



The Commonwealth Consensus Statement on Promoting Human Rights in and through Sport

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Commonwealth Sports Ministers note:

1. Commonwealth Member States, embracing the rich diversity of its people transcending boundaries of cultural, religious or any other identity, have long recognised human rights, and are pledged to use all their efforts to foster the human dignity of everyone in the Commonwealth, including marginalized people and communities.
2. Human rights are recognised in the international human rights treaties Commonwealth Member States have ratified and in agreements, declarations and plans of action that they have endorsed.ⁱ They are also enshrined in Principle II of the Commonwealth Charter as follows:

“We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instruments. We are committed to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, for all without discrimination on any grounds as foundations of peaceful, just and stable societies. We note that these rights are universal, indivisible and interrelated and cannot be implemented selectively. We are implacably opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds.”

3. Article 1 of the Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport adopted at UNESCO’s 38th General Conference proclaims the:

*“fundamental right to (practice) physical education, physical activity and sport without discrimination”.*ⁱⁱ

4. For the purpose of this Statement, ‘sport’ is used as a generic term, comprising sport for all, physical play, recreation, dance, organized, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms; as outlined in The Kazan Action Plan.ⁱⁱⁱ
5. Commonwealth Heads of Government recognise the important contribution that sport and physical activity can make to improving wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, socio-economic development and building peaceful and just societies. They acknowledge the need for policy coherence in the area of sport, human rights and development. In 2018, Commonwealth Heads of Government committed to collective action with sport bodies, including the promotion of human rights through sport and acknowledged the impact of the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth Youth Games on promoting Commonwealth values.
6. The Commonwealth brings a unique and innovative perspective to addressing key global challenges. Accordingly, Commonwealth governments maintain their commitment, engagement and leadership in using sport as a tool for human development and peace, and to ensuring the maximum contribution of sport towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The engagement of Commonwealth national human rights institutions in human rights and sport and adoption of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions' "London Declaration on Human Rights and Sport" in April 2018.
8. The adoption of the Tbilisi Declaration on Human Rights and Sport in October 2018 at the 15th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sports, commitment of the 2nd Pacific Island Sports Ministers Meeting in July 2019 of the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of integrity and human rights in sports and adoption of the Antananarivo Recommendations by the First Regional Meeting of African Ministers on the Implementation of the Kazan Action Plan in Africa in September 2019 recommending that inclusiveness and gender equality are mainstream components of national sports policies.

Therefore, Commonwealth Ministers of Sport, resolve to:

9. Promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms expressed in human rights treaties we have ratified as an objective in our statutory aims, policies, plans, projects and other strategic documents relating sport;
10. Advocate access to sport, physical education and physical activity for all;
11. Fight arbitrariness and other abuses in sport to ensure full respect for the rule of law in sport activities;
12. Invest in the effective implementation of human rights standards in and through sport, by developing governmental/non-governmental partnerships and using multi-stakeholder platforms to identify and promote measures to prevent and respond to human rights violations in sport;
13. Condemn all forms of racism and commit to intensify the fight against structural and systemic racial discrimination;
14. Strive to achieve gender equality in sport and enable persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis;
15. Implement a policy of zero tolerance by sport for violence, harassment, abuse or discrimination, paying particular attention to children and groups in a situation of vulnerability;
16. Promote and protect human rights in the context of the organisation of sport events and to introduce human rights objectives and considerations in the whole life cycle of major sporting events for a lasting positive legacy, including the bidding process, planning, procurement and competition delivery;
17. Invite other members of governments and parliaments, national human rights institutions, representatives from International Organisations, leaders of national and international sport organisations, the business community, international human rights organisations and other non-governmental organisations to develop an international declaration of human rights and sport;
18. Reaffirm the need to further integrate sport into national policies for Sustainable Development, including, among others, health, education, gender equality, economic development, youth development, inclusion and diversity, urban development, sustainable consumption and the elimination of all forms of violence;
19. Recognise that corruption and a lack of good governance, transparency and accountability undermine sport and note that a human rights approach requires transparency, accountability and good governance;

20. Commit to further develop and implement aligned monitoring and evaluation for consistent data at scale to inform, monitor and evaluate policies, as well as measure the contribution of sport to sustainable development and related human rights in the Commonwealth; and,
21. Fully acknowledge that it is for each State to determine in accordance with its domestic law, and its international obligations, the methods by which it might best discharge these commitments.

End Notes

ⁱ Member States' obligations to UN international human rights treaties include, where a treaty is ratified by a member State, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the International Convention against Enforced Disappearance, the International Convention against apartheid in sports, and all their respective Optional Protocols, where those protocols are ratified by a State; and the endorsement of the UNDRIP.

ⁱⁱ Article 1.1 of the Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport.

See: UNESCO (2015), Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002354/235409e.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ UNESCO (2017), *Kazan Action Plan, Outcome document of the Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI)*, Kazan, Russia, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000252725>