

International Sporting Organisations and Human Rights Resolution submitted by Amnesty International UK

The International Council DECIDES

- that the International Executive Committee shall develop a policy on international sporting organisations and the prevention of human rights abuses, addressing their constitutions and accountability processes, the planning and organisation of events, participation and discrimination, sponsorship and procurement and any other area likely to have a human rights impact;

- that the IEC shall develop a comprehensive strategy, to include
 - Assessment of the human rights impact (positive and negative) of major sporting events;
 - Lobbying and campaigning to ensure the adoption and compliance of major international sporting organisations with appropriate human rights standards
 - An assessment of whether UN or other IGO standard-setting mechanisms might assist the mainstreaming of human rights considerations into the decisions of international sporting organisations.

Background Note

As the International Secretariat has previously noted:

Sport is present in every society and every community. Watched and/or played by the old and young, by those living with poverty and by billionaires, by those at liberty and those imprisoned, by people of every colour and by people of every religion and of none: it's part and parcel of the world's wealthiest and poorest neighbourhoods.¹

At its best, sport can demonstrate the positive impact of fair play and adherence to rules, it can promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and highlight the achievement of success through merit rather than patronage.

However, the international organisations that govern the world's major sports and sporting events have shown limited regard for human rights in their policies, practices and decisions.

In recent years, Amnesty International's work has highlighted the clampdown on dissidents that preceded the Beijing Olympics, the forced evictions accompanying preparations for events in Brazil, unethical sponsorship deals at the London 2012 Olympics, the use of migrant labour in the construction of facilities for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the limited

¹ Amnesty International, *Human Rights and Sport: A Discussion Paper*, July 2009 (AI Index POL 30/002/2009), p.2

regard for a human rights crisis that formed the backdrop to the 2011 and 2012 Bahrain Grand Prix , as well as the toleration of discrimination by national sporting associations.

AI therefore has a history of engaging with sporting events. However, this engagement has predominantly been piecemeal and based on an event-by-event approach that highlights specific human rights issues or the general human rights backdrop in a host country. Whilst this has met with some success in publicising human rights issues, the movement has not sought to influence the decision-making processes of international sporting organisations in order to increase their potential for positive human rights impact and to minimise their potential for causing harm.

Systematic attention to human rights and international sporting organisations could assist the achievement of aims encapsulated in critical pathways on corporate accountability, as well as other areas of human rights concern (notably slums and migration in the context of forthcoming football World Cups and Olympic games).

This resolution asks the IEC to develop a policy that would set out Amnesty International's realistic expectations of the human rights standards that international sporting organisations should promote and observe. It also seeks the development of a strategy that could adopt a more systematic approach to assessing the human rights impact of major sporting events and of influencing the statutes and decision-making processes of international governing bodies.

The resolution builds on previous discussions within Amnesty International. However, it focuses on international sporting bodies as the most appropriate area for the IEC and IS to concentrate on.

The work envisaged in this resolution is necessarily long-term. However, the considerable influence of sport and the prestige attached to major events suggest strategic potential for positive human rights influence if we can develop strong policies and long-term plans.