**47thsession of the Human Rights Council**

**Quadrennial panel discussion on promoting human rights through   
sport and the Olympic ideal**

***Theme: The potential of leveraging sport*** ***and the Olympic ideal for   
promoting human rights for young people***

*Concept note (as of 17 June 2021)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Wednesday, July 7 2021, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**  **Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online platform (Zoom)**  *(will be webcasted and archived on* [*http://webtv.un.org*](http://webtv.un.org)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | Since their inception in 776 BCE, the concept of the Olympic Games has been to promote peace, given that thanks to the Olympic Truce conflicts were suspended for the duration of the Games in Olympia. In the same vein, sport and the Olympic ideal can be an invaluable tool for the promotion of human rights, development, conciliation and dialogue, and in particular for young people who are involved in practicing sports. Sport education and the values that sports carry with them are of paramount importance to this aim and this suggests that sport and the Olympic ideal can have an increased leveraging potential for promoting human rights for young people.  The panel discussion will offer an opportunity to identify good practices, challenges and opportunities in that respect, with a focus on:   * **The role of sport in promoting human rights for young people,** its impact and how it can be optimized; * **How sport can further the rights of young people in society**, becoming an instrument of empowerment**;** * **How major sporting events can be a welcoming environment** in order to promote awareness and a better understanding of human rights both by and for young people without any form of discrimination; * **Suggestions, good practices and practical examples of how to leverage sport and the Olympic ideal** for the promotion of human rights for young people. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Monique T.G. Van Daalen**, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statements:** | **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights  **Mr. Thomas Bach**, President of the International Olympic Committee *(video message)*  **Mr. Toshiro Muto**,Chief Executive Officer of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games *(video message)* |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Elizaveta Kunstmann**, Member of the Russian National Paralympic Sitting Volleyball Team, Honoured Master of Sports *(video message)* * **Ms. Kathrine Switzer**,Athlete, author, activist. Board Chair of 261 Fearless, Inc. *(video message)* * **Ms. Jenny Oklikah**,Chief Executive of the NGO “Fight for Peace” *(video message)* * **Ms. Sofia Bekatorou**, Olympic gold and bronze medallist in sailing (2004 & 2008 Summer Olympic Games) *(video message)* |
| **Outcome:** | This thematic discussion is expected to enable States and other relevant stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the issues reflected in resolution 43/18 in order to further the Council’s engagement in this area. |
| **Mandate:** | In its resolution 37/18, the Human Rights Council decided to incorporate into its programme of work a thematic panel discussion with regard to promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal, to be held once every four years at the session of the Human Rights Council preceding the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. In its resolution 43/18 the Human Rights decided that, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the postponement of Tokyo 2020, the panel discussion would be held at its forty-seventh session and that its theme would be ”the potential of leveraging sport and the Olympic ideal for promoting human rights for young people”. |
| **Format:** | The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. After opening statements and initial presentations by the panellists, there will be two segments of interventions, followed by conclusions from the panellists.  A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, which will cover opening statements, panellists’ presentations, and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 12 States or observers, 1 national human rights institution and 2 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. |
| **Accessibility for persons with disabilities:** | In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the panel will be made accessible to persons with disabilities. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcast. Participants can access live English captioning on the website <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG> during the event itself.  The accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities is available for further information on the HRC website  (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx>). |
| **Background**: | The General Assembly has recognized the valuable contribution of sport in promoting education, development, peace, cooperation, solidarity, fairness, social inclusion and health at the local, regional and international levels, and has noted that, as declared in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, sports can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations. The Human Rights Council has considered the issue of sports and human rights in particular in its resolutions 13/27 of 26 March 2010, 18/23 of 30 September 2011, 24/1 of 26 September 2013, 26/18 of 26 June 2014 and 27/8 of 25 September 2014, 31/23 of 24 March 2016, 37/18 of 23 March 2018, and 43/18 of 22 June 2020.  The Human Rights Council has acknowledged the potential of sport and major sporting events, including the Youth Olympic Games, to inspire and educate the youth of the world, including university students, and to promote their social inclusion through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires human understanding, tolerance, fair play and solidarity. The Council has also acknowledged the very important role of the media in the promotion and popularization of sport and in raising public awareness on the merits of practicing as a key element of a healthy lifestyle, thus contributing to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as well as the positive role that they may play when reporting on how sport can translate into respect for human rights and promote social cohesion and acceptance of diversity and the values of sport, including integrity, teamwork, excellence, respect, tolerance, fair play and friendship  The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee submitted in 2015 its report on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them. The report stresses, among others, the fundamental role of sport in educating children and young people, the value of sport in combatting all forms of discrimination and the role sporting events can play in promoting human rights.  The developments in the Human Rights Council are mirrored by a strengthening of human rights obligations in the world of sport, as reflected, for example, in the report “For the Game. For the World” prepared by Harvard University Professor John Ruggie for FIFA and the UNESCO report on racism and discrimination in international football. |
| **Background documents:** | [Human Rights Council resolution 43/18](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/43/18) (2 July 2020), “Promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal”  [Human Rights Council resolution 37/18](https://undocs.org/a/hrc/res/37/18) (23 March 2018), “Promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal”  Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, Final report on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them (2015) ([A/HRC/30/50](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/30/50))  Ruggie, John G., [“For the Game. For the World.” FIFA and Human Rights](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/mrcbg/programs/cri/research/reports/report68). Corporate Responsibility Initiative Report No. 68. (2016), Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [Colour? What Colour? Report on the fight against discrimination and racism in football](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002357/235721e.pdf) (Paris, 2015)  [Report of the 2018 Social Forum](https://www.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Documents/Issues/Poverty/2018SF/2019Report2018SocialForum_EN.pdf&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1)  Harvey, Mary. [Return to Play: Sport’s COVID-19 responses need to include the human rights of children and youth](https://www.sporthumanrights.org/en/resources/return-to-play-sports-covid-19-responses-human-rights-children-youth), 7 May 2020, Centre for Sport and Human Rights |

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