**CANADA**

**Call for input to the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls to the UN General Assembly on violence against women and girls in sport**ISSUED BY Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls

1. **Please provide examples of good practice that have been adopted by State and non-State actors with regards to ending violence against women and girls in sports?**

Canada’s National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence aims to create a Canada free of gender-based violence. Under Pillar 2 on Prevention, the National Action Plan identifies an opportunity for action to “equip professionals with training and guidance on trauma and violence informed approaches for preventing and addressing gender-based violence in the communities they serve and, in their workplaces,”, including sports coaches and recreational activities staff.

The federal government, through Sport Canada recognizes that maltreatment undermines the health, well-being, performance and security of individuals, communities, and society. Sport Canada is committed to promoting sport environments free from harassment, abuse, discrimination, and other forms of maltreatment for all sport participants, especially women and girls. Since 2005, as part of an eligibility requirement under Sport Canada’s Sport Funding and Accountability Framework, National Sport Organisations are required to have a formal policy to address harassment and abuse in order to receive federal funding.

Since 2018, Sport Canada has worked in consultation with experts and athletes to promote safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all sport participants, bolstered by investments in Budgets 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023.

The Government of Canada financially supported the Coaching Association of Canada to host consultations across the country and a national summit to determine with the sport community and different levels of government, the best course of actions to address the issue of maltreatment in sport. Subsequently, with funding from Sport Canada, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport led the development of the [Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport](https://sportintegritycommissioner.ca/files/UCCMS-v6.0-20220531.pdf) (UCCMS) in consultation with stakeholders in the sport community and in collaboration with an expert working group. The UCCMS sets harmonized rules and common principles to be adopted by sport organizations that receive funding from the federal government to advance a respectful sport culture that delivers quality, inclusive, accessible, welcoming, and safe sport experiences. This code provides the Canadian sport community with a foundational tool for preventing and effectively responding to maltreatment in sport.

In July 2021, following a call for proposals, the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) was selected to administer the UCCMS and to establish an independent and safe mechanism to manage complaints and incidents related to maltreatment at the national level. In June 2022, the SDRCC launched the [Abuse-Free Sport Program](https://abuse-free-sport.ca/), which includes the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC). As Canada’s independent third-party mechanism at the national level, the OSIC receives and manages complaints of maltreatment in sport, including gender-based violence. It receives reports about violations of the UCCMS and initiates scoping for Sport Environment Assessments, which are intended to address alleged systemic issues related to the UCCMS. In addition, the Abuse-Free Sport Program offers education, prevention tools and resources, including mental health and legal aid referrals.

Since July 1, 2023, all federally funded National Sport Organizations (NSO), Multisport Service Organizations (MSO) and Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Centres and Institutes must be Program Signatories to the Abuse-Free Sport Program to receive federal funding.

Additionally, the Government of Canada in collaboration with the Provinces and Territories focused on positive sport participation for women and girls, as well as funding investments into gender equity in sport at all levels are examples of proactive measures to increase equity and the number of women and gender diverse people in leadership positions in sport.

1. **What are the lessons learned from policies and legislations that have been adopted and implemented with regards to women and girls in sports and their implications on the safety, security, dignity, equality and participation of women and girls in sports?**

The Government of Canada is constantly assessing these initial steps undertaken over the last five years in partnership with the sport sector. One of the key learning so far is to ensure that survivors voices and needs are constantly part of the development of any initiatives to address the issue.

1. **Please provide recommendations as to how violence against women and girls in sport can be prevented and what needs to be done to better respond to the needs of survivors of such violence?**

Sport can be a first step to leadership for girls and gender diverse youth, helping them develop the confidence and resilience they bring to their education, careers, and communities. Ensuring positive sport experiences, girls and gender diverse youth are more likely to reap the benefits of sport participation and grow into confident and motivated Leaders.

According to Canada’s National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the growing body of evidence about prevention calls for key actions to promote greater awareness of GBV, including evidence-informed awareness and education for children at a younger age on healthy relationships, gender identity and expression, sexuality and consent education; increased awareness of available supports and resources on GBV; GBV training for professionals; specific engagement with men and boys in GBV prevention; and increased awareness of GBV in the workplace.

More specifically, the federal government’s approach is based on consultations and research undertaken to better understand the complexity of the issue.

The Government of Canada would recommend an approach based on awareness, prevention, reporting, management, and monitoring. Multiple initiatives described above highlight actions in these areas. It is believed that constant evaluation of these initial steps will be key to ensure the needs of survivors and survivors are addressed properly.

Canada would recommend that a fair, independent, and transparent process based on consultations with relevant stakeholders and victims and survivors is implemented to find adaptable and agile responses based on each jurisdiction and cultural needs.

Canada also believes that an international dialogue should be established with a view to share challenges, best practices, and essential information to ensure safety of sport participants around the world.

The development and implementation of training related to maltreatment, including abuse, harassment, and discrimination, and the promotion of safe sport should be the starting point to initiate an important cultural change based on new safe behaviors in sport.

**GENERAL NOTE:**

The background in this call for input uses the language of “male athletes”. This is inconsistent with Canada’s position on gender identity and on trans women and girls in sports.

The Government of Canada’s (GOC’s) position on trans individuals is that trans women are women and trans men are men. There is legislation in place that provides Canadians with explicit protection from discrimination, hate speech, and hate crimes on the basis of gender identity or expression in the Canadian Human Rights Act. The GOC has also committed to preventing and addressing discrimination and stigma based on sexual orientation, sex characteristics, gender identity and expression.

Discussions on violence against women and girls in sports should be inclusive of trans women and girl athletes, who experience violence and discrimination, including on the basis of their gender identity and expression.

Transgender athletes should have equal opportunity to participate and excel in sport at every level. The Government of Canada recognizes the challenges and potential impacts associated with the inclusion of trans people in sport. It acknowledges the barriers faced by transgender athletes, as well as the concerns about the potential impacts of fully including transgender women in female high-performance sport categories on the rights and opportunities for cisgender female athletes.