

March 8, 2022

**Mr. Gianni Infantino**  
President,

Fédération  
Internationale de  
Football Association  
(FIFA)

FIFA-Strasse 20  
Zurich, Switzerland

c/c

**Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly**  
Executive Director,

United Nations Office  
on Drugs and Crimes  
(UNODC)

Vienna International  
Centre Wagramer  
Strasse 5. A 1400  
Vienna, Austria

**Re: Global Experts' Feedback and Recommendations for the Establishment of an Entity for Safe Sport**

Dear Mr. Infantino,

We are writing to you about the recent developments around the [cooperation announced between FIFA and UNODC](#) to establish an Entity for Safe Sport. We are independent global experts committed to ending the widespread abuse of athletes and we have supported exposing many of the abuses this Entity seeks to remedy.

Together, we represent decades of the world's highest levels of safeguarding expertise in sport – including, and most importantly – that of the lived experience of survivors. Some of us have closely worked with FIFA on the widespread sexual violence and abuse of Afghanistan and Haiti football players.

Given our experience, we have all been invited to collaborate with the consultation process of this Entity since early 2021, having provided detailed feedback and recommendations in writing.

[As we have mentioned publicly](#) on many occasions, we of course strongly support the development of an independent, credible and well-resourced global entity that can safely accommodate reporting, conduct impartial investigations and offer protection to victims, survivors and whistleblowers of abuse in sport.

By providing the expertise and background that is needed to effectively apply a human and child rights-based approach, we want to make sure this much needed additional resource to safeguarding athletes of all ages is well invested. Our primary concern is the potentially devastating impact on survivors if such an entity fails to deliver on its promises.



Unfortunately, our previous efforts to assist in the consultation have been undermined by the conduct of the Coordination Secretariat. Our inputs have not been considered or incorporated, and we are witnessing a growing number of important procedural and substantive issues in the process of conceptualization of such an Entity.

As representatives of survivors and those most affected, whose use the Entity is intended to serve, we deem absolutely urgent that the following underlying points are addressed before the Entity is further developed. We request that you provide feedback on the following points, in writing, as soon as possible so that we can assess our support:

### **1. Procedural transparency and principled dialogue**

The way the current consultation has been managed – the lack of transparency and defined process, inclusion and seriousness – gives no comfort that survivors and victims of sexual abuse and trauma in sports will be treated with the necessary care and support needed; nor that the Entity developed will be adequately capable and equipped to deal with these sensitive cases. In particular, we are deeply concerned about how a temporary “Secretariat” has been established.

Our specific concerns around the process were expressed in a letter dated February 10, 2022, to which we did not receive a satisfying response. Some of us nevertheless followed the Secretariat’s invitation for a first meeting on February 17, 2022. Many attendees were shocked by the way the meeting was structured and conducted.

The Secretariat has shown little capacity to: *a)* organize a coherent methodology to follow in advance, which led to the lack of an agreed agenda; *b)* explain how senior staff were transparently chosen and what are their terms of reference; *c)* listen, incorporate and adapt course of action based on the feedback provided; and *d)* follow a trauma-informed and survivor-led approach, which appeared to be both dismissive and disrespectful to those we are seeing to represent and serve. The meeting itself was characterized by vague, ambiguous defensive and in some cases, offensive responses, including a worrying absence of trauma-informed and survivor-led language and procedures.

Whether intentional or by accident, this kind of approach is completely inadequate and unacceptable as a means of stakeholder engagement. An outcome that puts athletes and survivors at the centre, can only be achieved through a process that genuinely respects human rights and provides the voice and agency of diverse stakeholders.

A number of important actions should be taken up to ensure a survivor-centered approach beyond rhetoric – both throughout the consultation and during the implementation of a global Entity for Safe Sport.

The safety and security of the survivor should be the number one priority, which includes showing trust, not distrust in what survivors tell, listening, awareness and empowerment. All actions should be guided by respect for the choices, wishes, rights and dignity of the survivor, and no action should be taken that would worsen the situation of a survivor ('do no harm principle').

## **2. Primary beneficiary and mission statement**

A clear definition of who the Entity's primary beneficiary is and who it is for is crucial in light of determining its process of development, values and characteristics. As independent global organizations committed to ending the widespread abuse of athletes, we highly recommend that the sought Entity moves away from prioritizing sports bodies' own interests and places its primary focus on the needs of survivors and justice to victims. Invariably, being more survivor-centered means being less organization-focused.

Secondly, it is paramount that the values and principles of such an Entity are clearly defined and made public. Our priority is that the Entity enables safe reporting by listening to survivors and providing them with support, while conducting prompt and sensitive investigations that hold perpetrators accountable. If the Entity is to conduct these activities, it should respect, at a minimum, principles of independence, transparency, accessibility, human rights compatibility.

There is an opportunity for dialogue to retain our expert contributions if our concerns are understood and expressed.

**We hereby request to know in detail how you see these procedural and substantive questions, including concrete measures reflected – especially given the Entity's current funding resources and potential conflicts of interest.**

Given the tight schedule that the Secretariat shared is under, it would be helpful to receive your response as early as possible so that we can assess our further involvement in this process.

We remain at your disposal if you have any questions or would like to schedule an online meeting with us. We can be contacted by email at [andrea@sportandrightsalliance.org](mailto:andrea@sportandrightsalliance.org).

Sincerely,

**The Sport & Rights Alliance partners**

Amnesty International

The Army of Survivors

Committee to Protect Journalists

Football Supporters Europe

Human Rights Watch

ILGA World (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association)

International Trade Union Confederation

Transparency International Germany

World Players Association, UNI Global Union

**Additional Supporter**

Safe Sport International

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**About the Sport & Rights Alliance**

The Sport & Rights Alliance's mission is to promote the rights and well-being of those most affected by human rights risks associated with the delivery of sport. Its partners include **Amnesty International, The Army of Survivors, Committee to Protect Journalists, Football Supporters Europe, Human Rights Watch, ILGA World (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), the International Trade Union Confederation, Transparency International Germany, and World Players Association, UNI Global Union.** As a global coalition of leading NGOs and trade unions, the SRA works together to ensure sports bodies, governments and other relevant stakeholders give rise to a world of sport that protects, respects, and fulfils international standards for human rights, labor rights, child wellbeing and safeguarding, and anti-corruption. The SRA Acting Director, Andrea Florence is based in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and can be reached at +55 11 98420 0025 or [andrea@sportandrightsalliance.org](mailto:andrea@sportandrightsalliance.org).