Moderated by:* **Mary Harvey** (CEO, Centre for Sport and Human Rights)
- **Pascale Baeriswyl** (State Secretary, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Government of Switzerland)
- **Moussa Oumarou** (Deputy Director General, International Labour Organization)
- **Matthias Thorns** (Deputy Secretary-General, International Organisation of Employers)
- **Tim Noonan** (Director, Campaigns & Communications, International Trade Union Confederation)
- **Mary Robinson** (Chair, Centre for Sport and Human Rights)

5.00PM

CLOSE

# 2019 SPORTING CHANCE FORUM MEETING REPORT