

# SECRETARY - 20 GENERAL'S 24 REPORT SUMMARY

## SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE



# United by our Common Goals - Ensuring the Impact of Sport on Sustainable Development and Peace

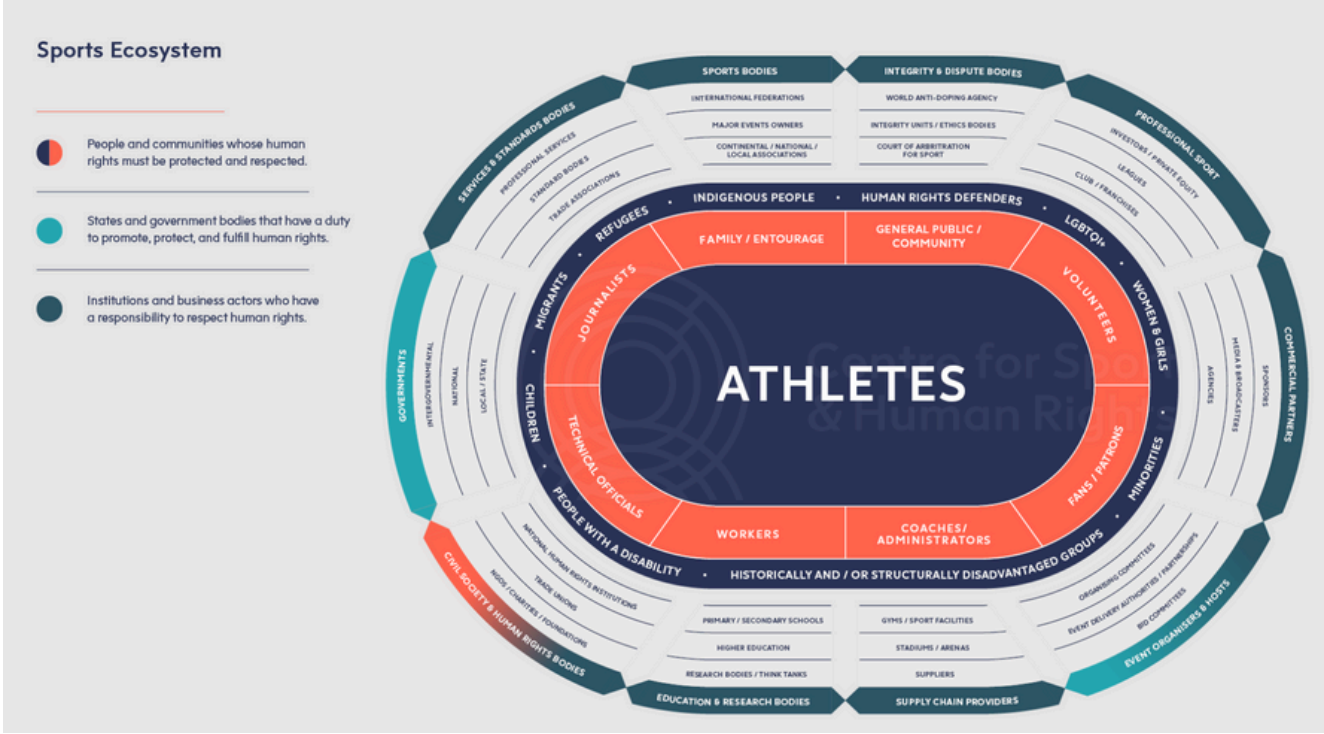
## 2024 Report of the Secretary-General

### Highlights and Key Recommendations

Drawing on inputs from leading global experts, Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders, this report focusses on progress in five priority areas of impact: **(i) social inclusion through sport, (ii) physical activity, physical education, and community-based participation in sport, (iii) gender equality in and through sport, (iv) peacebuilding and crime prevention, and (v) sustainable communities and climate action.** Each section reviews progress between 2022 and 2024, highlighting gaps in implementation that prevent sport from being fully utilized as a tool for development and peace. A schematic overview of the global sport ecosystem is used to deepen understanding of the multiple stakeholders engaged in sport and to highlight potential entry points and opportunities for strengthening implementation of the [UN Action Plan](#) amidst current global challenges. Lastly, the report provides strategic recommendations directed at the UN system, Member States and the global sport ecosystem to support implementation of the UN Action Plan.

# Global Sport Ecosystem

The global sport ecosystem includes a wide range of stakeholders such as athletes, coaches, and clubs to sports business organization, sport venues, media, as well as spectators and fans. While the global sport ecosystem is not governed by a single set of centralized rules, a fundamental respect for human rights is embedded in all sport. To effectively leverage the contribution of sport to achieving the SDGs, it is helpful to understand the ecosystem and stakeholders engaged in and around sport.



Source: [Centre for Sport and Human Rights](#)

## Social Inclusion Through Sport

This section examines the impact of SDP programmes and policies on social integration and inclusion, focusing on progress in implementing the UN Action Plan and increasing inclusion in physical activity, quality physical education, and community-level sports (SDGs 3, 4 and 10). An inclusive society is one where every individual has an active role to play, creating a stable, safe, and just environment for all. [UNESCO's 2024 report on the Social Impact of Sport](#) notes that investing in sport for social objectives has significant returns.

In this context, the report cites progress in SDP policies and programmes related to strengthening social inclusion and reducing barriers to engagement in sport, with examples from vulnerable groups including women and girls, youth, older persons, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities. However, key challenges remain which limit participation by persons with disabilities such as poor accessibility; lack of appropriate/adapted equipment; and lack of appropriately trained staff.



### Physical Activity, Physical Education, and Community-Based Participation in Sport

Regular physical activity, physical education, and community-based sports play a critical role in preventing noncommunicable diseases and promoting health across all age groups. Over the past two years, progress has been made in global monitoring, partnerships, and responding to recommendations outlined in the UN Action Plan. However, recent data from WHO in 2024 revealed that global levels of physical inactivity are rising - one in three adults do not meet recommended activity levels, and disparities between men, women, and older adults remain significant.

Moreover, gaps in data, particularly around adolescent physical activity and the provision of quality physical education, highlight an urgent need for stronger policy action and greater collaboration between health and sport sectors. Monitoring of policy implementation remains uneven, with more progress reported in higher-income countries compared to lower-income nations.

## Gender Equality in and Through Sport

The participation of women and girls in sports is a crucial enabler in achieving gender equality. Progress has been made in areas such as leadership, with gender parity reached in IOC commissions in 2022 and increasing government efforts to promote women's leadership in sports. Furthermore, the Paris 2024 Olympic Games was a milestone in gender parity among athletes, while other sports, such as tennis and surfing, have equalized prize money. While there has been improvement, disparities persist. Female athletes are underrepresented in high-earning lists and continue to face significant challenges, including widespread violence and abuse in sports. Many countries and sports organizations have yet to fully implement policies addressing gender equity - leaving gaps in opportunities and participation for women and girls. Moving forward, advocacy, investment, and continued implementation of gender-balanced initiatives are essential to advance progress toward SDG 5.



## Sustainable Communities and Climate Action

Sport is both affected by and contributes to climate change, with rising temperatures, extreme weather, and pollution impacting athletes and spectators. The World Meteorological Organization report confirmed 2023 as the hottest year on record, highlighting the urgent need for climate action. Progress is evidenced by various frameworks and initiatives, such as the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework and the Sport for Nature Framework, which will focus on reducing emissions and enhancing resilience to climate impact for 2024-2025. Beyond decarbonization, sports organizations have a unique opportunity to influence millions of fans to take climate action. Leveraging this cultural influence is key to amplifying the sector's impact on fighting climate change.

## Peacebuilding and Crime Prevention

Youth violence results in numerous deaths, injuries, and long-term consequences, with youth homicides accounting for 37% of global homicides annually. Sport can help address these issues by promoting fair play, preventing violent extremism, and fostering safer communities. Initiatives like the UNODC's Line Up Live Up programme and partnerships with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are training coaches, youth workers, and athletes to build resilience against violence and crime. By teaching critical life skills and engaging at-risk youth in positive activities, these programs aim to prevent crime and promote social cohesion. In addition to crime prevention, safe sport environments and the protection of athletes helps prevent harassment and corruption within sport. By addressing root causes of crime and violence and promoting trauma-informed approaches, sport can serve as a powerful tool for advancing social development, especially among vulnerable youth.



# Recommendations

## United Nations System

- Update [2018 UN Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace](#);
- Strengthen collaboration, coordination and knowledge sharing within and across the sport ecosystem at all levels.

## Member States and the Global Sport Ecosystem

- Mobilize resources to strengthen the capacity of the UN secretariat; Encourage and support countries in committing to the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#);
- Perform a rapid stakeholder review to assess the needs and opportunities for accelerating progress on inclusivity in sport;
- Advocate for and mobilize increased investment through sustainable funding streams to implement SDP programmes and policies;
- Develop and deliver training resources to strengthen capacities within the sport ecosystem.