

Statement on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal

At the outset, let me thank Mr. Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary General on sport for development and peace as well as Mr. Constantine Fillis from International Olympic Truce Centre for their introductory statements which identified the relation between sport and human rights.

As a member of the Advisory Committee who is from the Gulf region, I wish to thank Mr. Lemeke for speaking about the positive efforts of the State of Qatar vis a vis migrant worker who are working in sport projects. In fact, the State of Qatar is well known for respecting all people living in Qatar either citizens or residents. In fact, the State of Qatar is doing tremendous efforts for the welfare of migrant workers. The Qatari government is spending millions of dollars to make the life of foreign workers better. In fact, we should praise the Qatari efforts for enhancing the life of migrant workers. There is no doubt that the State of Qatar is implementing the 50 page Mr. Lemeke mentioned in his statement, because the Qataris are well known to live to their deeds. I am sure that Mr. Lemeke forthcoming visit to Doha next March will be a positive one and will prove that Qatar is doing tremendous efforts for migrant workers.

Going back to our subject, I should say that this new mandate is dealing with an important subject that deals with human rights and its promotion through sports and Olympic ideal. The human rights council demonstrated the importance of the subject by adopting resolution 24/1 without a vote during the last session of the Council. In fact, the universality of sport and Olympic ideals could educate people on the values of respect, diversity, tolerance and fairness and as a means to combat all forms of discrimination and promote a coherent society. Sporting events can help promote awareness and understanding of human rights principles by interacting between different people and different cultures.

The Human Rights Council requested the Committee in its resolution to prepare a study on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all. The Council requested also the Committee to present a progress report thereon to the Council before its 27th session (September 2014); and seek the views and inputs of States Members of the United Nations, international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders in this regard. This means that the Council wants us specifically to take into account the input of all interlocutors. Such method means that a drafting group would be established and a questionnaire would be prepared by the drafting group. Such method will be important to have the input of different actors to the study; however there is need to involve independent bodies specifically UN mandate holders and academic institutions to have their views on the subject.

In my view, we should identify synergy and complementarity between sport and human rights that would pin point the relations between them so that to promote the values of diversity, tolerance and fairness and to combat all forms of discrimination. Any study that we are going to prepare should identify also the obstacles that face sport in promoting human rights.

Thank you.