



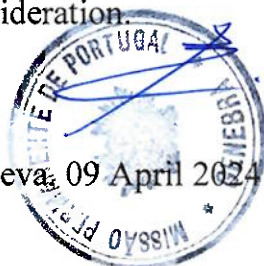
PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
GENEVA

DH - 87/2024

The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to the request of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, dated 16th January 2024, has the honour to enclose herewith the input of the Portuguese authorities to her report on violence against women and girls in sport.

The Permanent Mission of Portugal avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 09 April 2024



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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Direção-Geral de Política Externa

Input from Portugal for the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls to the UN General Assembly on violence against women and girls in sport

4. What are the principal causes of the violence that women and girls experience in sports, including the structural causes of such violence?

Sport is traditionally a male-dominated sector and progress towards gender equality in this area is hampered by social constructions of femininity and masculinity, which often associate sport with "masculine" characteristics, such as physical strength, endurance, speed, and a highly competitive and sometimes confrontational spirit. Women who participate in sport are still often seen as "masculine" and men who are not interested in sport can be considered as "unmanly".

Prevailing gender stereotypes not only affect women's participation in decision-making in sports organizations, but also their participation in sports activities. Traditional male and female roles still dictate that women devote more hours than men to family responsibilities, which affects the amount of time women have available for sporting activities.

Therefore, men dominate the sports coaching profession and practice of federated sport is also dominated by men. Women make only a third of the participants in sports federations with Olympic disciplines, and this figure is even lower for persons with disabilities.

An asymmetrical power relationship is therefore still very much in place, to the detriment of women and in favour of men. Women are brought up to take care for and please others, while men are brought up to focus on themselves and develop the skills that society values so highly: work, career, politics, i.e. the domain of public space and decision-making.



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There is still a high level of social tolerance for the sexual harassment that women continue to suffer in both public and private spaces and the sports arena is no different from the rest of society.

This idea of domination over women's bodies is behind the discriminatory and sexist attitudes that are often found in sports too. Without effective social contradiction, they escalate and can lead to more violent and aggressive attitudes by those directly involved with women who practice sport (for example, coaches, the vast majority of whom are men).

- 8. To what extent are women and girls in sport, as well as the associations that represent them being effectively involved and consulted in the design and implementation of policies that are meant to end severe discrimination and violence against women and girls in sport at the national, regional, and international level?**

The Action Plan for the Prevention and Combat of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2023-2026 foresees measures “to prevent and eradicate social tolerance to the various manifestations of the VaW, to raise awareness of its effects and to promote a culture of non-violence, human rights, equality and non-discrimination”. This includes, among other measures, “Training for the prevention of domestic violence and violence against women, especially in the social economy sector”, in collaboration with the Portuguese Confederation of Cultural, Leisure and Sports Collectives and with Sports Federations.

- 9. 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?**

Launched in 2022, the NEW LEADERSHIP | FOR A MORE EQUAL SPORT Training and Mentoring Programme aims to empower young leaders to implement the "Gender



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Equality and Inclusion Objectives, 2021-2024," set by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), thus creating a culture of change in sport in Portugal.

A team of mentors, leaders with recognized expertise in the field of sport, will accompany the group of participants, sharing their knowledge and experience with the new generation of leaders, and together shaping the future of sport in Portugal together.

The programme aims to:

- Improve leadership and decision-making skills in sports to achieve good governance.
- Create a network of leaders capable of facing the challenges of today's world, whose leadership is based on values such as equality between women and men.
- To increase the number of women in decision-making positions at the local, regional, and national levels.
- Implementing the "Objectives for Gender Equality and Inclusion, 2021-2024," set by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which take into account different areas of intervention, such as increasing women's participation in sport, increasing the number of women in leading sports positions in sport (managers, coaches, arbiters and judging teams, masseurs, etc.); the communication dimension, enabling women in sport to be more visible in the media; changing women's access to resources and also developing safe sporting environments for women, i.e. without the risk of violence or harassment.

At the end of the programme, the expected results will have two dimensions:

Changes at national level: progressive reduction at national level of inequality between women and men in sport.

Changes at organisational level: building action plans in sports organizations to facilitate the implementation of the International Olympic Committee's "Goals for Gender Equality and Inclusion, 2021-2024".



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The Programme is promoted by the Portuguese Olympic Committee (COP) with the support of Olympic Solidarity and in collaboration with the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth (IPDJ), the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) and the NGO Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights (PPDM).

In January 2024, the second edition of the New Leaders Program was launched.

In the first edition, the New Leaders training and mentoring programme, inspired by the New Leaders project developed by the Finnish Olympic Committee, trained 14 young people, 5 boys and 9 girls, who presented and are currently developing action plans for their sports organizations.

11. 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?

In the field of prevention, it will be fundamental and urgent for the education system to change its practices and to see itself as a place that prepares children and young people for adult life and for life in society, guided by freedom and equality as values that shape the way boys and girls see each other, learn to relate to each other, learn to make choices, share what is around them, understand each other as equals in rights and responsibilities.

We need an integrated approach to citizenship education and, in this context, education for gender equality, with the aim of transforming the culture of school institutions and their surrounding communities.

To this end, Portugal has included citizenship education in the curriculum since 2018, with gender equality as one of the compulsory areas at all levels of schooling. This must be understood as "a mission for the whole school", which requires the use of the whole school approach, involving all the persons who work there, as well as parents and families. In fact, the integration of gender equality in educational institutions requires its conscious and vigilant incorporation into collective practices and organizational



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dynamics, in a logic of participation and co-responsibility of professionals and educational management bodies for the institutional culture.

Sport and physical activity are also present in schools and they are also a powerful tool for citizenship education. They promote the development of the physical capacities of all children and young people, but especially girls and young women (for many, school is the only place where they can develop and test their motor skills), give them a real and concrete sense of their physical strength, boost their self-esteem and enable them to stand up for themselves and fight against the stigma and violence to which they are often subjected.

That's why, it is urgent that all girls and young women have access to physical activity and sport from an early age, and that they engage with boys and young men in physical activities so that everyone grows up in a balanced way, getting to know each other's bodies and learning to respect each other's differences.

We are increasingly convinced that preventing inequality and violence against women in sport also means creating a strong school sports programme based on mixed teams, irrespective of the sport activity.