

UN DESA Report: Sport as a means of promoting sustainable development

FIFA INITIATIVES

This document provides an overview of recent FIFA initiatives on “sport for development and peace” in line with FIFA’s vision and commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

In an email received on 11 January 2024 from desa-sport@un.org, FIFA was requested by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through its Division for Inclusive Social Development, to contribute to the United Nations (UN) Secretary General’s report in response to [General Assembly resolution 77/27](#), entitled “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development”.

The report will document how the resolution has been implemented to date, specifically by examining how sport is helping to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda, with particular attention given to the annual high-level political forum on sustainable development.

As a long-standing and close partner of the UN, FIFA is supportive of the report and acknowledges the power of football, the game’s global reach and the social responsibility that must be shouldered.

OVERVIEW OF FIFA INITIATIVES TO DRIVE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE THROUGH FOOTBALL

Through the FIFA Statutes, FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognised human rights and promoting the protection of these rights. The organisation is obliged to constantly promote football globally in the light of its unifying, educational, cultural and humanitarian values. FIFA implements programmes to uphold human rights through its

activities and relationships across the six continents. By partnering with international and regional organisations as well as with public authorities, FIFA makes global football events available and, with the support of FIFA Legends, activates a wider representative network of expertise that helps to highlight and address relevant social issues.

The from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reporting request and period (sport-related initiatives that have been undertaken or are planned between January 2022 and February 2024), falls under two FIFA strategy circles, hence this report includes previous, current and future initiatives showcasing how on FIFA and the game of football drive social development.

FIFA's new four-year strategy for global football 2023-2027 was detailed by FIFA President Gianni Infantino to representatives of all of FIFA's 211 member associations at the FIFA Football Summit 2023 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on 21 December 2023.

In the strategy document entitled "Football Unites the World – Strategic Objectives for the Global Game: 2023-2027", goal 6 specifically outlines the focus on social responsibilities, in particular human rights and climate-related aspects.

In a divided world, football stands for unity by forging alliances with important stakeholders from the political sphere. Football is a synonym of joy, happiness, passion, love and peace. In essence, Football Unites the World is a global movement that aims to inspire and to bring people together through our sport. In so doing, FIFA delivers various important social messages via powerful campaigns and actions in partnership with global institutions, thus maximising its positive impact by joining forces during FIFA events that command global audiences.

FIFA works in close collaboration with key international and regional organisations, including UN agencies, be it via memorandums of understanding with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or via other partnerships with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). FIFA also has official partnership agreements with the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, the

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the African Union (AU) aimed at contributing to the advancement of the SDGs.

Joint action plans supported by campaigns and activations related to specific global issues such as public health, match manipulation, domestic violence, the environment and anti-discrimination, target specific global audiences at various intervals during tournaments and outside of events inspire to drive positive change in close collaboration with the relevant UN agencies and other partners.

In accordance with UNESCO's Kazan Action Plan, the WHO's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity and other related frameworks to integrate sport into cross-cutting strategies as a driver of sustainable development and peace, FIFA is using its unifying power and platforms to drive sustainable change through a number of programmes and initiatives:

- A. FIFA's Strategic Objectives for the Global Game: 2023-2027:** FIFA's vision is to develop the game and inspire change on and off the pitch.
- B. Football Unites the World (FUTW):** Using the power and popularity of football, this is a global movement to shine a light on important societal issues.
- C. FIFA Forward Programme:** The FIFA Forward Programme provides infrastructure, job opportunities and development through football. It funds, implements and monitors development projects across FIFA's 211 member associations, including to address specific issues such as gender-based violence.
- D. Anti-discrimination:** FIFA's "No Discrimination" campaign includes several measures and resources to tackle discrimination on and off the pitch.
- E. Human rights:** FIFA undertakes various initiatives linked to its institutional strategy and implements inclusive and corrective measures by working closely with tournament hosts and its member associations.
- F. Safeguarding:** FIFA Guardians™ takes measures to protect and safeguard children and minors from potential abuse and to promote their well-being within football
- G. Climate change:** FIFA tournaments provide systemic frameworks for mitigation initiatives, local development and sustainability actions.
- H. Football for Schools (F4S) Programme:** The F4S Programme educates and provides guidance to children and adolescents to help them build life skills.
- I. FIFA Foundation:** The FIFA Foundation supports non-governmental organisations on numerous social issues and charitable projects (e.g. community programmes, conflict prevention, refugee support).

- J. Prevention of corruption and crime:** FIFA works closely with numerous stakeholders to implement oversight mechanisms and other steps to keep football safe.
- K. FIFA Legends:** FIFA uses the power and outreach of FIFA Legends to drive global messages and action on social causes and development
- **Addendum:**
 - Overview of FIFA’s principles and guidelines on diversity, accessibility and inclusion, and human rights for all
 - FIFA Annual Report 2022
 - FIFA Annual Report 2023
 - Overview of FIFA’s social impact campaigns

A. FIFA’s Strategic Objectives for the Global Game: 2023-2027

Football to serve society and unite the world

FIFA’s vision, tagline, brand and motto, “Football Unites the World”, is in line with our mission to develop the game and use football to unite people across borders, political views, class, gender and origin. In a divided world, football stands for unity. FIFA delivers various important social advocacy messages and actions via powerful global campaigns and programmes in partnership with global institutions.

FIFA’s Strategic Objectives for the Global Game can be found [here](#).

Goal 6: Focus on social responsibilities, in particular human rights and climate-related aspects

Football to serve society:

- “Football Unites the World” (FUTW) collaborating with international organisations
- F4S Programme helping to teach life skills
- FIFA Foundation leveraging the organisation’s network to mobilise a positive social impact
- Ensuring safeguarding is implemented across our sport
- Working with our member associations to promote human rights and anti-discrimination through best practices
- Protecting world football from the effects of climate change (net zero objective)

- Protecting world football from hate speech and abuse on social media (Social Media Protection Service (SMPS))
- Advocacy to help advance causes (FIFA Legends)

By partnering with international and regional organisations as well as with public authorities, FIFA makes global football events available and, with the support of FIFA Legends, activates a wider representative network of expertise that helps to highlight and address relevant social issues.

A timeline of FIFA's recent achievements can be found [here](#).

B. Football Unites the World (FUTW)

FIFA acknowledges its unifying power. FUTW is a global movement and campaign that uses the power of football to protect positive values, address social issues that affect today's world and unite people across borders.

FIFA is committed to using football's power as a force for good and leveraging our partnerships with UN agencies to achieve that goal.

More information on the FUTW campaign, including our campaign partners, can be found [here](#).

Background information on FUTW

The FUTW campaign aim to inspire, unite and develop through football. It brings people together all over the world to celebrate the beautiful game. It represents the commitment of those who live football – be they players, coaches or fans – to shape and improve our communities and society for the benefit of all.

In The Vision 2020-2023, FIFA President Gianni Infantino stated in goals 10 and 11 the importance of making football work for society and protecting social values. FUTW provides a platform to advance FIFA's objective to positively contribute to society for the good of all. The campaign seeks to raise awareness and educate people on important issues, mobilise the football community to drive sustainable development and change, and shine a spotlight on FIFA's projects, programmes and initiatives. With the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ having welcomed fans to the Middle East for the first time, FUTW was launched in close collaboration with leading UN agencies, thus demonstrating global unity, and is now the flagship campaign and tagline of FIFA and is carried out at all

tournaments, with technical collaboration taking place with partners in between competitions.

FUTW is supported by football's biggest stars from both male and female teams. The campaign's activations are manyfold but consistently include:

- Global television commercial broadcasts by FIFA's rights holders
- Shirt sleeve patches on players' shirts showing key messaging
- Pitch hoarding messages
- Integrated and cohesive messaging (press conferences, speeches, presentations, editorial)
- Pre-match ceremony flags with messages and partner logos
- Interview series with FIFA Legends, sharing their personal stories of experiencing global cultures and social issues through football
- Infotainment messages and short videos shown at every match
- Comprehensive, multilingual social media campaign for various global time zones and audiences
- Strategic discussion forums and high-level panels with global stakeholders and subject-matter experts on the margins of tournaments
- Reinforced collaborations and actions with UN agencies

Examples:

FUTW: <https://fifa.fans/3ljYog6>

Unite for Inclusion: <https://fifa.fans/48jODCG>

Be Active: <https://fifa.fans/3SVWai>

No Discrimination: <https://fifa.fans/3lrwY7W> and [No Discrimination \(fifa.com\)](https://www.fifa.com/no-discrimination)

Impact and benefit

With an estimated global audience of five billion fans engaged during our flagship tournament, the outreach and social impact of FUTW is monumental and testament to the power of football in raising awareness and inspire change around important societal issues.

FIFA's engagement and contribution to the 2030 SDG Agenda through our FUTW movement is on track, and we continue to deliver and give back to society above and beyond the beautiful game of football.

C. FIFA Forward Programme

The FIFA Forward Programme is FIFA's flagship football development and investment programme. The investment provided and the projects implemented have strong positive effects among FIFA's 211 member associations. Following the successful implementation of two editions of the FIFA Forward Development Programme (FIFA Forward 1.0 and FIFA Forward 2.0), FIFA Forward 3.0 was launched in January 2023 and provides an even more a comprehensive funding model and support mechanism for football development projects across the world.

FIFA Forward 1.0 and FIFA Forward 2.0 achieved impressive results, with FIFA member associations having been supported financially in their daily operations and in setting strategic long-term goals, including the implementation of tailor-made development projects to provide football infrastructure and competitions and to promote and advance women's football and provide opportunities for female empowerment.

Through the FIFA Forward Programme, and in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half of FIFA's member associations, including those with more limited financial resources, were able to technically equip their youth and women's national teams and participate in numerous international competitions and tournaments with the support of solidarity funding for travel and equipment needs. This work indirectly supports Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

More on the FIFA Forward Programme:

[FIFA Forward 3.0 bolsters investment in football development](#)

[History of the FIFA Forward Programme](#)

D. Anti-discrimination

Discrimination affects millions of people every day, stifling opportunities, harming physical and mental health, wasting human talent and accentuating social tensions and inequalities. Unfortunately, the world of sport and football is also strongly affected by

discrimination and racism. The FIFA Statutes state that FIFA does not accept discrimination or racism in any way or form. FIFA has therefore established a dedicated platform with various means to counteract discrimination and racism. In making football truly global, equitable and inclusive, a proactive approach and joint action are required at all levels of football.

FIFA is elevating its engagement with all 211 member associations to create synergies and advance equality among the millions of people who play football at all levels. In consultation with players and member associations, FIFA is striving to protect players, fans, officials and everyone in the game from discrimination.

FIFA supports its 211 member associations in human rights and anti-discrimination work by sharing good practices, building capacities and encouraging strategic action at member-association level through the FIFA Forward Programme, and promoting compliance.

The FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination provides a strategic framework to support member associations in developing their human rights work and builds on the vast experience of the global football community.

Within this framework, FIFA has implemented measures to directly counteract discriminatory behaviour, when identified during tournaments and beyond:

- [Three-step procedure](#): This procedure applies to all FIFA competitions. Under this procedure, the referee has the authority to first stop the match and request a public announcement asking for the discriminatory behaviour to cease, to suspend the match until the behaviour stops following another warning announcement, and finally, if the behaviour persists, to decide to abandon the match. As a general rule, a match is automatically forfeited if the referee decides to abandon it after having applied the three-step procedure for a discriminatory incident.

Additionally, FIFA has urged all member associations, leagues, clubs and disciplinary bodies to introduce the three-step procedure in their domestic competitions (see FIFA circular [1682](#)).

- In addition to the three-step procedure, a proactive anti-discrimination stadium announcement is displayed to address the spectators before all FIFA matches.

- Before applying the first step of the three-step procedure, reactive antidiscrimination stadium announcements following discriminatory incidents can be broadcast at any time. These reactive announcements do not interfere with the match.
- [FIFA Anti-Discrimination Monitoring System](#): FIFA has implemented the anti-discrimination monitoring system to identify discriminatory behaviour at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ preliminary competition and final tournament. The risk assessments, neutral anti-discrimination match observers at all matches, special match reports and evidence provide a basis for the FIFA Disciplinary Committee in the event of it having to open disciplinary procedures.
- Regular safety and security measures used to prevent and/or to react to discriminatory incidents before and during FIFA matches include, for instance:
 - Pre-match scanning of fan paraphernalia (banners, etc.) at the stadium gates and through pre-match applications
 - Direct communication and dialogue with spectators at the stadium gates and in the stadium to achieve an immediate change in behaviour, and
 - Confiscation/removal of discriminatory items; and expulsion of an individual/individuals from the stadium.
- Diversity and anti-discrimination briefing and training for FIFA match officials (referees, etc.), participating member associations, players and other team members, FIFA employees, further tournament-related workforce (such as stewards, volunteers, etc).
- FIFA supports human rights related training for public security forces and co-provides inclusivity and non-discrimination workshops for contracted hotels.
- Diversity and anti-discrimination briefing and close exchange with commercial affiliates.
- Mainstreaming diversity and anti-discrimination in approximately 60 tournament policies and operational procedures.
- Measures cross-cutting with general human rights projects are the FIFA Human Rights Grievance Mechanism and the human rights volunteers programme:

- The Human Rights Grievance Mechanism is a FIFA mechanism aligned with FIFA's Human Rights Policy and international standards for business and human rights. It is active since the FIFA Arab Cup 2021™ and accessible to everyone that believes their human rights have been violated in connection with the FIFA World Cup™. FIFA works with relevant authorities and third parties to adequately address grievances raised through the system.
- FIFA operates a pioneering [human rights volunteers programme](#) through which specially trained volunteers engage with fans and community members to learn about their experiences with the tournament. Any human rights related concerns identified through these conversations will be taken up by the FIFA human rights team, to be addressed in line with FIFA's human rights commitment.

FIFA has also created a dedicated Anti-discrimination campaign platform: “No Discrimination” which is an awareness, action and education campaign that aims to rid football of discrimination in any and every form.

The platform contains various tactile elements and includes strong advocacy messaging and tools: [No Discrimination \(fifa.com\)](#)

Discrimination and social media:

As the world is becoming more digital, discrimination is increasingly becoming a serious problem on online media platforms. FIFA acknowledge this and have installed active protective measures. On 18 June 2022, to coincide with the UN International Day for Countering Hate Speech, FIFA joined forces with FIFPRO – the worldwide representative organisation for professional footballers – to coordinate and implement a plan on how to protect participating teams, players, officials and supporters from abuse on social media during its international tournaments. FIFA's pledge came on the back of an independent report that used artificial intelligence to track over 400,000 posts on social media platforms during the semi-finals and finals of two international competitions (UEFA EURO 2020 and the CAF Africa Cup of Nations 2021). The [report](#) identified that over 50% of players received some form of discriminatory abuse, causing harm to them and their followers.

Following this analysis, FIFA launched SMPS to protect players, teams and officials from online abuse, keeping their social media feeds free from hate and allowing them to enjoy taking part in FIFA events. It also stops their followers being exposed to abusive,

discriminatory and threatening posts and prevents the normalisation of these kind of actions.

More information on the SMPS can be found [here](#).

More examples of No Discrimination initiatives: [No Discrimination \(FIFA.com\)](#)
<https://fifa.fans/3lrwY7W>

In February 2024, President Gianni Infantino asked FIFA's European member associations to work together with FIFA to scale up the fight against racism in football in "a united way", calling for collaboration on enhanced counter-measures detailed in a proposal that will be put before the FIFA Congress in May 2024.

Source: <https://fifa.fans/49XkdxL>

E. Human rights

FIFA embraces its responsibility to respect human rights across its operations and relationships.

Through its competitions and the activities it undertakes to govern and develop football, FIFA generates jobs and investment in infrastructure, promotes the values of equality and fairness and strengthens social bonds among people and countries. This substantial impact brings with it a considerable amount of responsibility.

FIFA recognises its obligation to uphold the inherent dignity and equal rights of everyone affected by its activities. This responsibility is enshrined in article 3 of the FIFA Statutes, which reads as follows: "FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognised human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights."

FIFA's Human Rights Policy elaborates on this statutory commitment and outlines FIFA's approach in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Since 2016, FIFA has built a strategic programme to embed respect for human rights across the organisation's operations and relationships.

With respect to FIFA competitions, this programme involves measures such as:

- integrating human rights requirements into bidding processes for competitions and into the subsequent selection of the hosts;
- developing event-specific human rights risk assessments and risk mitigation strategies covering salient topics such as labour rights, anti-discrimination, press freedom and freedom of expression;
- establishing and implementing grievance mechanisms and working to ensure remediation where adverse impacts have occurred; and
- reporting on the due diligence steps taken.

In addition, FIFA's endeavours with respect to its role in governing and developing football include:

- working with its member associations to develop and implement anti-discrimination action plans and promote disability football;
- integrating human rights criteria into the requirements for the provision of development funds to its member associations; and
- including respect for the rights of players and other people involved in the game in the relevant regulations.

Throughout its work in this area, FIFA engages and collaborates closely with external human rights experts and stakeholders, including UN agencies.

Additional examples:

UN Human Rights Day: FIFA reaffirms its commitment to human rights and anti-discrimination <https://fifa.fans/4afBx1p>

FIFA praises human rights engagement with FIFA World Cup 26™ Host Cities at UN event <https://fifa.fans/439sTyX>

F. Safeguarding

FIFA is deeply committed to ensuring that all children and those who are vulnerable because of their football activities have the right to play in a safe and enjoyable environment, free from any risk of harmful behaviour.

One of the cornerstones of this commitment is the FIFA Guardians™ programme, which was set up by the FIFA Safeguarding & Child Protection Department. The programme provides a framework to help all 211 FIFA member associations prevent any risk of harm

to anyone in football and respond appropriately when needed. It offers policy guidance and educational content, including an online Safeguarding in Sport Diploma to professionalise the role of safeguarding.

More info:

First group graduate from two-year FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Sport Diploma at FIFA Summit <https://fifa.fans/4300730>

G. Climate change

FIFA deems it essential to act against climate change and mitigate its detrimental consequences.

Sport is not immune to climate change, which affects grassroots, recreational, amateur and elite football all over the world. Heat waves, heavy rainfall and other extreme weather conditions impact the ability for football to be played and can lead to increased health risks for players. Violent weather events and rising sea levels damage football infrastructure, while increasing air pollution puts the health of those who play sport outside at risk.

Football competitions, like all sporting events, are also affected by climate change. Global infrastructure and operations have already been impacted, leading to disrupted match schedules and uncertainty for players, fans, sponsors, broadcasters and organisers.

FIFA will continue to play a leading role in climate action by engaging actively and collectively in the journey towards net zero by ensuring education and action on sustainability measures and climate-friendly actions around our tournaments.

H. Football for Schools (F4S) Programme

Football brings people together, inspires generations and promotes team spirit. It plays a pivotal role in helping to educate children, and through the F4S Programme, FIFA has the ability to harness the game's power in order to educate people on a global scale.

Delivered in collaboration with UNESCO, national governments, education authorities and other relevant stakeholders, this important initiative offers millions of children from

around the world a unique opportunity to learn invaluable lessons and targeted life skills and competencies that can be taught in line with the SDGs.

Example:

Burundi becomes 100th country to implement the F4S Programme:

<https://fifa.fans/3P5KAKa>

I. FIFA Foundation

As an independent entity, the FIFA Foundation delivers a range of programmes in conjunction with various non-governmental organisations and other institutions to generate a positive social impact.

Such programmes and initiatives include the Community Programme, the Campus Programme, the Humanitarian Fund, the Digital Education Programme, the Refugee Programme and Disability football. Through these activities, football has the capacity to address social issues affecting young people, empower women and girls to play football and realise their full potential, repair damaged or destroyed sports infrastructure and support education.

FIFA Foundation uses football to spread awareness in Indonesia on World AIDS Day:

<https://fifa.fans/3P57rW8>

J. Prevention of corruption and crime

FIFA works closely with international experts on crime, corruption, and integrity in sport to safeguard and protect the game. FIFA and the UNODC reinforced their joint commitment to kicking crime out of football by renewing their memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2023.

The MoU commits both parties to step up their efforts to protect the integrity of the game. Equally, safeguarding is a core aspect of the joint cooperation. FIFA and the UNODC continue to work to ensure that the football environment is protected and safe for children, young adults and vulnerable athletes.

FIFA and the UNODC will continue to build capacities and raise awareness of the need to tackle corruption and crime in and through football.

Both parties have also agreed to support the development of a new UNODC global network aimed at enhancing collaboration and coordination between law enforcement, anti-corruption authorities and sports organisations.

Example:

FIFA and UNODC renew memorandum of understanding to kick crime out of football:
<https://fifa.fans/3V1VN1O>

K. FIFA Legends

Current and former players and coaches are a critical stakeholder in advancing social causes.

They teach future generations by example; they have a voice that is heard and respected on multiple platforms and they can help amplify the message of positive change that FIFA and its partners want to effect. As such, FIFA will actively involve FIFA Legends in all its causes, whether through their active participation in task forces, discussions that can facilitate policy definition or taking part in social campaigns.

The FIFA Legends are core to our social impact campaigns and advocacy work to help advance social causes.

Current and former players and coaches are critical stakeholders who support FIFA in contributing to the SDGs. They act as crucial voices and role models through their participation on multiple platforms and in various events and campaigns.

L. Additional information on FIFA's strategy and objectives

Looking ahead

FIFA continues to develop football, aware of its unifying power, and the SDGs are central to our social impact strategy: <https://fifa.fans/3uU0wZ0>

Strategy foreword by the FIFA President:

<https://fifa.fans/3wEjFPf>

Please see [this section on governance](#) on FIFA.com.

M. FIFA Annual Reports 2022 and 2023

Further information can be found in the [FIFA Annual Report 2022](#) and the [FIFA Annual Report 2023](#).

More information can be found on [FIFA.com](https://www.fifa.com).

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