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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration
and Programme of Action**

**Summary of the high-level interactive panel
discussion of the Human Rights Council to
highlight, examine and suggest ways in which
sport and major sporting events, in particular the
Olympic and Paralympic Games, can be used to
promote awareness and understanding of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the
application of the principles enshrined therein***

* Late submission.

I. Introduction

1. On 27 March 2012, pursuant to its resolution 18/23, the Human Rights Council held a high-level interactive panel discussion to highlight, examine and suggest ways in which sport and major sporting events, in particular the Olympic and Paralympic Games, can be used to promote awareness and understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the application of the principles enshrined therein.
2. In resolution 18/23, the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to liaise with relevant special procedures, States and other stakeholders, including relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, with a view to ensuring their participation in the above-mentioned panel discussion. It also requested OHCHR to prepare a summary on the high-level discussion. The present summary was prepared pursuant to that request.
3. The objectives of the panel were to discuss how to harness the vast potential of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and other major sporting events to raise awareness of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights among more people than ever before; to reinforce educative messages about the power of sport to bring about positive change (in this context, the focus was on exploring synergies between Olympic values and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights); and to explore the feasibility of putting in place a process on which the hosts of future Olympic events might build in order to reinforce such underlying concepts as universality, non-discrimination and equality, which underpin both the Olympic spirit and human rights.
4. The panel discussion was moderated by the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Jeremy Browne (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). An opening statement was delivered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The panellists were the Deputy Chairperson of the London 2012 Organizing Committee, Sir Keith Mills; the , President of Rio 2016, , Carlos Nuzman and the Human Rights Ombudsman and President of the Russian Paralympic Committee, Vladimir Lukin,

II. Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and contributions of panellists

6. In her opening address, the High Commissioner stated that sport had been acknowledged as a vehicle for peace and human development in several key United Nations documents and declarations, in particular, the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹ the 2005 World Summit Outcome² and the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals.³
7. In reference to the Olympic Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the High Commissioner underlined the fact that sport and human rights share many fundamental values and objectives, but noted, nevertheless that it was surprising how little interaction there had been to date between the human rights movement, mechanisms and institutions and the world of sports.

¹ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² General Assembly resolution 60/1.

³ General Assembly resolution 65/1.

8. The High Commissioner highlighted the fact that practicing sports contributes greatly to the development and empowerment of human beings, perhaps most of all to that of children, because it can build self-confidence, develop social, educational and physical skills and teach respect for such key human rights principles as non-discrimination, equality, accountability and participation. She stressed that sport was also a tremendous public health instrument and was, for instance, an exceptional platform to raise public awareness of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Moreover, sport had historically been a powerful tool for the empowerment of social or marginalized groups, such as girls and women, minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. The High Commissioner added that, in many countries struggling with poverty or conflict, sport had assisted greatly in building development and peace; she referred in this regard to the demobilization process of child soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia, where children from opposing factions had been integrated in rehabilitation centres and placed in mixed football teams.

9. Given the unique media attention attracted, the Olympic and Paralympic Games had an enormous potential to promote awareness and understanding of human rights. The High Commissioner therefore encouraged the host organizers of the upcoming Olympic Games in London and Rio de Janeiro, and on the sites of Sochi in the Russian Federation and PyeongChang in the Republic of Korea, to pay special attention to the promotion of human rights, for instance, through varied promotional activities and campaigns. The High Commissioner stressed that, given the impact of such mega-events, it was essential that human rights implications be duly considered at all stages and by all actors involved. She referred specifically to housing rights in this regard.

10. Like any social activity, sport could also have potentially negative side effects. The High Commissioner therefore recommended that measures should be taken to prevent sport becoming a source of human rights violations. She stated that the International Olympic Committee must assume the moral leadership to ensure that human rights norms are fully integrated and respected in the sporting world. She also called on all international human rights mechanisms, especially the relevant special procedures mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies, to look carefully and systematically at the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of sports.

11. The moderator, Jeremy Browne, stressed the importance of making a connection between the values embodied by the Human Rights Council and those by the Olympic Games. Indeed, the principles underpinning the Olympic Charter, such as non-discrimination and equality, were also the bedrock of human rights. He stated that the Olympic Games were not just a celebration of sport; they were a celebration of shared humanity. Billions had watched the previous Beijing Games and it would be important for the London Games to harness this attention to demonstrate the wider economic, social and cultural agenda that the Games stand for.

12. Sir Mills underlined the importance that the meeting reflect on the role of the Human Rights Council and the Olympic Games in these difficult times, and stated the importance of growing cooperation between the United Nations and the Olympic Games. He recalled that, in 1948, when the Olympics were last held in London, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was also adopted. It was also then that the first competition for war veterans with spinal cord injuries was held, which meant the start of what was to become the Paralympics.

13. Sir Mills stated that sport could be the answer to all questions, but was an agent that could be used to spread human rights across the world in this era of globalization. He illustrated how London was building on this platform to generate long-term change by using sport as an ambassador for peace, and also as a catalyst for transformation and opportunities for the young. He highlighted how the Olympic truce had been a core concept

of the Olympics Games since ancient Greece, and referred in this regard to how the truce had allowed for vaccination during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. He underlined the fact that the Olympic truce resolution of the United Kingdom was aimed at building friendship and cooperation between nations and to develop long-term economic development. He furthermore presented examples of how schools around the United Kingdom had used the truce to address issues ranging from bullying to gang culture, and illustrated how a number of poor areas in East London had benefited from the Olympic Games and been transformed into vibrant neighbourhoods.

14. Mr. Nuzman expressed the commitment to the promotion of human rights in all its aspects. He explained how Brazil, as a country enjoying economic stability, had taken an extensive number of initiatives in preparation for the Olympic Games. Brazil has adopted the Rio Master Plan, which included a number of urban development projects, such as training centres, a high-performance transport ring and the refurbishment of a number of existing facilities. He also explained how the objective was to bring these projects to all favelas in order to promote social inclusion and enhance urban dwelling in those areas, by providing essential services such as rain drainage, paving and public lighting. Mr. Nuzman added that, in the event that individuals and families had to be relocated, a step-by-step resettlement procedure would facilitate the transition to a better situation for those involved. In closing, Mr. Nuzman stressed that sport was a catalyst for key issues and a real opportunity for transformation and for creating a legacy of peace.

15. Mr. Lukin stated that, while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not refer to sports or to the Olympics, the principles that underpinned it were nonetheless in line with the Olympic Charter. He cautioned that, although sports might be perceived as aggressive, this was not the case in reality. He recommended that States should strengthen education programmes to generate tolerance and respect for others. The International Olympic Committee had an important role to play in supporting human rights. Mr. Lukin stressed that practicing sports was a human right and that everyone should have the opportunity to engage in it without discrimination. Sport was, moreover, an essential element of the fundamental right to health and should be considered an urgent issue for the world community to tackle.

16. Mr. Lukin also referred to the situation in the Russian Federation, where the introduction of criminal liability for doping use, in addition to the application of a suspension, was currently being considered. The Paralympics in Sochi would be a locomotive for change and provide impetus for more and better facilities for the disabled, making the city a place of active recreation for persons with disabilities. Mr. Lukin concluded by stating that the Olympic Games should be no place for politicization.

III. Discussion

17. States and observers pointed out that sport had a major impact on domestic policies and was a source of inspiration. Reference was made to the importance of sport in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in the promotion of sustainable development and peace. Emphasis was also put on the need to ensure easy mobility for all sports teams. It was stressed that the principles of non-discrimination and equality were ideal tools for social, human and intellectual development. It was suggested that sports activities be provided for persons with disabilities, including in schools, and that sufficient resources be allocated to ensure their effective participation in sport through any physical and linguistic means possible. Other recommendations from States and observers concerned the need to prevent the exclusion of women in sport, to counter discrimination against women and girls in sports clubs, and for all countries to include women in their Olympic delegations.

18. Questions raised concerned the contribution of the Olympics to the promotion of anti-discrimination policies and to boosting tolerance, the link between the Olympic Games and the Millennium Development Goals, the impact of the Paralympics on persons with disabilities, ways and means of involving the human rights machinery in the holding of such events, involving all countries and not only the host country in the preparations, facilitating the sharing of good practices on addressing concerns in terms of climate and sustainability, and whether participation should be limited to those countries that do not openly discriminate. Specific questions regarding the London Olympic Games asked how the organizing committee had chosen the legacy projects to be pursued and whether it had performed an ethical evaluation of the companies it had chosen to contract.

IV. Comments and replies by the panellists

19. Sir Mills replied that the International Olympic Committee was working hard to deal with discrimination against women and girls in sports, and pointed out that progress had been made in a number of countries. He also reported that the Committee had undertaken a substantive due diligence test with regard to companies hired in the organization of the Olympic Games.

20. Mr. Nuzman stated that Brazil had created an interministerial group to follow up on progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and referred in particular to advances in reducing poverty. He also underlined the fact that the International Olympic Committee only concluded partnerships with organizations whose work it believed was in accordance with the values of the Olympic movement.

21. Mr. Lukin referred to the issue of discrimination against women and girls, and added that the problem had to be seen in a broader context, including, for instance, the non-participation of men in artistic sports. He also stressed the need to dedicate attention to important environmental problems.

V. Conclusion by the moderator

22. The moderator welcomed the timeliness of a discussion on this important issue and thanked the panellists and participants for their contributions before closing the meeting.
