**Promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal**

**Questionnaire**

*This questionnaire forms part of consultations undertaken by the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee with* ***States Members of the United Nations****,* ***international*** *and* ***regional organizations****,* ***national human rights institutions****,* ***civil society organizations*** *and* ***other relevant stakeholders****, with a view to preparing a study on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 24/1.*

**Background**

In its resolution 24/1 of 26 September 2013, the Human Rights Council requested the Advisory Committee to prepare a study on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them, bearing in mind both the value of relevant principles enshrined in the Olympic Charter and the value of good sporting example, and to present a progress report thereon to the before its twenty-seventh session of the Council (September 2014).

In this context, the Advisory Committee decided, at its twelfth session held in February 2014, to designate a drafting group[[1]](#footnote-2) in charge of the preparation of this study. The drafting group will present a draft progress report to the Advisory Committee before its thirteenth session (August 2014), with a view to submit it to the Council in September 2014.

The resolution also requested the Committee, in its preparation of the study, to 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. The drafting group therefore elaborated the hereunder questionnaire. Respondents are advised to reply only to questions that are applicable to them.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. **How is sport used in your country to promote human rights? What are the best practices being applied?**

Australia is a sports loving nation with sport used to achieve various social, health and educational outcomes. Priorities lie in the development of sport, from community to elite levels, with a focus on diverse sports policy development, sports programmes, major events and sports integrity.

Through the Australian Sports Outreach Programme (ASOP), the Australian Government has developed a model for community sport development.

Research has shown that the ASOP in the Pacific is having a positive impact on the lives of some of the world’s most marginalised people by:

* helping to build the confidence and self-esteem of people with a disability
* providing opportunities for them to interact with their families and communities
* contributing to breaking down barriers and changing negative attitudes
* contributing to greater inclusion of people with disability in community life
* providing women and girls with unique opportunities to develop their leadership skills
* empowering women and girls to be more involved in decision-making.

The ASOP Country Programme in the Pacific is also contributing to improved gender equality. An example of this is the Epo’n Keramen programme conducted in Nauru.

Epo’n Keramen means ‘people gather to play sports’. The programme, a partnership between the Australian Government and Nauru’s Ministry of Sport, recruits and trains local community volunteers as coaches, officials and organisers, and supports sports activities by providing technical assistance, equipment, training and capacity building, to allow sport to be delivered at a community level. Approximately 19 percent of the population or over 2,000 people, a third of which are women and girls, participate in sports-based activities on a regular basis.

By providing women and girls with regular opportunities to develop their leadership skills and involving them in decision-making, the programme is contributing to making women feel more involved in shaping and implementing decisions both at the community and national level.

Results of a nationally representative household-based door-to-door survey conducted in March 2013 indicate that female participants were much more likely than female non-participants to feel that they have a say in decisions that affect their community (67 per cent compared to 37 per cent of female non-participants), or their country (51 per cent compared to 36 per cent of female non-participants). This is a significant finding in a nation where there are currently no female members of Parliament.

This is supported by evidence collected through qualitative research with participants stating that the programme is contributing to greater inclusion of women and girls in sport activities and leadership roles and that this is leading to changes in the self-confidence of female participants.

Netball Australia recently won the Sports Leadership award at the Australian Migration and Settlement Awards. In winning the Award, Netball Australia was recognised for creating a fair, safe and inclusive environment for all players that are new to netball and from emerging communities. In addition, Australia Post has recently announced its support of Netball Australia’s One Netball Community Engagement Programme as part of its Our Neighbourhood National Community Partnerships. Through this partnership, the netball community will be engaged and empowered to establish connections with new communities and participants, to encourage long-term involvement in the sport.

**2. What are the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to strengthen respect for human rights?**

The Australian Government’s *Play by the Rules* programme harnesses the combined strength and knowledge of the human rights and sports and recreation sectors, to influence attitudes and change behaviours, leading to positive cultural change in sport and recreation environments.

*Play by the Rules* is a unique collaboration between the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), Australian Human Rights Commission, all state and territory departments of sport and recreation, all state and territory anti-discrimination and human rights agencies, the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and the Australian and New Zealand Sports Law Association (ANZSLA). These partners promote *Play by the Rules* through their networks, along with their own child safety, anti-discrimination and inclusion programmes.

*Play by the Rules* provides information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of administrators, coaches, officials, players and spectators to assist them in preventing and dealing with discrimination, harassment and child safety issues in sport.

*Play by the Rules* also works to create closer, more mutually-beneficial relationships with government agencies, sports federations and national and state sporting organisations, associations and clubs. This helps to share and cross-promote information, programmes and resources, link to wider sport and discrimination networks, and simplify the duplicity of information in the sector.

Further information about *Play by The Rules* can be found at <http://www.playbytherules.net.au/>.

**3. What are the sports practised in your country and how far are they all inclusive (for women, youth, vulnerable groups etc.)?**

Australia has a strong sporting culture with participants able to choose from a variety of organised sporting activities and competitions regardless of age, gender or cultural background.

The ASC currently recognises 93 national sporting organisations, of which 64 receive government funding.

To be granted recognition national sporting organisations must demonstrate they have a national perspective and that each is the pre‑eminent body taking responsibility for the development of their sport in Australia.

Under-Represented Groups

The Australian Government provides funding to support participation opportunities for all Australians with a focus on inclusion and integrity.

The ASC established the Women in Sport Leadership Register (WiSLR) in 2011 to connect sport with potential female board and administration candidates, grow the number of women on sport boards and to help promote inclusive cultures that support women in sport.” As at 29 October 2013, 151 women have placed their names on the Register.  The WiSLR grants programme provides development opportunities and training for women.

A sport executive leadership academy has been included in the Australian Institute of Sport Centre for Performance Coaching and Leadership (the Centre).  The programme will provide leaders with professional development to support them in their current and future roles.  The WiSL programme and the WiSLR will be aligned to the Centre to provide a ready source of potential candidates and to strategically all leadership programmes.

The ASC has completed work to activate Market Segmentation research, which defined the characteristics and drivers for participation of a number of market ‘segments’, including segments made up predominantly of women.  Pilot projects were conducted to apply the research to specific sports.  As an example, Basketball Australia conducted a programme that addressed the barriers that exist within the sport to the participation of young girls.

Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Programme (ISARP)

Indigenous affairs are a significant priority for the Australian Government. The Government is changing the way it does business to see more Indigenous children attending and finishing school, more adults in real jobs and individuals and families living in healthier, safer communities.

Sport programmes make a valuable contribution to achieving *Closing the Gap* targets in relation to justice, health, education and employment, and have the potential to achieve positive outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

The ISARP provides funding to support community participation in sport and active recreation activities that help to improve the health and physical wellbeing of Indigenous Australians and provides entry level employment opportunities for Indigenous people in sport and recreational activities.

The ISARP supports the Australian Government’s initiative of *Closing the Gap* by contributing to the identified target area of closing the life expectancy gap within a generation by providing more opportunities for sport and physical activity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) recognises that overcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage requires long-term generational commitment that will see major efforts directed across a number of strategic platforms or ‘Building Blocks’. Of the seven Building Blocks endorsed by COAG, the ISARP primarily contributes to Health (by encouraging a healthier lifestyle that includes physical activity), Economic Participation (through employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples such as sport and recreation officers), Safe Communities (by providing an alternative to anti-social behavior) and Governance and Leadership (by funding initiatives to build capacity of Indigenous communities to deliver sport and recreation activities independently).

The ISARP also provides funding to the ASC to administer a small grants programme for elite Indigenous sportspeople (athletes, coaches, officials and trainers) selected to represent in mainstream national and international sporting teams, events and competition.

National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) that provide participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians with the support of ASC funding include athletics, AFL, basketball, cricket, football, netball, hockey, rugby league, rugby union, softball, swimming, tennis and touch football.

In 2013-14, the ASC has provided $1.13 million across eight NSOs for People with Disability for a range of activities, including participation. The ASC also approved $13.6 million to the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) for high performance sport outcomes for people with disability.

Sports Ability is an inclusive games programme aimed at increasing participation in sport and physical activity for people with disabilities, particularly those with high support needs. Sports Ability consists of three elements; adaptive equipment for five inclusive games (sitting volleyball, boccia, goalball, table cricket and polybat); resources in the form of activity cards; instructional DVDs and training and support available through the SDSR network.

The ASC undertook market segmentation research in 2012 to gain an in-depth understanding of the ‘demand side’ of sport and the Australian community. The research developed a consumer centric needs based segmentation of current and non-sports participants to drive and inform retention and growth strategies. In 2013 the ASC conducted further research and built on this model to explore the needs and motivations for people with disability. Initial findings are similar to the broader population but with some nuances. However the barriers to participation (e.g. transport, cost) are felt much more strongly. The research is currently being finalised and will be released before the end of the year.

Culturally and Linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

The ASC conducts two priority projects targeting CALD communities with seven NSOs that provide participation opportunities for CALD communities utilising broader ASC participation “whole of sport” funding.

The Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership (MYSP) Programme is aimed at creating sustainable opportunities for youth from new and emerging communities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in community sport and physical activity.

All Cultures is a free online resource on the ASC website at  The resource aims to provide information to assist the sports sector to be more inclusive of people from CALD communities.

Resources include case studies, operational templates, guidelines and tools, and videos of athletes talking about their experiences. All Cultures provides information to coaches, trainers and volunteers delivering sport and recreation programmes for people from CALD backgrounds.

**4. In what way can sport and the Olympic ideal become a means to:**

1. **advance the cause of peace ?**

A growing body of evidence from a number of leading government and academic institutions including; the Australian National University and the Australian Institute of Criminology, suggests well organised and delivered sport and physical activity programmes combined with other interventions can make a significant contribution to reducing crime in particular groups and communities and advance the cause of peace.

A number of leading government and academic institutions are in broad agreement that the evidence is encouraging, and that it suggests with careful planning and implementation, sport and physical activity programmes can make a significant contribution to reducing and preventing crime in our communities and advancing the cause of peace.

A number of Australian Government agencies undertake research and/or utilise sport and physical activity programmes to assist in the delivery of non-sport related policy outcomes. These include a range of programmes that can be seen as reducing anti-social behaviour, or that contribute significantly to reducing and preventing crime in the community.

1. **promote development?**

The Australian Government recognises that sport has unique attributes that enable it to contribute to development processes.

Its popularity, its capacity as a communication platform, its potential to set the foundation for healthy child development and its ability to connect people, make it a development tool that can be used to meet a range of objectives.

Sport itself cannot solve the development issues of a region, but it should be an important component of any comprehensive development programme. The direct result of developing the capacity of organisations and individuals to organise and partake in sport meets many development objectives.

If it can be shown that quality sports programmes increase individuals’ ability to organise, lead, network, communicate, co-operate, administer, evaluate, self-determine, become more active, inform each other, and develop a sense of responsibility and fair play, then there is a strong argument for the support of sport from a development perspective.

1. **combat all forms of discrimination?**

In Australia, discrimination laws apply to sport, although the extent of coverage varies nationally. Harassment (e.g. sexual or racial harassment) is also unlawful. These laws aim to ensure that we can all participate in the public life of the community, free from certain forms of discrimination and harassment. Further information relating to discrimination law and sport in Australia can be found at <http://www.playbytherules.net.au/legal-stuff/discrimination>

**5. What kinds of challenges are faced in promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?**

While there is no doubt that sport is a powerful medium for change it is difficult for us to comment on this given we are not responsible for the government policy on human rights.

**6. How can the media help in the promotion of human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?**

We cite the example of women’s sport in Australia.

In 2010-11, the ASC introduced a grant funding programme to improve the coverage of women’s sport in the Australian media. Further funding was provided to target sports like: surfing, cricket, netball, football, swimming, hockey, cycling, rugby, rowing, and snow sports. This coverage has increased the profile of women’s sport in Australia.

The ASC is now extending its understanding by commissioning new research and analysis of the media’s broadcasting of women’s sport in both traditional and new media broadcast platforms.  The research findings will inform strategy and programme development to increase the share of broadcast for women’s sport across all media platforms.  This research is due for completion in mid-2014.

A research project is presently underway to understand the commercial value of women’s sport within Australia, looking at levels of consumption and the link into the “female economy”.  The research is aimed at understanding the link between the levels of consumer spending controlled by women and whether or how this is related to involvement in sports as a participant or consumer.  The project will also build upon the media coverage research.  The overall objective will be to understand whether an untapped commercial potential exists for women’s sport.

**Deadline for submission of responses to the questionnaire:**

In order to give the Drafting Group the opportunity to take into account the different contributions, all parties are encouraged to submit their responses as soon as possible and at the latest by **11 April 2014**.

Answers can be submitted via email to the following address:

[hrcadvisorycommittee@ohchr.org](mailto:hrcadvisorycommittee@ohchr.org)

OR

Secretariat of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee

c/o Ms. Meena Ramkaun

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Palais Wilson, Room 4-060, Fax: +41 22 917 9011

United Nations Office at Geneva,

CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Thank you for your contribution.

For more information on the Advisory’s mandate: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/AdvisoryCommittee/Pages/HRCACIndex.aspx>

1. A/HRC/AC/12/L.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)