

# The London Declaration on Sport and Human Rights

Commonwealth Forum of National  
Human Rights Institutions

April 2018



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National Human Rights Institutions

## Context

The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions is an inclusive body of Commonwealth NHRIs and other national accountability mechanisms having a human rights mandate to support the broad objectives of promoting networking, sharing of information, experiences and best practices, encouraging countries to establish Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs, and assisting national institutions to fulfil their mandated activities. The Forum has agreed strategic priorities which include human rights and good governance, and business and human rights, which include sport and human rights. The Forum has worked on the value and importance of sport and human rights in the context of the Commonwealth Games and other Commonwealth sporting initiatives.

## Declaration

We the members of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions attending the meeting on the 17th April 2018 in London, United Kingdom:

- (a) Reaffirm the values and principles contained within the Commonwealth Charter; and acknowledge the Communique of the 9th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting;
- (b) Recall Member States' obligations to international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 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 applicable;
- (c) Recall the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the GANHRI Edinburgh Declaration on Business and Human Rights;
- (d) Recall the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People;
- (e) Recall the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action;

- (f) Recall the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the commitment to endeavour to reach first those who are furthest behind, alongside the GANHRI Merida Declaration on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (g) Recognise the UNESCO Declaration of Berlin and the Brighton Declaration on Women in Sport, and the GANHRI Amman Declaration on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in protecting and promoting the human rights of women and girls, and promoting gender equality;
- (h) Recognise the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, and the International Convention against Doping in Sport;
- (i) Recognise the UNESCO Kazan Action, including its definition of sport as a generic term, comprising sport for all; physical play; recreation; dance; organised, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms;
- (j) Recognise the Commonwealth Games Federation's Sport Impact Model and Human Rights Policy Statement;
- (k) Take note of relevant provisions of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights;
- (l) Take note of the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulations of Sports Competition, and the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events; and
1. Highlight that sport can play a positive role in the lives of all persons, including children, older persons, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTI, and indigenous peoples;
  2. Recognise the power of sport to contribute to addressing racism and other forms of discrimination, including for example disability, sexual orientation, and gender-based discrimination; and help empower minorities and vulnerable groups;
  3. Acknowledge the potential for sport to progress socio-economic, civil and political rights across the Commonwealth;
  4. Emphasise the role of sport in the education of all persons, including children in schools;
  5. Emphasise the importance of sport to achieving the highest attainable

standard of health of all persons, including both physical and mental health;

6. Acknowledge the need for policy coherence in the area of sport, human rights, and development;
7. Recognise that sport is a broad concept covering grass-roots, amateur, professional, and mega-sporting events;
8. Reaffirm the importance of active, free, and meaningful, participation in decision-making by impacted, or potentially impacted, stakeholders;
9. Recognise the ability of sport to heal and achieve peaceful, inclusive, equitable societies, especially where conflict has occurred;
10. Stress the need for safeguarding measures to protect all participants in sport, and vulnerable groups, including children and persons with disabilities;
11. Cognisant that sport can be utilised to combat climate change and promote climate justice;
12. Recognise sport as a means to engage business, and recognise elements of sport, including mega-sporting events, as businesses;
13. Stress the importance of sport to progress business and human rights,

including in the areas of modern slavery, supply chains, and public procurement;

14. Emphasise the role of sport in culture and in promoting harmonious cultural relations;
15. Highlight that sport can advance connectivity between civil society, States, businesses, and NHRIs;
16. Note the ability of sport to generate economic growth, cognisant that measures to realise human rights protections can require economic investment which may not provide visible short-term economic returns, but will bear fruit in the long-term development of a state and its citizens;
17. Highlight the importance of integrity in sport, including sport-related doping, corruption, crime, and betting;
18. Convinced that sport bodies act as role models and should prioritise good governance;
19. Convinced of the need for sport to harness technology to provide transparency and accountability;
20. Note the importance of communicating progress made by sport to promote and protect human rights, and lessons learnt;

Therefore, we declare as follows:

As a group of Commonwealth NHRIs, we will:

- i. Actively support the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport, developing partnerships and the exchange of knowledge and advice between the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport and NHRIs;
- ii. Engage with the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport and the biennial Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting; to engage with Commonwealth Sports Ministers to enhance policies and frameworks; and support the implementation of the Communique of the 9th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting; and call upon the Commonwealth Secretariat to establish a high level technical working group and broader learning alliance on measuring the contribution of sport to the SDGs that should contribute to the work of CABOS;
- iii. Call on Commonwealth Member States to adopt a statement and associated guidance on the importance of, and key focus areas for, Commonwealth Governments in protecting human rights 'in' and 'around' sport;
- iv. Actively support the Commonwealth Games Federation in taking a human rights-based approach to the

design and delivery of the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth Youth Games;

- v. Develop a programme of work for the Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs' actions to support the promotion and protection of human rights through sport;
- vi. Take steps to develop tools to ensure the protection of human rights and to contribute to addressing racism and discrimination within sports policies and actions, such as guidance for NHRIs on how to support a human rights-based approach to mega-sporting events;
- vii. Share good practice between NHRIs and utilise the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to co-ordinate work;

As individual NHRIs, we will:

- viii. Exercise our role, in accordance with the Paris Principles, to provide advice to government, investigate, and support legal action that protects and promotes human rights in sport;
- ix. Work with local Commonwealth Games Associations in Member States, Sports Ministers, national organising committees, and national and local sporting bodies to advise on the protection and promotion of human rights;

- x. Engage with organising committees of mega-sporting events within our jurisdictions and encourage them to adopt human rights based approaches to the design and delivery of the events;
- xi. Encourage Governments to design and implement a national strategy on sport policy, recognising the value of sport to the fulfilment of human rights obligations;
- xii. Strengthen the relationships between NHRIs and other national

accountability mechanisms with a human rights mandate, the Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Games Federation, and national organising committees of Commonwealth Member States;

- xiii. Promote and advocate the potential of sport as a tool to fulfil human rights and undertake research on relevant topics to this effect.

Adopted at the Biennial Meeting  
London, UK  
17 April 2018

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