

Committee: The International Olympic Committee

Delegation: Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)



Topic: Harnessing sports diplomacy for the advancement of democracy & human rights

Since its establishment in 1904, FIFA has always sought to foster international understanding and cooperation among nations, even during the most difficult and turbulent times. From its beginnings on the eve of World War I to the world's current political climate, FIFA has made the football pitch a space where all people can unite under the common love for the beautiful game. For this reason, FIFA remains committed to continuing to use football- and sports diplomacy more generally- as an agent for peace understanding and human rights, but also to help the International Olympic Committee (IOC) adopt a framework that is consistent with their own values in promoting non-discrimination, fair play, and respect for human dignity.¹ This should also serve to aid in the IOC's Olympism 365 project aimed at building a better world through sport "by bringing together social impact initiatives and diverse organizations under one shared vision".

Based on Article 4 of the FIFA Statutes, "discrimination of any kind against a... private person or group of people on account of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender...sexual orientation or any other reason is strictly prohibited and punishable by suspension or expulsion".² These are core pillars to how FIFA operates and is the basis for the Football Unites the World campaign. Launched at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, players and all other participants stood together on issues both in and outside the pitch promoting social actions towards non-discrimination and global education. However, this was only the start, as the campaign has now transformed itself into a joint campaign that engages directly with the 2018 formed FIFA Foundation.

Via this foundation, FIFA aims to, in various ways, but namely financially, aid a number of programs "bound by a common thread: (to) making lives around the world better thanks to the beautiful game".³ These programs align with FIFA's 2023-2027 strategic framework goals and

¹ See, International Olympic Committee, *IOC Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations* (Lausanne: IOC, November 16, 2021), PDF file, accessed November 2025, <https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Beyond-the-Games/Human-Rights/IOC-Framework-Fairness-Inclusion-Non-discrimination-2021.pdf>

² See, FIFA, *FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination* (Zurich: FIFA, June 2018), PDF file, accessed November 2025, <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/6363f7dc616ff877/original/wg4ub76pezwcxsaaj98-pdf.pdf>

³ See, "Chapter 03," FIFA Foundation, accessed November 2025, <https://www.fifafoundation.org/#chapter-03>

the United Nations Agenda 2030 and SDGs along with the Football Unites the World campaign. They truly embody a global commitment of FIFA by aiding those in the snowy plains of Canada to those throughout the sandy islands of the Philippines. One project, in Thailand specifically, titled the 'Urban Light Foundation' works to use football to address challenges affecting underprivileged, at-risk youth of trafficking, by helping with immediate needs, building resilience, and developing essential skills. The project has over 200 beneficiaries and serves various groups from LGBTQI+ people, Indigenous people, and refugees. This is but one example of the 130 non-governmental organizations the Foundation has supported, totaling support for over 150,000 people.

Hence, with FIFA already using its power to be a tool for change and promoting human rights, it makes the following recommendations to the IOC so that it may further its Olympism 365 project: 1) the creation of a new social campaign that works with Olympism 365, but engages more with its public image; 2) more emphasis on its strategic partners such as the UNODC; and 3) a platform that is separate from that of the IOC to promote this project through the creation of a separate website, social media pages etc... With over 60,000 people reached and a record number of 1.5 million people to benefit by 2030, the work speaks for itself.⁴ That said, the public would benefit from knowing more about the project so that they may engage with it, whether that be voluntarily or monetarily to continue furthering its goal of aiding people.

FIFA has been where the IOC is now, and thus it offers its years of expertise so that it may bring awareness to the positive social return the World Cup and the Olympics bring. Together, both spectacles make the globe more unified and as FIFA's president, Gianni Infantino, responded when asked if "humanity heading in the right direction?", FIFA reiterates "yes, because football encompasses all that ... Peace, unity, coming together, understanding each other, all these values that football brings to people... it's something that we need to uphold, and we need to absolutely bring forward all the time".⁵

⁴ See, International Olympic Committee, "Olympism365 Summit: Major New Commitments Set to Generate USD 200 Million of Investment Towards Building a Better World Through Sport," *IOC Newsroom*, June 2025, <https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/olympism365-summit-major-new-commitments-set-to-generate-usd-200-million-of-investment-towards-building-a-better-world-through-sport>

⁵ See, FIFA, "Invest in Happiness," *Inside FIFA*, October 2025, <https://inside.fifa.com/organisation/president/news/future-investment-initiative-saudi-arabia-infantino-interview?entryId=6CDDp30hxBc4aCwSNE1FUh>

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Topic: Inclusion of transgender, intersex and non-binary athletes in competitive sport

In its guiding principles, FIFA has always strived to ensure that football remains the most inclusive and fair sport for all those who participate. Referring to Article 4 of the FIFA statutes, FIFA reiterates its commitment to, “discrimination of any kind against a... private person or group of people on account of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender...sexual orientation or any other reason is strictly prohibited and punishable by suspension or expulsion”.⁶ In this sense, FIFA urges caution when looking to the topic of transgender, intersex and non-binary athletes in sport as it is in not only FIFA’s but the IOC’s commitment to ensuring “every person has the right to practice sport without discrimination and in a way that respects their health, safety and dignity”.⁷

As alluded to in the 4th FIFA Statute, FIFA’s mission is to always ensure the safety of its athletes, but this does not only mean physically, this also includes the safety of athlete’s mental health. In this sense, FIFA advises that measures that could be rooted in discrimination and transphobic sentiment be carefully reviewed. FIFA bases this on the fact that identifying trans people experience “elevated rates of poor mental health, suicidality, and self-harm... However, these negative outcomes are not inherent to being trans but result from broader societal responses, including stigma discrimination and lack of inclusion or affirmation of trans identities”.⁸ Hence, the idea of creating a blanket ban on transgender athletes disregards the effort individuals have put to get to the professional level and consequently what it may do to them mentally if barred from participating.

Furthermore, FIFA disapproves of any engagement of rhetoric that implies that transgender people will transition to play a sport and take advantage of physiological ‘enhancements’ or to placed in a gender setting they would not have been a part of beforehand. FIFA understands that people transition for the simple reason that they want to feel more like themselves and

⁶ See, FIFA, *FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination* (Zurich: FIFA, June 2018), PDF file, accessed November 2025, <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/6363f7dc616ff877/original/wg4ub76pezwcxsaaj98-pdf.pdf>

⁷ International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Charter* (Lausanne: IOC, January 2025), PDF file, accessed November 2025, <https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/International-Olympic-Committee/IOC-Publications/EN-Olympic-Charter.pdf>

⁸ N. Amos, “Mental Health and Well-being Outcomes Among Trans Young People in Australia Who are Supported to Affirm Their Gender” *Journal of Adolescent Health* (2025), PDF file, accessed November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2025.03.011>

live happily. In this sense, FIFA would also condemn the citing of the ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences’ that misinterprets why people may transition and is often cited to further blanket bans on trans participation. For example, it alleges the removal of single-sex spaces and an increase of assault on women in sports due to sex offenders, often being male, going “to great lengths to gain access to those they wish to abuse”⁹ without any verifiable statistical correlation. It is this language FIFA wishes to avoid when reasoning as to why transgender people should not participate in sport.

Instead, FIFA suggests to the IOC that each case of trans-athlete participation be overseen on a case-by-case basis, via the creation of a new special oversight committee, similar to what FIFA has done in the past. Moreover, existing studies often rely on small sample sizes of fewer than 20 trans athletes and some of between 1-3 athletes. Hence, until further, more comprehensive studies are produced, the idea of a blanket ban would not align with FIFA’s commitment to the safety of their athletes. Currently, FIFA is working on a framework to understand how to ensure trans athlete participation and will share its insights after a final review of its findings. FIFA has always been open to collaboration and will aid any sporting body open to it to ensure all athletes fairness and equality in their respective sports.

⁹ UN. Human Rights Council. Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, its Causes and its Consequences, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective*, U.N. Doc, **A/HRC/38/47** (2018), 7, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1641160>