



Expert Group Meeting

Transforming Lives through Sport

Draft concept note

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a universal plan of action for people and the planet and the aspiration to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are integrated, indivisible, and global in nature, and they balance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental. If fully implemented, these SDGs promise to usher in a new era of peace and prosperity, where everyone can fulfill their potential and enjoy the benefits of a healthy world.

Central to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda is promoting integrated approaches to policy and planning processes for sustainable development, including environmental sustainability.

Promotion of integrated approaches essentially requires that the interlinkages, trade-offs, and synergies among the SDGs are well understood by national governments and relevant stakeholders, such as NGOs and sport business organizations, who play an important role in achieving the SDGs.

In addition, within each SDG, some variations may cover one dimension more than others—for example, SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 3 on healthy lives and well-being are directly related to sport and physical activity, while SDG 10 draws attention to the importance of reducing inequalities in sport. However, within many of the SDGs, there are connections among the components that can be used to highlight the benefits of sport for development and peace.

It is important to uncover the interactions among the Goals to ensure that efforts to achieve each specific Goal and associated targets are undertaken in a holistic, integrated, and balanced manner. It is not always easy to fully understand and operationalize the complex interrelations, including how the Sustainable Development Goals underpin or can be promoted through actions primarily addressed at enhancing economic prosperity or social inclusion; but strong reliance on data, good practices, and decision support tools can help advance in this direction.

As such, a series of **expert group meetings (EGM)** are being organized by the Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

The meeting will bring together inputs from Member States, UN entities, and other stakeholders, such as sporting teams, NGOs, and sport businesses at two levels to review the role of sport across all SDGs, taking into account the complex web of interactions among the



Goals in a systemic manner, and considering the implications of taking action within each SDG along one dimension on another.

Presumably, a better understanding of the interlinkages and interactions between the SDGs and within individual SDGs, underpinned by knowledge of the importance of healthy linkages, will pave the way for effective, integrated approaches while enhancing the capacity of policymakers to set priorities and to devise coherent implementation strategies.

Accordingly, the EGM will cover **five priority themes** through which **experts** in the respective fields discuss issues relevant to sport as a **transformational power** in people's lives and explore the role of sport as an enabler of sustainable development and peace. The priority themes are listed below.

Priority themes:

- 1. **Gender Equality**
- 2. **Integrity**
- 3. **Disability**
- 4. **Peace**
- 5. **Sustainability**

Format:

A multi-stakeholder dialogue will be organized for each priority theme. Each dialogue will take place virtually via the Zoom platform from 8.30 to 10.30 am EDT, with one priority theme being addressed on each day of the week.

Dates:

The dialogues of the expert group meetings will be convened virtually from Monday 29 April to Friday 3 May, 2024.

Connection details and other relevant information will be shared with participants in advance. To accommodate participants from a range of geographic locations, the meetings will be divided into 5 groups of 6-10 experts and meeting for a maximum of 2 hours per dialogue.

Each group will include an **academic expert** working in the specific subject area to provide an overview and to offer research perspectives. Each group will be moderated by the lead academic.

Meeting Dates:

- | | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Gender equality, sport, and the SDGs | Monday | 29 April |
| 2. Integrity, sport, and the SDGs | Tuesday | 30 April |
| 3. Disability, sport, and the SDGs | Wednesday | 1 May |
| 4. Peace, sport, and the SDGs | Thursday | 2 May |
| 5. Sustainability, sport, and the SDGs | Friday | 3 May |

Each dialogue will have an opening segment with introductory remarks, a presentation by an **academic expert**, and an explanation of the methodology, setting the stage for the second part of the event consisting of an interactive discussion among the 6-8 expert participants.



The **objectives** of the **EGMs** will be to:

- Convene the leading global experts, and organizations practitioners working on various aspects of the priority themes to gather the available knowledge and insights.
- Take stock of the latest research globally on the priority themes, with attention to key trends, data availability and needs, and best practices and gaps in policy responses.
- Provide information on an organization's achievements over the past two years.
- Develop informed, practical, and action-oriented **recommendations** to inform the drafting of the report of the Secretary-General on integrated approaches to sport and the Sustainable Development Goals, and influence and expand the global normative frameworks on sport for development and peace.

Participant Profiles:

Each dialogue of the EGM will be attended by approximately 6-10 experts, representing a range of organizations, including academia, NGOs, networks and associations, sports teams, sports business organizations, practitioners, and civil society organizations leading practice on issues of relevance to the high-priority theme of **Transforming Lives through Sport**.

Efforts will be made to select experts on a broad spectrum of issues of relevance to the theme. In selecting the experts, the criteria of geographical balance and diversity of representation will also be taken into account to ensure that a broad range of realities and perspectives are reflected.

Experts will present and discuss their organizations and personal work at the meeting, with a focus on the formulation of policy recommendations for the UN System, Member States, Regional Commission, and other stakeholders.

Organizations representing the United Nations System and other inter-governmental organizations with relevant mandates and expertise will also be invited to participate in the EGM as observers, and can pose questions to the experts.

Documentation:

The documentation for the meeting will include a series of Background, **Expert Papers**, or **Informative papers**:

Expert papers:

The Expert papers delivered by the academic provide a broad overview of the topic and its various facets, holistically, highlighting the key dimensions, and providing broad recommendations for policy-makers and others. They are brief 8-10 minute think pieces presenting the state of play, key issues, and recommendations about a specific aspect of the main theme. They allow the Expert group to delve deeper into specific facets of the priority theme and to examine more specific and concrete policy recommendations.



Participant Papers:

These consist of a maximum three-page summary of the work that you or your organization have been performing over the last two years and the ideas and recommendations for the future Secretary General's report.

Informative Papers from observer organizations, usually United Nations agencies, are also brief think pieces focusing on key issues of particular relevance to their mandate and expertise, and where relevant, ensuring linkages to important relevant UN processes or priorities.

All papers should address current gaps on the topic, including any relevant normative or policy frameworks or industry guidelines or practices, and help shape concrete recommendations for policies to be implemented at the international, national, regional, and local levels.

All papers play a key role in informing the discussions of the Expert Group Meeting, and also in presenting **key recommendations** that may be reflected in the Secretary General's Report on the priority theme.

The papers and ensuing discussions at the Expert Group Meeting should adopt an intersectional lens and reflect diverse identity categories or wider circumstances within the 5 Priority Themes (Gender equality, Integrity, Disability, Sport for Peace, and Sustainability) and how they relate specifically to the 2030 SDGs.

Overall Guiding Questions

How is your area of expertise relevant to transforming lives through sport?

How have you and your organization contributed to the connection between sport and the SDGs over the past two years?

How does your specific area relate to the SDGs and what are your recommendations for the future?

Guide questions:

Gender Equality:

How do we -break down barriers to ensure meaningful access to sport for all? This includes barriers such as affordability, and harmful social norms.

How is sport evolving to become more gender equitable (as evidenced by rapidly growing audiences and mass media coverage – for example)?

What is needed to ensure quality physical education for girls and women – including policy change and investment?

How do we create a gender-transformative sports ecosystem, including ensuring women's leadership in decision-making? –

How can the increased participation of women and girls in sport contribute to SDG achievement?



We have heard for years that no one cares about women's sport – so why invest in it? When in fact, we now see how with investment, people DO want to watch. How is this argument eroding, and what are the arguments in favor of greater investments in women's and girls' sports?

What is being done to address gender-based violence in and through sport?

Integrity:

What are the current threats posed to the integrity of sport and how do they influence the outcome of events? For example, Artificial intelligence.

How do we continue to combat Match Fixing which is a very real issue in the sports ecosystem?

What are the barriers and support mechanisms available to sports people to offset results manipulation, doping, corruption, and unethical behaviors in sports?

How do we create accountability measures to preserve individuals' human rights and responsibilities in sports?

What are the ethics and values that promote community confidence in sports, including fair and honest performances and outcomes, unaffected by illegitimate enhancements or external interests?

Disability:

What are the typical barriers for persons with a disability to participate in sports?

Is there still a lack of awareness from people without disabilities on how to include individuals in sports? For example, the lack of opportunities for training and competition, and accessible facilities still cause physical barriers and limited resources.

What role does the International Paralympic Committee play in ensuring sustainability in sport for the disabled? What are their plans and importantly their recommendations?

How can we best incorporate sports for athletes with a disability into the mainstream of school and grassroots sports? What is needed?

Peace:

What are the apparent positive outcomes of sports participation and the SDGs? How do we know this participation works?

We understand that the IOC places education as a priority through sport but what is the value of education through sports in the development context?

How do we increase funding for SDP programs?

How do we effectively engage sport to increase community development in areas of conflict, poverty, and post-disaster?

How do we plan and organize refugee sports programs?



Human Rights in sport is a critical issue and needs to be front and center in United Nations policy structures. Discuss the future.

Sustainability:

What is the role of the International Olympic Committee in leading sustainability and sports issues?

Transportation-related emissions are a problem with major sports. How can we limit the significant carbon footprint?

Sporting events require large amounts of energy for lighting, cooling, heating, and communications. How can we further limit or offset the sports dependency on increased carbon emissions, and air and water pollution?

How do we eliminate waste generation in major sports and how can we recycle waste to further enhance waste elimination at grassroots levels?

Management of the EGM:

The EGM will be conducted in English and documentation will be in English. Slide deck presentations are welcome, but to ensure that the timing for the presentations is adhered to, they should be kept to 3 slides (maximum) that capture the essential elements of the EGM papers (for example, key trends, critical issues for consideration, and key policy recommendations).

The Slide decks and the papers should be shared with DISD in advance to facilitate their sharing online during the meeting and will be posted on the [DISD website](#). The EGM will be recorded to facilitate the drafting of the meeting report. The recording will not be made public or shared outside the UN.

Deliverables:

1. Experts will be expected to deliver a short paper (3 pages) detailing their organization's major outputs, future directions, and how they relate to sport and its transformational power.
2. Experts will be expected to offer recommendations regarding their specific areas which may feed into the Secretary General's Report.
3. Experts will be expected to send their brief paper (3 pages) and PowerPoint after the meeting and no later than **18th may 2024** via email to desa-sport@un.org with a copy to keith.gilbert@un.org
4. All Experts will be acknowledged in the meeting report which will be posted on the UNDESA website.

The expected outcome of the EGMs will be a minor report reflecting the views of the experts and containing a summary of the discussion and policy recommendations. Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to this important Expert panel.