

Guide to State Engagement on Human Rights in and Through Sport

The Declaration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states that:

“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”

As an overarching driving and unifying instrument, the 2030 Agenda in recognising sport as an important enabler of sustainable development, has provided a focal point for the sport sector globally to engage with sustainable development and human rights.

The Kazan Action Plan

The sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI), convened by UNESCO, was held in 2017. MINEPS VI adopted the [Kazan Action Plan \(KAP\)](#) “to facilitate international and multi-stakeholder policy convergence, ease international cooperation and foster capacity-building efforts of governmental authorities and sport organisations”. The framework is fully integrated within the 2030 Agenda framework while embedding human rights at its core. KAP is structured around three main policy areas:

- I. Developing a comprehensive vision of inclusive access for all.
- II. Maximizing the contributions of sport to sustainable development and peace.
- III. Protecting the integrity of sport.¹

Marking a shift from mere declarations of policy intent towards action, the KAP consists of five priority areas of multi-stakeholder cooperation at international, regional and national levels, as well as a sport policy follow-up framework designed to measure progress. The five priority actions are:

1. Elaborate an advocacy tool presenting evidence-based arguments for investments in physical education, physical activity and sport;
2. Develop common indicators for measuring the contribution of physical education, physical activity and sport to prioritized Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets;
3. Unify and further develop international standards supporting sport ministers’ interventions in the field of sport integrity (in correlation with the International Convention against Doping in Sport);
4. Conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a Global Observatory for Women, Sport, Physical, Education and Physical Activity;
5. Develop a clearinghouse for sharing information according to the sport policy follow-up framework developed for MINEPS VI;

The UN Secretary General’s report on Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) of December 2018 and the updated UN Action Plan on SDP affirm the KAP’s critical role in fostering sport policy coherence within the UN system and amongst national governments. KAP is also aligned with the World Health Organisations’ Global Action Plan for Physical Activity. Continuing the momentum is critical, as sport works to demonstrate its potential impact on rights and development.

¹ The Kazan Action Plan uses the term “sport” as a generic term, comprising sport for all, physical play, recreation, dance, organized, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms.

What has been produced?

The UNESCO Chair is leading work on KAP action 1 focusing on human rights in and through sport. Human rights in and through sport refers to the recognition of sport as a human right, to ensuring that sports at all levels are conducted in a manner that protects human rights including child protection and provisions against harassment and violence, and to using sport as a tool to promote other rights such as equality, non-discrimination, health and education. As part of KAP action 1 implementation focus has been drawn to sports-based reporting to the UN Treaty Bodies, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Voluntary National reporting (VNR) on the SDGs. Under KAP action 2 sport and physical education has been mapped to 10 SDGs and 36 targets and indicators developed for reporting on sport and the SDGs.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), all contain articles which recognize sport as a human right. They also contain many other rights such as health, education, employment, and non-discrimination which contribute towards to full realisation of the right to sport or which sport can contribute to. Despite this, research has found that reporting to the Treaty Bodies and UPR on sport and the sport-related dimensions of other rights by states is very low and not carried out in a systematic or exhaustive manner. Some countries do report on relevant topics around sport, but they do not provide robust evidence. Similarly, the number of Committee and UPR recommendations related to sport is also low. Due to the low levels of reporting and recommendations related to sport, the UNESCO Chair has developed draft tools on how to engage with human rights reporting bodies on sport. Individual tools for states, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society on each of the four Treaty Bodies and the UPR have been developed.

Each tool begins by briefly outlining the Committee's background or the UPR process, followed by sport as a human right with relevant treaty articles, and the links between human rights, the sustainable development goals and the Kazan Action Plan. Depending on whether the tools are aimed at states, NHRIs or civil society, each tool then takes a different approach. For civil society the reporting cycle and the process of reporting to a Treaty Body or the UPR is explained in detail as the target audience for these tools are members of the sporting community who are most likely unfamiliar with the processes. States and NHRIs are already familiar with the process, therefore the tools focus specifically on how sports can be included in their engagement. All three tools then contain a section of suggested topics for recommendations. These suggestions are largely based on the KAP action 2 indicators for measuring the impact of sport towards the SDGs.

To date Human Rights Reporting Tools have been developed for all actors on the following:

- [Convention on the elimination of discrimination against women](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights](#)
- [Universal Periodic Review](#)

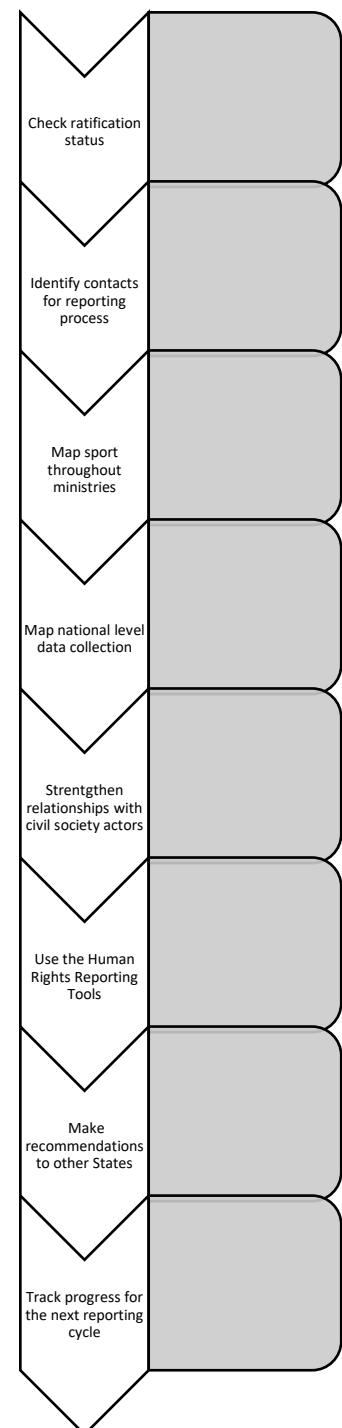
In order to briefly explain the work being carried out in relating to human rights and sports and the links with the Human Rights Treaties, short infographics were developed to serve as an introduction to the topic. To date the following Human Rights Reporting Infographics have been developed:

- [Human Rights and Sport Infographic](#)
- [Human Rights, Children and Sport](#)
- [Human Rights, Disability and Sport](#)
- [Human Rights, Gender and Sport](#)
- [Human Rights, Economic Social and Cultural Rights and Sport](#)
- [Human Rights, Race and Sport](#)

How to use

We are inviting states to use and engage with these tools. When your state receives the tools and information package, we invite you to take the following steps to make the most effective use of them.

1. Check your state's ratification status. The OHCHR dashboard (<https://indicators.ohchr.org/>) shows which of the four identified treaties your state has ratified and has reporting responsibilities to. All UN member states take part in the UPR. Check you state's reporting timelines [here](#).
2. Identify the entity with responsibility for the reporting process. Your state may have a single national human rights reporting mechanism, clearly defined by legislation or in policies, or a government ministry or department may have responsibility for coordinating reporting to each Treaty Body and to the UPR. It is important to note that the responsible ministry or department may differ for each treaty. Once the appropriate contact(s) have been identified, share the materials with the relevant contact(s).
3. Map sport throughout the entire system of ministries/ departments. To ensure strong reporting on sport, inputs will be needed from many different ministries/ departments. Every country organises their ministries/ departments differently so the precise targets will differ according to the national context. However, the ministries/ departments with responsibility for the following areas should be considered: sport, health, education, equality, urban planning, management of national parks, infrastructure, employment, skills and local government. This list is not exhaustive, and each state will need to carefully examine their own ministries/ departments, keeping in mind the broad, sport for all definition of sport used in KAP. When it has been established what contacts need to be engaged with reporting on sport, share the guidance tools with them. An inter-departmental meeting of contacts should be organised to discuss integrating sport into reporting processes and facilitating ongoing inter-departmental communication on all matters relating to sport.



Example of gross-governmental thematic cooperation: The inter-ministerial committee on Sustainable Consumption and Production, Chile

The inter-ministerial committee on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) was established by the Ministry of Environment, in order to develop a national programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production to facilitate implementation and coordinate joint action across the public sector in this area. Steps in establishing this committee can be used in setting up similar thematic gross-governmental groups, such as for sport. These steps included ensuring institutional commitment to the committee's establishment, requesting the heads of all relevant government ministries to nominate someone from the ministry to sit on the committee, setting out the rule of procedure for the committee, including meeting frequency, and agreeing upon initial action points for the committee.

https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/case_studies.pdf

4. Map national level data collection as it relates to sport to identify who is collecting data on sport. Consider actors beyond government ministries/ departments. State agencies, especially those with responsibility for sport and statistics should be considered. The National Governing Bodies of Sport are organisations which administer a particular sport on a national basis. They will have valuable insights and data into the realities of sport policies in operation. If your state has a National Human Rights Institution, they should also be consulted with for their human rights expertise as it relates to sport in your national context. As part of this exercise, a mapping of national policies relevant to sport, including health, physical education, etc., should be conducted to identify any follow-up frameworks. This mapping will help to identify where useful information is already being gathered and how existing datasets can be applied to human rights and SDG reporting.

Example of policy mapping: Sustainable Outlook of Mongolia

In early 2016, the Mongolian parliament passed the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030 (SDV). In order to assess policy coherence and align national policies for Agenda 2030 implementation the Sustainability Outlook of Mongolia (SOM), a technical cross-sectoral working group, was set up. It reviewed the coherence of a total of 195 national policy documents, as well as their alignment with SDV objectives and the SDGs. The National Development Agency of Mongolia developed guidelines for this exercise, making use of a 7-point scale to assess the level of interaction between various SDGs. The exercise included a mapping of existing indicators and data collection, identifying overlap and gaps. Cross-sectoral consultations involving sector experts including from CSOs, professional associations and academia were a part of the process.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=1217&menu=3170>

<https://www.partners-for-review.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Whole-of-Government-P4R-Discussion-paper-2019.pdf>

5. Relationships with civil society actors from the sports sector sport and anti-discrimination groups with sport as a focus area should be cultivated. Civil society is strong source of information on policy implementation, good practice and areas where there is continued need for improvement. Engaging with civil society on coordination and drafting of reporting will provide an additional layer of information and is strongly encouraged by the UN Treaty Bodies. We encourage you to identify networks of contacts in the sport sector, distribute the reporting tools for civil society among these networks and facilitate communication between civil society and ministries/ departments on sport and human rights.

Example of civil society and state communication on sport: SASReCon – Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa's bi-annual sport science conference

SASReCon brings together South African sport science researchers and practitioners to share insights and learn from each other. It endeavours to bridge the gap between science and practice while also acting as a forum for the academic sport science and research community to present and share results of recent projects. The conferences aim to synthesise stakeholders' recommendations concerning the effectiveness of programmes, policies and implementation within their jurisdictions which can be harnessed by the Department of Sport and Recreation for better sport and recreation service delivery in the country. This is a positive example of state engagement with sport sector civil society which could be replicated widely and adapted to include a segment on human rights and sport reporting.

<https://www.srsa.gov.za/content/sasrecon-srsas-bi-annual-sport-science-conference>

6. Use the Human Rights Reporting tools as a guide to reporting on sport to the human right monitoring mechanisms. The indicators and reflexive questions included in the tools provide guidance on areas of reporting and data collection. The intergovernmental networks established in the previous steps and policy mapping should result in easier collection of the relevant information.
7. As well as including information on the status of sport in your own state in your Treaty Body and UPR reports, we encourage states to make recommendations relating to sport to other states during the UPR. In order to do so, the UPR tools should be highlighted with the relevant contacts in the ministry or department with responsibility for international relations and the importance of raising the sports and human rights agenda stressed. Examples of good practice within your state should also be identified through the policy and contacts mapping exercises carried out as these can form the basis of recommendations to other states.
8. Track progress in the implementation by the State of recommendations from international and regional mechanisms

Coming Soon

Raising Awareness at National Level: Many people would like to learn more about how sport and human rights connect. Empowering Rights Holders & Mobilising Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty *is a project commencing in Ireland in this vein.* It aims to increase understanding among state actors, the sports sector and grassroot organisations of sport both as a human right and as a tool for human rights promotion within the context of State reporting to UN human rights mechanisms. In line with the actions outlines above your State might consider a similar process of awareness raising around sport and human rights at national level. It could include National Human Rights Institutes, relevant Government Departments and Statutory Sports Agencies, National Statistics Institutes, Sporting Bodies, bodies representing marginalised populations, and Rights Holders. A model for this process and resources to support this process are underdevelopment and will be available by following registration here: Include registration link.

Online Learning and Advocacy: **Under the Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO), European Union /Council of Europe Joint Programme for international** co-operation projects 2020/2021 the Rights Understanding in Sport Toolkit (TRUST) is under development. It will produce an online programme for sports practitioners in educational institutions and the wider community on providing human rights education and raise awareness of the potential role sport can play in human rights promotion. Resources in English, Spanish and Portuguese will include online training, multimedia and advocacy materials as well as a knowledge hub on human rights and sport.

For further information please contact:

Catherine Carty, UNESCO Chair manager, Catherine.Carty@staff.ittralee.ie

Sarah Carney, Sport and Human Rights Researcher, sarah.carney@staff.ittralee.ie

Gerard Masdeu Yelamos, UNESCO Chair Researcher & UFIT Global Coordinator,
gerard.masdeu@staff.ittralee.ie