

# HUMAN RIGHTS AND SPORTS\*



In July 2017 the Kazan Action Plan (KAP) was adopted "to facilitate international and multi-stakeholder policy convergence, ease international cooperation and foster capacity-building efforts of governmental authorities and sports". The sports sector globally is unifying and advancing its human rights activities considerably. The UNESCO Chair, IT Tralee is coordinating work in this domain. We are involved in building mechanisms based on the SDG mantra of 'no-one left behind, starting with the most vulnerable' in the aspiration that policy and investment decisions can be evidence-based, rights-based and led from areas of the most need.

Participation in sport has been shown to have numerous benefits including promoting health and mental well-being. Being physically active helps to prevent serious conditions, such as type-2 diabetes and obesity. Participation in sports also increases confidence, self-esteem and social skills such as teamwork, leadership and discipline

Several United Nations human rights treaties contain articles which recognize sport as a human right. They also contain rights which are necessary for the full enjoyment of the right to sports, such as education including physical education, and rights which participation in sports can contribute to, such as health.

## International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights

- Article 6 and 7 - Right to work
- Article 12 - Right to health
- Article 13 and 14 - Right to quality education, including physical education
- Article 15 - Right to participate in cultural life, including sports



## Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

- Article 8 - Right to participate at international level
- Article 10 - Right to quality education, including physical education
- Article 11 - Right to work
- Article 12 - Right to health
- Article 13 - Right to participate in economic and social life including recreational activities and sports
- Article 14 - Rights of rural women, including to take part in all parts of community life

## Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Article 19 - Right to freedom from violence, injury, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Article 23 - Rights of children with disabilities to special care, and to education, health care, training and recreation
- Article 24 - Right to health
- Article 28 and 29 - Right to quality education, including physical education
- Article 31 - Right to play and recreational activities

## Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- Article 30.5 - Right to participate in sport and leisure
- Article 6 - Rights of women and girls with disabilities
- Article 7 - Rights of children with disabilities
- Article 8 - Responsibility of states to raise awareness regarding the rights of persons with disabilities
- Article 9 - Right to accessibility
- Article 16 - Right to freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse
- Article 19 - Right to live independently and in the community
- Article 24 - Right to personal mobility
- Article 10 - Right to quality education, including physical education
- Article 25 - Right to health
- Article 26 - Right to habilitation and rehabilitation
- Article 27 - Right to work

## Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

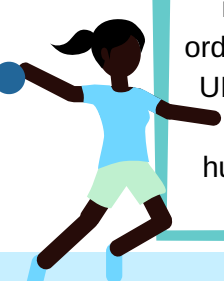
- Article 4 - Condemns racist propaganda and organisations, and incitement of discrimination and violence
- Article 5 - Non-discrimination in civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights including participation in cultural activities and access to places or service for use by the general public.
- Article 7 - Measures to combat prejudices through teaching, education, culture and information

### These rights link to several of the Sustainable Development Goals



When something is a human right it means that everybody is entitled to it, simply by virtue of them being human. However, not everybody is always supported to enjoy these rights equally. For example, women can face gender stereotypes and cultural barriers to participation. High level figures indicate that persons with disabilities are three times less physically active than persons without disabilities.[1] Children with disabilities are 4.5 times less active than their peers without disabilities[2] and 93% of women with disabilities are inactive at levels that promote health[3]. For many people when intersecting identities such as gender, disability, race, income, sexuality, minority status, location, migration status etc., combine, participation can become even harder.

The UN "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework's guiding principles recognise: (a) States' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms; (b) The role of business enterprises as specialized organs, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights; (c) The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached. In order to promote the protection, respect of human rights in and through sports, tools on engaging with the UN treaties, including CRPD, are being prepared for states, National Human Rights Institutions, and civil society organisations, including sports organisations. These tools aim to raise awareness of sport as a human right, to encourage states to take stock or where their policies are and share good practices, and to empower civil society in advocating for sports as a human right.



\*"Sport" is being used to reflect physical education, physical activity and sport in this note.

1) National Disability Authority (2005). Promoting the Participation of People with Disabilities in Physical Activity and Sport in Ireland. Available online <http://nda.ie/Image-Library/PDF-Downloads/Physical-Activity-and-Sport-Report.pdf>

2) Sagas, M. and Cunningham, G.M. (2014). Sport Participation Rates Among Underserved American Youth. Aspen Institute's Project Play: Reimagining Youth Sports in America. Available online:

[https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/education/Project\\_Play\\_Underserved\\_Populations\\_Roundtable\\_Research\\_Brief.PDF](https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/education/Project_Play_Underserved_Populations_Roundtable_Research_Brief.PDF)

3) Sun, F., Norman, T. J., & While, A. E. (2013). Physical activity in older people: a systematic review. BMC Public Health, 13(1), 449. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-449>