



Sports Governing Bodies and Human Rights

"Striving for Excellence"
Supplementary Resources
May 2014



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Background

The material in this report was originally written for the www.megasportingevents.org website to expand on and advance the research contained in IHRB’s report “Striving for Excellence: Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights” (2013). It is accurate and up to date as of May 2014. The www.megasportingevents.org website has since been updated and the original content replaced. The original content has been archived into this series of short reports to maintain their usefulness as early contributions to the body of research on mega-sporting events and human rights.

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What’s the Issue?

Sports governing bodies like the [International Olympic Committee \(IOC\)](#), the [Fédération Internationale de Football Association \(FIFA\)](#), [Commonwealth Games Federation](#) and [International Paralympic Committee \(IPC\)](#) set the rules that all other actors are expected to follow when delivering an MSE, ranging from the criteria around transport, accommodation, and ticketing allocations, to the procedures for the opening and closing ceremonies. As such, these bodies are in a strong position to set requirements that advance respect for human rights and help reduce any adverse rights impacts associated with these events.

Both the IOC and FIFA have principles of human dignity, integrity and participation cemented within their respective constitutions – the [Olympic Charter](#) and [FIFA Statutes](#), as do other sports governing bodies like the Commonwealth Games Federation. Each of these bodies in their different ways is also already working to embed integrity and sustainability safeguards - including some that are human rights-related – within their internal processes. Environmental protection for example is already well entrenched within the bid process to host the event, and within host city / country contracts / agreements of both the IOC and FIFA. Human and labour rights provisions however are not yet so well advanced as environmental protections, and there are opportunities to demonstrate greater leadership in this space.

Leadership from the sports governing bodies is not only about reforming governance documents, bid city requirements and host city contracts. It might, for example, also extend to guidelines for procurement and sourcing by MSE local organisers, and to strengthen non-discrimination principles such as developing initiatives to combat racism or homophobia, and efforts to promote gender equality in sports administration and participation.

The IOC, the Olympic Charter, and Human Rights

High ideals are associated with the Olympics in the public imagination. The [Olympic Charter](#) is the [Olympic Movement’s](#) constitution. Revised periodically, it sets out basic rules, such as the formalities for opening and closing ceremonies, and contains the ideological core of the Olympic Movement referred to as the ‘Fundamental Principles of Olympism’ (Fundamental Principles). All members of the Olympic Movement agree to abide by the Charter. These include the International Olympic Committee (the IOC), the International Sports Federations (there are 25 such sports federations, including FIFA for football and the IAAF for athletics), the currently 204 National Olympic Committees (the national representative organisations that manage and promote sport year on year), the athletes and officials, as well as the Local Organising Committees - and by extension the host cities - responsible for delivering an Olympic Games.

Human rights-related principles are woven into the fabric of the Olympics. The Fundamental Principles proclaim that: 'Olympism is a philosophy of life', and encourage 'social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles', 'the harmonious development of humankind', and 'the preservation of human dignity'. A 1996 revision added that: 'The practice of sport is a human right,' and called for every individual to 'have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind'. The Fundamental Principles also encourage 'the promotion of women in sport at all levels,' and urge the Olympic Movement 'to demonstrate a responsible concern for environmental issues' and to act 'to reflect such concern in its activities and educate all those connected with the Olympic Movement as to the importance of sustainable development.'

The IOC's [Code of Ethics](#) is an integral part of the Olympic Charter. It comprises an array of rules on dignity, integrity, non-discrimination, confidentiality, against harassment, and on the conduct of candidate cities. Those covered by the rules include the Local Organising Committees entrusted with delivering the Games, as well as each of the International Sporting Federations. Each International Sports Federation, including FIFA, is expected to 'adopt a code of ethics based on the principles and rules of the IOC Code of Ethics or adopt the IOC Code of Ethics in a written declaration.' The policy against discrimination is clear-cut, stating that: 'There shall be no discrimination between the participants on the basis of race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, philosophical or political opinion, marital status or other grounds.' The Code of Ethics also spells out that 'All forms of harassment of participants, be it physical, professional or sexual, and any physical or mental injuries to participants, are prohibited.'

The IOC has come under pressure from its corporate sponsors and campaign groups alike over its enforcement of the non-discrimination provisions, notably in relation the protection of LGBT rights ahead of the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, and women's rights within a number of competing nations prior to the London 2012 Olympics.

The [IOC's Ethics Commission](#) was created in the wake of the 1998 Salt Lake City corruption scandal surrounding that city's bid for the 2002 Winter Olympics. The IOC Ethics Commission is made up of nine members, a majority of whom are not members of the Olympic Movement. It is responsible for drawing up and revising the IOC's Code of Ethics and preventing breaches of the Code. It can also investigate any complaints, and if necessary propose sanctions, including the ultimate sanction of removing the right to host the Games from the host city, Local Organising Committee and National Olympic Committee.

Not all aspects of the Olympic Charter are progressive in human rights terms. The IOC's efforts to ensure that the Olympic Games are not subverted for political ends, contained within Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter, tread a fine line with regard to limiting respect for free speech. Rule 50 stipulates that: 'No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas' and that 'any violation of the provisions ...may result in disqualification or withdrawal of the accreditation of the person concerned. The decisions of the IOC Executive Board regarding this matter shall be final'.

FIFA, the FIFA Statutes, and Human Rights

The constitution of FIFA is called the [FIFA Statutes](#). Its provisions apply to FIFA’s 208 national Member Associations, as well as various FIFA bodies including the FIFA Executive Committee, Congress, and various standing and ad-hoc committees. Like its counterpart the [Olympic Charter](#), FIFA’s Statutes are infused with human rights-related concepts. Its provisions include a commitment to ‘promote [football] globally in the light of its unifying, educational, cultural and humanitarian values, particularly through youth and development programmes’. The provision on non-discrimination is comprehensive. It states that: “Discrimination of any kind against a Country, private person or group of people on account of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, language, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, sexual orientation or any other reason is strictly prohibited and punishable by suspension or expulsion.” FIFA’s [Our Commitment](#) document also explicitly recognises that parts of the world are ‘still deprived of their basic rights’ and highlights the need to use the power of football for ‘social and human development’ and as ‘a symbol of hope and integration’.

The provisions on non-discrimination and stance against racism raise a challenge for FIFA as it prepares to welcome Russia as host of the 2018 World Cup. Russia’s treatment of its LGBT community and laws against the teaching of homosexual issues to minors prompted widespread controversy ahead of the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, with calls for the event to be boycotted. Concerns over Russia’s attitude to racism and racial chanting in football have also received [media attention](#). For example in December 2012, the main supporters’ group of Russian champions, Zenit St Petersburg, [lobbied](#) against the club signing non-white or homosexual players.

In June 2011, FIFA’s Congress voted to strengthen the FIFA Ethics Committee, which is made up an investigative and adjudicatory chamber. It is able to decide the scope and duration of any sanction against those deemed to be in breach of the FIFA Statutes, FIFA Code of Ethics and the FIFA Disciplinary Code. Joint-head of the Ethics Committee, Michael Garcia, is currently leading an investigation of alleged corruption scandals surrounding the bid and election process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup.

Responses

The Olympic Movement - Sustainability and Human Rights

The IOC and wider Olympic Movement have a number of existing initiatives and processes in place to address sustainability challenges, some of which also relate to human rights.

The IOC's most recent bid stipulations for the summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, the [2020 Candidature Procedure and Questionnaire](#), for example require candidate cities to submit an initial environmental impact assessment, and to describe their stakeholder engagement plans on environmental issues. Candidate cities are also required to give guarantees that all construction work necessary for the event will comply with relevant domestic environmental regulation and International agreements and protocols on planning, construction and environment protection. Those bidding are additionally expected to outline what criteria will be used to assess how potential suppliers are adhering to any specific, named, national or international standards, including on labour standards. Under provisions related to the Paralympic Games, candidate cities are further asked to offer guarantees that national and international accessibility standards will be fully integrated into the planning and construction phases of the event. The host city or government also has an opportunity to indicate any special features not covered by the sports governing body questionnaire that it believes to be relevant, thereby opening the door to innovation and leadership models. London's candidature file for the XXXth Olympiad, for example, promised to set up the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012, to monitor and assure the sustainability of its delivery bodies.

The IOC's Sport and Environment Commission - which advises on environmental protection - has put in place the Olympic Movement's Agenda 21: Sport for Sustainable Development in 1999. This arose out of a 1994 IOC-UNEP cooperation agreement to develop joint initiatives.¹ Agenda 21 encompasses several human rights-related themes, like fighting social exclusion, health protection, and advancing the role of women, young people² and indigenous peoples. Elsewhere, the IOC's [Teaching Values: An Olympic Education Toolkit](#) designed to promote Olympic values among young people around the world, has a complete chapter on 'Respect for others'. This includes a full-page introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a youth human rights role-play exercise.

In 2009 the IOC organised the XIII Olympic Congress, an exceptional meeting of the

1 The UN Environment Programme has collaborated with the various OCOGs, including Athens (2004), Torino (2006), Beijing (2008), Vancouver (2010), London (2012), Sochi (2014) and has recently has been invited by the Rio de Janeiro organisers to assist in its preparations for Rio 2016.

2 A goal of OM Agenda 21 includes: "to declare its endorsement of the United Nations Convention (Resolution 44/25) on children's rights".

entire Olympic Family comprising media partners and corporate sponsors as well as the [Olympic Movement](#), where it began a process of integrating Recommendation No. 30. According to the XIII Olympic Congress [Follow-up Report](#) (2011), Recommendation No. 30 explicitly addresses human dignity and human rights. Implementation notes spell out that:

a) The IOC will intervene at the OCOG [organising committee] level in the event of serious abuse, such as:

- mistreatment of people displaced due to Olympic venue construction;*
- abuse of migrant workers at Olympic venue construction sites;*
- child labour;*
- improper restrictions on the media’s freedom to cover the Games, including cultural aspects;*

b) The IOC will establish a system for correctly identifying and dealing with ‘legitimate complaints’ from official sources;

c) The IOC will not intervene in non-sport human rights issues; and,

d) The leverage that the IOC has towards the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) should be determined. This might lead to amendments to the Host City Contract and documentation for Bid Cities.”

In 2013, human rights advocacy group Human Rights Watch, in its report [“Race to the Bottom: Exploitation of Migrant Workers Ahead of Russia’s 2014 Winter Olympics”](#), noted that the IOC had recently raised concerns over migrant worker exploitation in the run up to the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics with the Sochi Organising Committee, and had sought responses from the Organising Committee and Olymstroy (the state-run delivery company) in relation to a number of complaints.

Plans for a new strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement, known as [Olympic Agenda 2020](#), were unveiled during the IOC Session convened in Sochi in February 2014. The proposals focus around three themes of sustainability, credibility and youth. The initiative is the brainchild of new IOC President Thomas Bach, and a year-long process of outreach and dialogue is currently underway with the National Olympic Committees and wider stakeholders. Plans under the heading of sustainability include replacing the IOC’s Sport and Environment Commission with a new Commission for Sustainability, which it is hoped will continually explore opportunities for sustainability management and for greater financial transparency. Additional suggestions include encouraging bid and host cities to maximise the use of existing or temporary venues, and proposals to encourage greater gender equality within the Olympic Movement. The process will culminate in Monaco in December 2014 when proposals for Olympic Agenda 2020 will be presented for approval to an IOC Extraordinary Session.

FIFA – Sustainability and Human Rights

In its most recent [Bidding Agreement](#) for the right to host and stage the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, FIFA asked bidding countries for a number of sustainability-related commitments. They are required to submit 'a comprehensive assessment of the environmental and climatic impacts of staging the Competition,' an Environmental Protection plan, and among other step an "outreach programme to consult and include all interested groups and concerned stakeholders in the Environmental Protection Plan, including the federal, state and municipal governments, non-governmental organisations, community based organisations and others".

On the social aspects of sustainability, FIFA asks prospective host candidates to give a general explanation of how their bid can contribute to 'sustainable social and human development' and 'complement FIFA CSR Activities', and calls upon host applicants to "describe in concrete terms, how it intends to use [the potential of the World Cup to unite players, officials and fans of all ethnic backgrounds, religions, social classes and cultures] to break down social barriers, promote tolerance, equality and social integration, and encourage social harmony", and how the bid will among other things improve sports participation and health standards, and the development of football "outside the elite men's game (e.g. women's, youth, grassroots and disabled football".

FIFA has published its [2018 FIFA World Cup Bid Evaluation Report: Russia](#) and [2022 FIFA World Cup Bid Evaluation Report: Qatar](#). Both reports assessed the bids commitments on social and environmental matters. Comments on Qatar's bid among other things highlight that: "The significant construction work involved merits consideration, especially in terms of stadium readiness, testing under conditions comparable to the FIFA World Cup and the deployment of climate-control measures" but make no mention of assessing the labour standards in place to safeguard workers' well-being. It is worth noting that the [Brazil Bid Inspection Report for the 2014 FIFA World Cup \(2007\)](#) contained no evaluation of, or reference to, any social or environmental commitments. Yet in the [2014 FIFA World Cup Sustainability Strategy – Concept](#) jointly issued by FIFA and the Brazilian organisers, version 2 of which was published in May 2012), they announce unambiguous and explicit commitments around human rights (including on labour rights and human trafficking). The strategy is built around social responsibility standard [ISO 26000](#), and as such is aligned with the [2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) on the need for corporate human rights due diligence and the resolution of grievances.

More broadly, FIFA has entered into [strategic alliances](#) with several UN bodies that have human rights responsibilities and remits, including the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). There are also indications, following the deaths of at least 44 Nepali migrant workers on construction sites in Qatar during the summer of 2013, that FIFA may be considering giving human rights greater prominence in the way it does business. In November 2011, FIFA publicly committed to supporting workers' rights, including those of migrant workers, ahead of Qatar 2022; and has pledged to work with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to "add labour-related

criteria to the bidding process for future FIFA World Cups.”³ In evidence to the European Parliament in February 2014 over the welfare of Nepali and other migrant workers on construction projects in Qatar, Dr. Theo Zwanziger, a member of [FIFA’s Executive Committee](#), also publicly indicated that FIFA was looking at the need to rethink the bidding process, and the possibility of giving “human rights a much higher status”.

IOC Legacy, Knowledge Management and Impact Studies

In 2003 the IOC identified the need to add the promotion of “positive legacy” to the Olympic Charter. The IOC recognised that the complexities and impacts of staging an MSE upon a host city warranted a greater transfer of knowledge to help bid cities and future organising committees to hit the ground running. Although the Olympic Movement did not have much sustainability-related knowledge to transfer to London when it won the bid for the 2012 Olympics in 2005, the IOC has since established an Olympic Games Knowledge Management Programme, through which it collects and transfers lessons and best practices for future host cities, alongside a programme of Olympic Games Impact (OGI) studies. Since 2003, the IOC has asked all Local Organising Committees to conduct the OGI study. These encompass economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts, and cover a span of 12-years, starting two years prior to the host city’s election. At the present time, Local Organising Committees from London 2012, Sochi 2014, Rio 2016, PyeongChang 2018, and Tokyo are participating in the process. The IOC’s legacy systems are still relatively new. But they have the potential to help perpetuate new human rights good practice and risk management strategies the planning and delivery of an Olympics, and to be a model for other MSEs.

FIFA and the Anti-Racism Taskforce

FIFA set up an [Anti-Racism and Discrimination Taskforce](#) in 2013 to address acts of racism and discrimination in football. This followed a series of [race-related incidents](#) on and off the pitch. The Taskforce is made up of representatives from the different stakeholders of the football community, and regularly invites players - like Kevin-Prince Boateng (who [led team-mates off the field](#) in protest over racist chants from fans during an AC Milan match in January 2013), and expert advisers to participate – such as a representative of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human, Yury Boychenko (Chief of the Anti-Discrimination Section), Tokyo Sexwale (South African businessman and politician who was formerly an anti-apartheid activist), and Hilary O. Shelton (Director, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Washington Bureau).

The Taskforce first met in May 2013, and later that month FIFA’s Congress overwhelming

³ See for further information: Human Rights Watch, “Building a Better World Cup Protecting Migrant Workers in Qatar Ahead of FIFA 2022” (2012).

approved a landmark FIFA resolution on the fight against racism and discrimination. This resolution included proposals for tough new sanctions to combat high profile displays of racism in football. Among other things it addressed:

- Having an official at the stadium to identify potential acts of discrimination, and to facilitate the availability of evidence for the disciplinary committees to take decisions;
- Applying sanctions for a first or a minor offence, and a list of stronger sanctions for reoffenders or for serious incidents, such as expulsion from a competition;
- The need to implement existing sanctions in a harmonised way across all confederations, member associations and leagues, with "a proposal to request that clubs and member associations provide a concrete action plan showing their intention to fight any forms of racism and discrimination among their supporters".

At [subsequent sessions](#), the Taskforce has analysed prevention and education measures to further enhance the fight against discrimination, as well as the enforcement of sanctions to punish offences. Key priorities include:

- Allocating specific resources for the fight against racism and discrimination
- Developing an anti-discrimination handbook to be given to all member associations for best practice and training
- Recruiting and training of anti-discrimination officers
- Identifying and engaging of anti-discrimination ambassadors

FIFA Quality Programme and Labour Rights

FIFA is prepared to set mandatory labour rights standards for companies with whom it does business. The [World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry](#) (WFSGI) introduced the WFSGI Pledge for the [FIFA Quality Programme](#) for football manufacturers in 1997. The scheme requires FIFA licensed brands to sign a pledge together with their suppliers, which has to be renewed yearly, confirming they are in compliance with the WFSGI Code of Conduct. When it began the process was designed to combat child labour in Pakistan and India, but the WFSGI Code was updated in 2010, and now covers the [core conventions](#) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which set standards on child labour, forced labour, non-discrimination and freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.

FIFA licensees have to provide the WFSGI with an annual audit demonstrating their suppliers' full compliance with the Code. Significantly, the WFSGI Pledge is mandatory for the production of FIFA licensed footballs, meaning that the Pledge has to be confirmed before licensees can proceed to the technical test phase for producing

footballs to the correct specification.⁴

Recommendations

IHRB’s 2013 report “[Striving for Excellence – Mega Sporting Events and Human Rights](#)” included a series of recommendations for Sports Governing Bodies and other key stakeholders involved in preparing and staging a Mega Sports Event. These recommendations are intended to support efforts by Sports Governing Bodies to ensure that human rights are more central to the way they do business in the years ahead.

1. Make an explicit public commitment to respect human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, within the sports governing body’s constitution or codes of ethics. Establish a strategy for integrating a human rights-approach based on the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (Guiding Principles) into the sports governing body’s relevant operating procedures, for example the candidate city / country bid requirements / questionnaires, the host city / nation agreements, impact studies, and legacy / knowledge management transfer processes.
2. Require lead worldwide sponsors and media partners, to respect human rights in line with the Guiding Principles. This includes adopting a human rights policy statement, and to publicly disclose information on their efforts to implement human rights due diligence, and to remediate adverse human rights impacts.⁵ This requirement should be mandatory, and form part of the contract between the sponsor / broadcast partner and the sports governing body.⁶
3. Revise existing candidate city / country bid requirements / questionnaires so that bid cities / countries conduct a social impact assessment that includes human rights relevant issues, in addition to the current environmental impact assessment requirement. Stipulate the need to consult with potentially affected groups and other stakeholders, as outlined in the Guiding Principles.
4. Require Local Organising Committees, in line with the Guiding Principles, to adopt a human rights statement, and to publicly disclose information on their efforts to implement human rights due diligence, and to remediate adverse human rights impacts. Local Organising Committees should also be required to include in their contracts with commercial sponsors and

4 Information based on direct correspondence with the WFSGI. See also <http://www.wfsgi.org/committees/csr-committee/wfsgi-pledge-for-fifa>.

5 The California Transparency in Supply Chain Act for example requires retail sellers and manufacturers doing business in the state to disclose their efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from their direct supply chains for tangible goods offered for sale.

6 The mandatory requirements outlined in the WFSGI Pledge for the FIFA Quality Programme outlined above could serve as a model.

partners a stipulation for those sponsors / partners to do likewise.

5. Establish the office of an ombudsman under the authority of the sports governing body, to receive human rights complaints pertaining to MSEs, the operations of Local Organising Committees, and their delivery and commercial partners, and for that body to independently investigate allegations of human rights abuses related to the MSE.