**OSRSG VAC submission for SG’s report on “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development”.**

**28 February 2024**

Background

1. The Office of the SRSG on Violence against Children welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the SG’s report on “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development.”
2. Sport contributes to many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to violence against children, poverty, health, education, equality, social inclusion, decent work and peaceful societies.
3. Sport can offer a safe haven from harm that children experience in other settings. It can help address violence against children and gender-based violence. It can be an anchor of normality and source of resilience for children whose lives are uprooted for various reasons, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable.
4. However, children experience violations of their rights that are associated with sport settings or events. Children may be exposed to violence or abuse while engaged in sport in the community. Children involved in sport may become the victims of discrimination, sale, trafficking or exploitation. Mega sporting events can bring displacement, the use of child labour, and sexual exploitation of children.
5. For these reasons, the Office of the SRSG consistently promotes the need to ensure the protection of children from all forms of violence and discrimination in sport. In this connection, the Office advocates for the inclusion of child protection as part of a holistic approach to sport for peace and development, in addition to pushing for higher child safeguarding standards with Member States, sports federations and other stakeholders.

Specific initiatives from January 2022 – February 2024

1. The Office of the SRSG would like to highlight the following initiatives for inclusion in the SG’s report:
   1. The Office of the SRSG contributed actively to the process initiated by FIFA to establish an independent global safe sport entity.
   2. Together with the Centre for Sport and Human Rights and UNICEF, the Office of the SRSG led the development of the Child Rights and Mega-Sporting Events (MSE) Toolkit. It provides a set of resources to help benchmark, monitor and evaluate the extent to which entities involved with the organizing of an MSE are addressing their responsibility towards the rights and well-being of children across the lifecycle of the event.
   3. In the context of her country engagement, the SRSG consistently promotes the need for a stronger legal and regulatory framework for safeguarding in sport. In addition, she uses the opportunity presented by a country hosting a mega sporting event to raise awareness and enhance capacity in upholding the rights of every child, as well as to invest in social services and infrastructure for the benefit of all as a legacy of such events. For example, this was the case during the SRSG’s official visit to the Solomon Islands in April 2023, in advance of the Pacific Games held there in November 2023.