



Centre for Sport  
& Human Rights

# RESPONSIBLE SPORT

REALISING THE PROMISE OF SPORT, TOGETHER

Refreshed Strategy 2026-30

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Sport and Human Rights exists to close the gap between the promise and the reality of sport, by working to ensure that everyone connected to sport is safe, included, and respected.

We champion a vision of responsible sport: a world where sport's extraordinary power to inspire is matched by its ability to respect the dignity and rights of all those impacted by it. From everyday community sport to the largest international events, our mission is to ensure that sport prevents harm and abuse, makes things right when people are adversely affected, and uses its unique place in society to protect, promote, and advance human rights.

Sport has extraordinary reach and influence. It builds identity, strengthens communities, creates employment, and mobilises investment across borders. Yet, like any other area of society, it carries real risks of harm. Independent investigations and public inquiries have documented systemic safeguarding failures, exploitative labour conditions linked to events and supply chains, discrimination and exclusion, restrictions on freedom of association and expression, and inadequate access to effective remedy. These are not isolated incidents but patterns of harm reflecting systemic gaps.

Decisions taken in sport affect livelihoods, communities, public institutions, and global audiences. As sport has grown in scale, commercial value, and political significance, so too have the expectations on institutions in sport to respect internationally recognised human rights. Now a multi-trillion-dollar global

industry, investments in sport governance and capacities to prevent harms have not always kept pace with commercial expansion. Commitment to responsible sport is now fundamental to sport's long-term legitimacy, integrity, and sustainability.

Many organisations in sport lack full visibility of the range of harms their activities can pose to people, reinforced by a persistent belief that sport is inherently positive. Fragmented governance systems, overlapping jurisdictions, and blurred lines of responsibility weaken accountability, allowing human rights considerations to be sidelined. Athletes, workers, and communities are often under-represented in decision-making processes that directly affect them. Even where commitment exists, gaps in awareness, engagement, and capacity prevent consistent implementation. As scrutiny intensifies and expectations rise, these structural weaknesses undermine trust and sport's long-term sustainability.

At the same time, sport remains one of the most influential social forces globally. When governed and delivered responsibly, sport can promote inclusion, create decent work, strengthen host communities, and provide meaningful platforms for participation and expression. Expectations of sport are rising, regulatory frameworks are evolving, and institutions across the ecosystem — including governing bodies, commercial partners, investors, and public authorities — are seeking clearer guidance on how to meet their responsibilities. This moment presents a clear opportunity to embed responsible sport as a shared global expectation.

The Centre for Sport and Human Rights is grounded in internationally recognised human rights and labour standards, including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The application of these standards to sport is articulated in the Sporting Chance Principles and embedded throughout our work.

We understand sport as a complex global ecosystem comprising athletes, workers, communities, governing bodies, event organisers, sponsors, public authorities, investors, and civil society. Within this ecosystem, we concentrate our efforts where responsibility for people is most decisively shaped: through sport governance and the delivery of sporting events. Governance determines how power is exercised, how rules and policies are set, whose interests are represented, and whether prevention of harm and access to remedy are embedded in decision-making. Sporting events distribute authority, resources, and operational activity across multiple institutions and sectors. These events heighten risks but also create important opportunities to align standards, clarify responsibilities, and embed protections that endure beyond a single event. By working across governance systems and the full lifecycle of sporting events, we support institutions to strengthen due diligence, accountability, and stakeholder engagement in ways that enhance both protection and long-term credibility.

Over the next five years, we will pursue five interconnected strategic priorities that together contribute to systemic change:

1. **Raise Awareness:** increasing visibility of human rights risks and responsibilities across sport.
2. **Build Collaboration:** convening diverse stakeholders to strengthen collective action.
3. **Drive Implementation:** supporting institutions to embed prevention of harm and access to remedy into policies and practice.
4. **Shape the Agenda:** identifying systemic and emerging risks and advancing reform across the sport ecosystem.
5. **Sustain an Enduring Institution:** ensuring our ongoing independence, credibility, and long-term sustainability as a central platform for joint action and support for sport institutions.

Across these priorities, we advance responsible sport through cross cutting priority themes that respond to both systemic risk and opportunity. This includes supporting the continued growth of women's sport in ways that embed equity, safety, and representation from the outset; strengthening athlete welfare by advancing fair working conditions, meaningful participation in decision-making, and access to effective remedy; and integrating a cross-cutting commitment to non-discrimination, ensuring sport is accessible and inclusive for all. These themes provide pathways to address structural issues while reinforcing prevention of harm and respect for rights across the sport ecosystem.

Sport is not separate from society; it reflects and shapes it. Realising a world of responsible sport requires institutions across sport to work together within a coherent framework. We provide the independent platform, technical expertise, and convening space that enable sport bodies, governments, commercial partners, and civil society to align with international standards, strengthen governance, manage social risk, and build long-term institutional resilience.

In practice, we work through targeted initiatives that translate standards into practice. We convene the Responsible Sport Council as a multi-stakeholder platform to bring together senior representatives from sport bodies, commercial partners, and other stakeholders to strengthen alignment, accountability, and

shared expectations across the ecosystem. The Sporting Chance Forum provides a global platform for dialogue, learning, and collective action, connecting institutions and affected groups to accelerate reform. Together, these platforms support consistent standards, deepen cross-sectoral collaboration, and reinforce responsible sport as a shared global agenda.

By 2030, the work of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights will have contributed to shaping a sport ecosystem where human rights protections are not aspirational but operational. This means human rights will be recognised by all actors as fundamental to sport's legitimacy and sustainability. Participatory governance and shared standards will reduce fragmentation and ensure consistent, transparent responsibilities across the ecosystem. Prevention of harm and access to remedy will be embedded in everyday operations — from grassroots sport to major international events — with measurable improvements in people's safety, dignity, and inclusion evident globally.

In this future, responsible sport will not be peripheral but expected. Institutions will demonstrate due diligence, accountability, and transparency as standard practice. Athletes, workers, and communities will have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect them. Sport will be stronger, more sustainable, and more trusted as a result.

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONSIBLE SPORT

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN THE PROMISE AND THE REALITY OF SPORT

## VISION

A world of sport where everyone is safe, included, and respected.

## MISSION

To bring the world of sport together to understand and address shared human rights challenges by collaborating to build capacities for responsible policies and governance, and by developing joint actions to ensure that all involved in sport protect people and advance human dignity.

### RAISE AWARENESS

Through thought leadership, global summits, public engagement, and targeted communications, we translate complex human rights challenges into practical insights — growing a more diverse sport and human rights movement across organisations and regions.

#### Intended Outcome

More institutions understand and publicly recognise how their policies and decisions impact people.

### BUILD COLLABORATION

We create trusted spaces for dialogue, shared learning, and co-creation — building long-term partnerships, brokering dialogues that bridge divides, and fostering mutual accountability. We help organisations align around shared challenges and engage meaningfully with those affected by sport.

#### Intended Outcome

More institutions make formal commitments to addressing their human rights impacts and affected groups gain meaningful opportunities to advocate effectively.

### DRIVE IMPLEMENTATION

We turn commitments into action — developing authoritative tools, guidance, and training that help institutions identify risks, strengthen safeguarding, conduct human rights due diligence, and establish effective grievance mechanisms, with tailored advisory support throughout.

#### Intended Outcome

Sport develops agreed standards and best practices, and institutions build the expertise to embed these into operations.

### SHAPE THE AGENDA

We engage with the most resonant human rights risks and opportunities, leveraging priority themes and prominent events to advance coherent improvements to sport governance and event hosting — identifying both systemic risks and emerging areas of reform where responsible practice is taking root.

#### Intended Outcome

CSHR's priorities are set collaboratively and recognised as relevant and timely, and affected groups are supported to co-create change.

### SUSTAIN AN ENDURING INSTITUTION

Over the next five years, we aim to reinforce CSHR's position within the sport ecosystem as a credible, trusted and long-term actor able to influence significant and systemic change. By 2030, we want to ensure that CSHR is sustainably funded, well managed and operated in accordance with its values, and maintains a governance structure that supports its independence and legitimacy.

#### Intended Outcome

CSHR is recognised equally by actors from sport and human rights as a legitimate and reliable partner in which time, trust and resources are worth investing.

BY 2030

Human rights will be recognised by all actors as **fundamental to sport's legitimacy and sustainability** — and protections will be operational, not aspirational.

Participatory governance and shared standards will **reduce fragmentation** and ensure consistent, transparent responsibilities across the ecosystem.

Prevention of harm and access to remedy will be **embedded in everyday operations** — from grassroots sport to major international events — with measurable improvements in people's safety, dignity, and inclusion.





*"The Centre for Sport and Human Rights has become an indispensable force in advancing the work needed to shape a world of responsible sport that respects human rights. In a short period, the Centre has contributed enormously to the efforts of a global network dedicated to lasting change throughout the entire sport ecosystem."*

**Mary Robinson,**  
Former President of Ireland,  
Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
First Patron & Founding Chair, Centre for Sport and Human Rights



# FOREWORD

## EPSY CAMPBELL BARR

The world is watching sport as never before. Over the next decade, billions will witness history unfold: Olympic flames will be lit in Los Angeles, in Brisbane, in the Alps, and — for the first time on the African continent — in Dakar. FIFA World Cup tournaments will take place across continents, from the Americas to North Africa and in Europe. New generations of athletes will break records and barriers alike. These landmark moments sit atop a vast world of sport that unfolds every day, on every continent: youth tournaments and world championships, community clubs and professional leagues, sport transforming lives in underserved communities. From the local sports field to the arenas rising in global cities, these are the places where sport's promise is tested.

The question is not whether sport can inspire; we know it can. The question is whether sport at all levels will seize this moment to demonstrate what responsible leadership looks like. Will institutions treat their commitments to safety and fairness not as aspirations but as operating principles? Will the values sport proclaims be visible in every decision, even the difficult ones? That is the race sport must win.

Sport remains a space where millions invest not just attention but belief. People look to sport for more than entertainment; they look for meaning, for community, for proof that rules matter. This is sport's extraordinary gift. But it is also sport's profound responsibility. When sport betrays its stated values, when it becomes a vehicle for interests that contradict the

principles it proclaims, the damage is deeper than compromising institutional credibility. This undermines the very idea that shared values can transcend division. More than ever, the world needs sport to be what it promises to be: a force for dignity and humanity.

We are at a tipping point. Without collective action rooted in international standards, there is a risk that communications campaigns reference human rights concepts in sport without accepting responsibility, that performative indicators obscure real engagement, and that human rights priorities are selectively cherry-picked based on political objectives.

Sport operates in an increasingly complex landscape where maintaining consistency becomes harder. Yet this is precisely why clarity of principle matters more than ever. Institutions that anchor their decisions in transparent, rights-based frameworks, and apply them consistently, will be those that avoid harm to people, maintain public trust, and produce positive legacies in the decade ahead.

“We stand at a moment of possibility.”





Dr Epsy Campbell Barr, Honorary Chair of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, Former Vice-President of Costa Rica.

We stand at a moment of possibility. The forces reshaping our world are reshaping sport too. Across the ecosystem, momentum is building: athletes using their voices, federations modernising governance, host cities insisting on lasting legacies, community organisations demanding safer environments, sponsors elevating expectations.

The generation rising into leadership brings fresh perspectives, particularly from women leaders, and notably those from the regions and backgrounds historically underrepresented in sport. They understand that sport's power is earned through consistency, that fairness must be foundational, not conditional. They are not asking for perfection; they are asking for sport to mean what it says and do what it promises.

The decade ahead will test sport's institutions. But tests can be passed. The federations, event organisers, and corporate partners that embrace accountability and participatory governance, that build capacity for principled decision-making, that consistently align actions with values, these will be the organisations that thrive. They will attract the athletes, fans, and public trust that sustainable success requires. It is no longer enough for sport to claim legitimacy; legitimacy must be earned every day and strengthened through respect and collaboration. This strategy offers a shared compass for navigating such complexity.

Sport has always been more than games. It is ritual, identity, hope. It is where we see ourselves reflected and imagine who we might become. If we honour that truth, if we insist that accountability is non-negotiable and dignity is universal, then sport's next chapter can be its finest. The power of sport is well established — imagine the power of responsible sport.

## PREFACE

# MARY HARVEY

Over the past four years the Centre for Sport and Human Rights has learned what works, and what is still needed. We have moved from articulating principles to demonstrating our value. This new strategy reflects that evolution. It also reflects something harder-won; clarity about our role. We are here to build the infrastructure for responsible sport. To be the platform where difficult conversations happen. To create the tools that turn commitments into capability. To ensure that no organisation in sport, however large or small, has to figure this out alone.

This matters because of who depends on sport getting this right. Every day, children train in environments that should protect them but don't. Workers build stadiums under conditions that exploit. Athletes compete in systems where their voices are sidelined. Communities host events that promise legacy but don't deliver. When sport fails to embed responsibility, real people experience real harm. Our work exists to ensure sport's extraordinary reach translates into protection and dignity.

For organisations in sport, these risks are real and growing. Regulatory requirements are tightening. Public scrutiny is intensifying. Stakeholder expectations are rising. The cost of neglecting social risks and harms to people has never been so much in the spotlight. This is where our role becomes tangible: we provide the expertise, frameworks, platforms, and support that enable sports institutions of all kinds to engage with stakeholders, identify risks, implement effective safeguards, and demonstrate accountability.



Mary V. Harvey OLY, Chief Executive Officer,  
Centre for Sport and Human Rights

Principled leadership needs to be backed by practical capability. Leaders need support and advice that combines credibility with pragmatism. They need expertise adept at convening both a boardroom dialogue and a community consultation. This requires an organisation that understands both international human rights standards and the realities of games time operations, a trusted partner for institutions and activists alike. That is what we have built in the Centre for Sport and Human Rights.

Our approach draws on extensive evidence: our recent [Going the Distance](#) report provides an overview of impact under our previous strategic plan [Convergence 2025](#); our landmark [State of Play](#) report maps over 300 human rights initiatives across the sport ecosystem; and our [Meeting the Moment](#) report presents insights and analysis from strategy consultations with a wide array of stakeholders. As a result, this document reflects not our vision alone, but a shared understanding of the demands of this moment. Through annual business plans, our team will work to define the indicators and outcomes that will deliver strengthened performance and lasting benefits to all those involved in the world of sport.

We are under no illusions about the road ahead. Resources are constrained. Political winds shift. Progress is non-linear. But we have also seen what happens when sport commits: safeguarding systems strengthened, athlete voices amplified in

governance, workers' rights protected, fans respected, legacies secured. We have seen children train safely, workers work with dignity, communities benefit meaningfully from events they host. Experience shows that when partnerships and business relationships are framed around integrity, ethics, and responsible business conduct, sport thrives—on the field, in business, and in the public eye. We know change is possible. The challenge lies in building the systems and partnerships to deliver it.

This strategy is grounded in what we have learned, and sets out an ambitious but achievable plan of what we must still build. Most importantly, it recognises that we cannot do this alone, nor should we. The responsibility of building a world of sport that is safe, inclusive and respectful belongs to all of us.

As sport grows and the stakes rise, so too should the willingness of all actors to sustain our independent role as an organisation that serves sport, builds trust, and creates value. Those who benefit most from sport's reach - federations, leagues, sponsors, broadcasters, governments, and event hosts - have the greatest interest in ensuring that the expertise we offer remains credible and available. Delivering on our strategy will require sport to match commitments with investment. We need the rhetoric to be backed by resources.

We are ready for the work ahead.  
I invite you to join us.

## OUR VISION

A world of sport where everyone is safe, included, and respected.

## OUR MISSION

To bring the world of sport together to understand and address shared human rights challenges by collaborating to build capacities for responsible policies and governance, and by developing joint actions to ensure that all involved in sport protect people and advance human dignity.

# OUR FOUNDATIONS

The Centre for Sport and Human Rights (CSHR) was launched in 2018 under the leadership of our Founding Chair and First Patron Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to advance the application of a human rights based approach to sport. CSHR was formally established in 2021 as an independent human rights organisation for the world of sport headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, with a mandate to act as a global hub for human rights dialogue and international cooperation, close to many of the world's leading sports bodies and the Olympic Capital of Lausanne.

Originally an initiative of the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB), CSHR was first conceived from 2015 through a collaborative process among intergovernmental agencies, governments, sports bodies, businesses, civil society organisations and trade unions. Rooted in the Sporting Chance Principles (see Appendix), we are the only independent organisation in any sector with the formal participation of both the UN Human Rights Office and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in our governance, connecting sport directly with international human rights and labour standards. Our people-centred model of the global sport ecosystem has been recognised by the UN Secretary-General in his 2024 report on sport.

We are guided by our President and Honorary Chair Dr. Epsy Campbell Barr, former Vice President of Costa Rica and global advocate for human rights and equality, as well as our distinguished Patrons Dr. Harry Edwards, legendary civil rights activist and scholar, and Guy Ryder, UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy.

Our board and team share a common purpose: to make sport safer, fairer, and more responsible. Our governance brings together representative voices from sport, business, government, trade unions, academia, and civil society, ensuring our work reflects both institutional insight and the lived experiences of those affected by sport. Our structure as a Swiss association and regulated UK charity ensures independence, transparency, and accountability to our beneficiaries.

Over time, CSHR has earned a reputation as a trusted and effective partner, among institutions and civil society organisations alike. Our standards, tools, and guidance have become authoritative reference points, defining best practice and setting expectations for those working in sport. Through collaboration, capacity-building, events, and direct technical support, we've helped sport organisations strengthen safeguarding, we've advised major event organisers on mitigating human rights risks, and we've supported our partners to embed human rights due diligence across their operations.



*"The Centre for Sport and Human Rights, under the distinguished leadership of Mary Robinson, has been a distinct institutional home for international efforts to bring awareness and action to the intersection between sport and rights."*

**Volker Türk,**  
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
*Sporting Chance Forum 2023, Geneva*



# OUR VALUES

Our values guide everything we do and shape our working culture:

**Respectful:** We approach our work with respect, treating everyone with dignity, fairness, and empathy, and elevate the voices of those most affected by sport.

**Constructive:** We work to develop practical and plain-spoken guidance and tools for sport actors that address complex problems.

**Collaborative:** We are committed to meaningful participation and equitable representation. We recognise that, from boardrooms to locker rooms, achieving systemic change in the world of sport depends on shared solutions and collective responsibility.



# THE CONTEXT

At its best, sport models the values we hope to see in society: fairness, inclusion, respect, and care for one another's well-being. It is a shared language crossing borders, generations, and identities — one of the few universal social forces. Sport speaks to people in ways that transcend political divisions, cultural differences, and economic circumstances. It creates moments of shared joy that few other human endeavours can match. In an era of fragmentation and polarisation, the world needs sport now more than ever. Sport's unique capacity to bring people together, to inspire young people, and to foster social connection makes it an essential contributor to healthy societies and sustainable development. It has the potential to advance health and well-being, promote gender equity, foster peaceful and inclusive communities, and strengthen global partnerships. The human right to participate in sport is part of everyone's right to participate in cultural life.

Over generations, sport has flourished as a relatively autonomous sphere. Sport was once primarily a cultural and social institution, but it has become big business, shaped by vast commercial interests, global audiences, and the growth of mega-sporting events. As the sector has matured, so too have society's expectations: today, sport is increasingly called upon to demonstrate responsibility, accountability, and meaningful engagement with those it impacts.

Sport's unique reach and cultural significance position it as far more than a field of competition – it is a platform with potential to advance dignity and rights worldwide. Public trust now depends not only on performance on the field, but on how those who are responsible for all aspects of sport treat the people and communities who make it possible. Sport operates under intense scrutiny from fans, media, communities, sponsors, and regulators alike, where every decision, on and off the field, is watched, debated, and judged. Athlete welfare, governance, ethics, and commercial conduct are no longer private matters. Operational integrity, demonstrating how values are lived in practice, is a new currency of trust and resilience.

Steps towards mandatory human rights due diligence for private sector actors, as well as new procurement requirements, and evolving case law in national and regional courts are all shaping a new landscape for sport as a major global industry. In addition, developments in AI, data analytics, and digital platforms are redefining how sport is organised and experienced, creating both opportunities and new risks around fairness, privacy, and inclusion. Generational change and reform within sport are opening spaces to reset priorities and embed responsibility. Powerful forces are also driving change from within. Upcoming global sporting events present moments to build on progress in embedding human rights standards in planning, delivery, and legacy – influencing broader practices and engaging with all





regions of the world. The rapid growth and professionalisation of women's sport also presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish norms for equality, representation, and safe participation. Athletes and their associations are speaking out on welfare, equality, and justice; fan movements are demanding accountability, inclusion, and transparency from the grassroots up. A new generation of athletes, fans, and advocates is demanding greater sustainability and integrity. Ongoing reform and modernisation efforts within some leading sports bodies are strengthening transparency, accountability, and the application of human rights standards. Meanwhile, NGO monitoring, investigative journalism, and independent research are exposing where harms continue to take place within the world of sport, shaping public opinion, and raising the reputational cost of inaction. In Europe, debates on the European sports model further underline the expectation that sport's autonomy is exercised alongside clear responsibilities for transparency, solidarity, and respect for fundamental rights.

The characteristics that make sport so valuable - its global reach, emotional resonance, and capacity to shape identity - also make it attractive to actors seeking to advance political, commercial, or reputational interests. In an environment where multilateral institutions and international standards are under increasing strain, safeguarding sport as a social good requires clear expectations grounded in human rights. Establishing and maintaining a credible social licence for sport depends on all institutions involved in sport demonstrating that they can manage risk, protect people, and act with integrity at scale.

# THE CHALLENGE

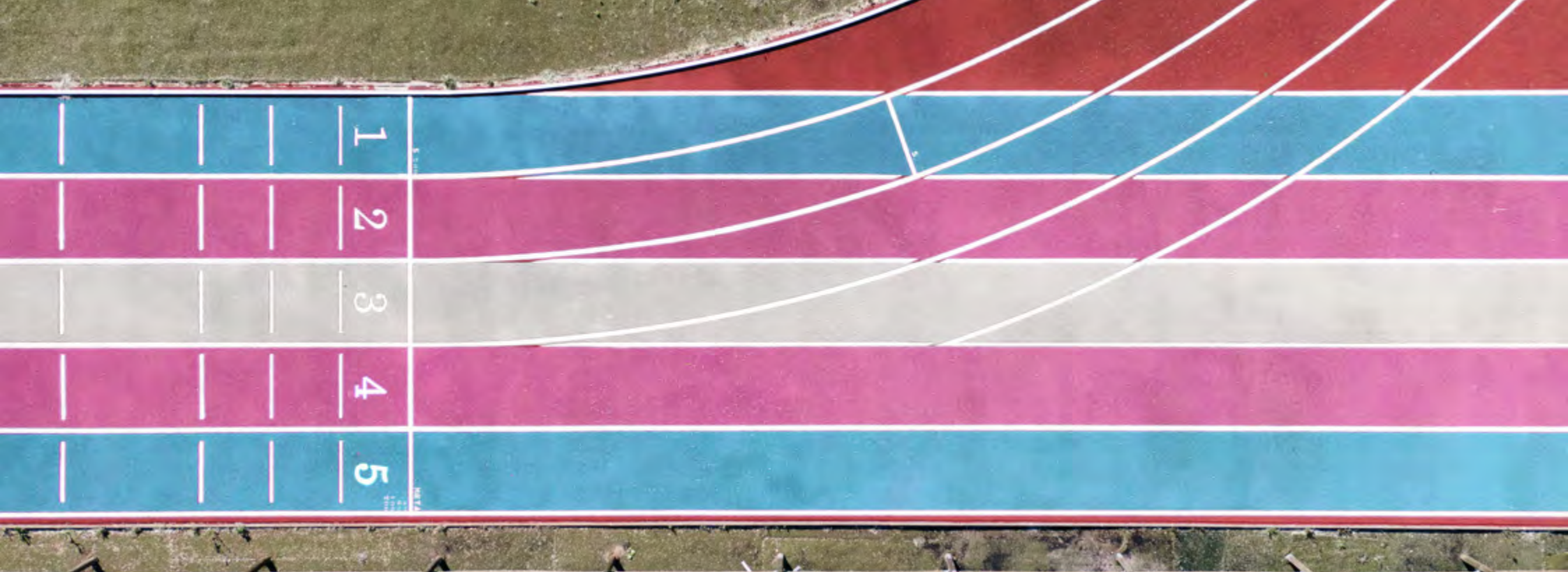
For all its promise, too often the reality of sport falls short. Like any other area of society, sport carries real risks of harm to people. Behind inspiring sporting moments can lie potentially significant violations of rights, including: child abuse, coercion, trafficking and exploitation of children, and child labour; unsafe working conditions and exploitation of migrant labour across supply chains; restrictions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; gender inequality and other forms of discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity; community displacement; restrictions on expression, protest, and reporting; player load and injury risk within a congested sporting calendar; neglected mental health needs; accessibility gaps for persons with disabilities; militarised policing and potentially unsafe venues; issues with privacy, data protection, and surveillance; and inadequate grievance mechanisms leaving victims without effective remedy. Vulnerable groups are also disproportionately affected by accelerating climate impacts.

These are not isolated incidents but patterns of harm experienced by people, with those most at risk typically underserved or excluded groups whose lives and well-being depend on sport acting responsibly. The prevalence of harm is also intersectional, with greater vulnerability experienced by persons at-risk due to discrimination based on personal characteristics, which in many places correlate with groups recognised with specific protections in law, including: children, women and girls, Indigenous peoples, refugees, persons with

disabilities, LGBTQI+ communities, and ethnic and religious minorities. Human rights defenders can face severe risks. While the prime responsibility and duty to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms lie with states, institutions in sport can also cause, contribute to, or be connected to such harms and have a responsibility to respect human rights. While some institutions have taken meaningful steps to address these risks, progress remains uneven across regions, sports, and levels of competition.

The reality of these harms has been extensively documented. Independent investigations, judicial proceedings, and public inquiries have exposed systemic safeguarding failures within elite training environments; exploitative and unsafe labour conditions linked to the construction and delivery of major sporting events; restrictions on freedom of association affecting athletes and workers seeking collective representation; discriminatory laws and regulatory frameworks affecting the participation and safety of women and LGBTQI+ athletes and fans; entrenched racial discrimination; and community displacement associated with event-related infrastructure development. In some contexts, prolonged disputes over equal pay and working conditions have highlighted structural inequities within professional sport. These findings underscore how processes and practices across institutions can translate into sustained harm for individuals and communities. Current trends are also reshaping the landscape, creating both pressures and possibilities. Sport is increasingly drawn





into geopolitical power dynamics — used to project influence, enhance reputations, or distract from human rights concerns. In environments where sport is closely intertwined with political authority, national reputation, or significant financial interests, institutional incentives are not always aligned with human rights objectives, and durable progress may only be achievable through persistence and long-term, context-specific engagement.

New investment models and powerful financial interests, from the betting industry to state ownership and private equity, are reshaping who controls sport and why. Sport increasingly functions as a mainstream financial and investment asset, reshaping incentives and risk exposure, contributing to a

growing perception that sport is drifting away from the communities that sustain it, and accelerating the shift from sport as a social good to sport as a private asset.

At the same time, debates about the future of rights; including who defines them, how they are enforced, and how they evolve in digital and transnational spaces, are intensifying. Sport does not sit outside these debates; it helps shape social norms, public expectations, and standards of conduct. How leaders respond will determine whether sport can fulfil its potential as an authentic force for good. Closing the gap between promise and reality will define the next chapter for sport — one where sustainable and impactful sport is built upon a foundation of responsible sport.



*"The Sport & Rights Alliance is a proud member of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights. By providing space for those impacted by sport and addressing difficult topics through multi-stakeholder dialogue, the Centre plays a crucial role in advancing human rights in sports - transforming convening into action and building models for good governance and sustainability."*

**Andrea Florence,**  
Executive Director, Sport & Rights Alliance

# BARRIERS TO CHANGE

A number of deep-rooted systemic issues explain the ongoing prevalence of risks to people in sport, which must be confronted if sport is to be responsibly governed and delivered at all levels. There are gaps in governance, regulation, enforcement, representation, and transparency - all of which require different constellations of actors to lead and engage on, including governments, intergovernmental organisations, sports bodies, commercial partners, trade unions and civil society organisations. CSHR has a particular role to play within the responsible sport movement, and our strategy is to address three specific barriers:

## GAPS IN AWARENESS

Organisations in sport often don't have full visibility of the range of risks that sport can pose to people. A persistent belief that sport is inherently positive can obscure risks, leaving many in positions of authority unaware of their full responsibilities. This can create blind spots to harm and a reluctance to acknowledge how sport's systems can negatively impact people. Fear of reputational damage, perceived complexity, and competing priorities can also discourage organisations from making or sustaining meaningful commitments to protect people. Our response is to raise awareness of these issues and grow the responsible sport movement as a critical first step in achieving systemic change.

## GAPS IN ENGAGEMENT

Global sport is characterised by fragmented systems and weak accountability for violations of people's rights. Powerful commercial interests, overlapping jurisdictions, and blurred lines of responsibility create tensions between human rights priorities and existing power structures. When not exercised responsibly, the principle of sporting autonomy can further increase the risk that the same institutions are expected to both regulate and promote sport, complicating accountability and oversight. As financial pressures grow and incentives prioritise short term gains, meaningful engagement can be sidelined by institutions at a time when civil society space is shrinking around the world. Decisions are often made without genuine consultation of those affected, with athletes, workers, and communities frequently under-represented in governance and policy processes. When sports bodies, governments, sponsors, and NGOs operate in silos, inconsistent standards emerge, leaving gaps where people are vulnerable to abuse and discrimination. Caution in taking on potential or perceived legal liabilities can discourage institutions from embracing social responsibilities. Our response is to engage all actors and foster collaboration that lifts up the voices of those who are impacted and to develop tangible solutions that advance more effective and coherent policies and regulations in sport.



## GAPS IN CAPACITY

Even where commitment exists, implementation gaps continue to prevent meaningful change on the ground. Many organisations may wish to act responsibly but lack the expertise, resources, and frameworks to translate principles into practice. Limited training, knowledge, and practical guidance mean that commitments remain aspirational rather than operational. Even where policies exist, the absence of clear accountability mechanisms, grievance processes, or dedicated capacity results in uneven protection and missed opportunities for learning and prevention. Our response is to build capacity and enable action by providing tools, expertise and support specific to sport that can drive implementation of commitments.





# THE OPPORTUNITY

Responsible sport is where commitments to protect people are translated into concrete actions, a culture of accountability is embedded, and where daily decisions are made with an awareness of their impact on others. In practice, [responsible sport](#) means:

- **Athletes** work and play in harm-free environments, their well-being protected and their voices heard and heeded in decisions that shape their careers, with access to the care, support, representation, and opportunities needed to flourish during and beyond their sporting journeys.
- **Children and young athletes** grow and thrive in systems designed for their safety, development, and dignity — free from abuse, exploitation, and neglect.
- **Workers** from stadium staff to construction, manufacturing, hospitality and security experience safe conditions, fair pay, and dignity at work. Their rights are respected, and their contributions recognised.
- **Communities** hosting sport events become true partners. Their perspectives are included from the start, and they experience lasting benefits in health, education, and social connection.
- **Fans** enjoy welcoming, inclusive spaces where everyone can celebrate safely, with sport acting as a bridge across differences and a catalyst for shared belonging.
- **Officials, volunteers, and journalists** are protected, valued, and able to contribute with integrity and independence, strengthening fairness, transparency, and trust throughout sport.
- **All those affected by sport** have access to effective remedy when things go wrong — ensuring accountability, restoring trust, and building a culture of prevention and care.

Only when human rights risks are identified and addressed can the extraordinary potential of sport be realised. Responsible sport becomes reality when institutions in sport establish systems that support such awareness and accountability and promote conscious decision-making, informed by those most impacted.

- **Sports bodies** integrate and implement human rights standards into governance, policy, and practice.
- **Event organisers** embed rights from bidding to legacy, ensuring that venues, procurement, and event delivery protect people and the planet.
- **Sponsors** use their leverage to promote safe, fair, and inclusive sport — conducting human-rights due diligence and supporting access to remedy when harm occurs.
- **Suppliers and service providers** — from hospitality to security, transport, and technology — deliver products and services free from exploitation and unsafe work.
- **Broadcasters** tell sports' stories responsibly — respecting privacy and amplifying diverse voices.
- **Investors** including private equity, private capital, and sovereign wealth funds conduct due diligence, ensure investments do not contribute to harm, and use influence to advance responsible business.
- **Governments** uphold their duty to protect, using policy, funding, and diplomacy to protect people in sport and hold all actors accountable.
- **Host cities** embed human rights into procurement, infrastructure development, service delivery, and community engagement — ensuring that event preparation and legacy protect residents, workers, and local communities.
- **Professional sport** embeds respect for human rights in ownership, management, and competition. Clubs and leagues integrate human rights into governance, athlete welfare, supporter engagement, and commercial decision-making — recognising their central role in shaping culture, employment practices, and community impact.
- **Player unions** represent athletes' collective voice, advocate for safe working conditions and fair treatment, and ensure athletes have effective channels to raise concerns and access remedy. With a greater say in the development of policies and economic frameworks, social partners together play an important role in bringing sports governance in line with internationally recognised human rights.
- **Civil society, trade unions, and academia** contribute expertise, scrutiny, and collaborate in shared solutions.

*"The Centre for Sport and Human Rights builds value within global sport, surfaces risks, and catalyzes collective action on human rights issues. Being a longstanding strategic partner and a founding participant in the Responsible Sport Council supports our stakeholder engagement efforts, contributes to our human rights due diligence, and gives us access to the highly specialized expertise."*

Clare Iery,  
Head of Global Human Rights, The Coca-Cola Company



# OUR APPROACH

**Systemic risks require systemic responses:** CSHR's work is grounded in the recognition that risks to people in sport are rarely isolated incidents. They arise from how sport is organised, governed, and delivered, and from wider societal dynamics that play out within sporting contexts. Harm is seldom the result of a single decision or actor; it reflects systems of authority, incentives, and accountability that shape behaviour over time. Addressing these risks therefore requires approaches that are systemic, grounded in international standards, and capable of operating across institutional boundaries.

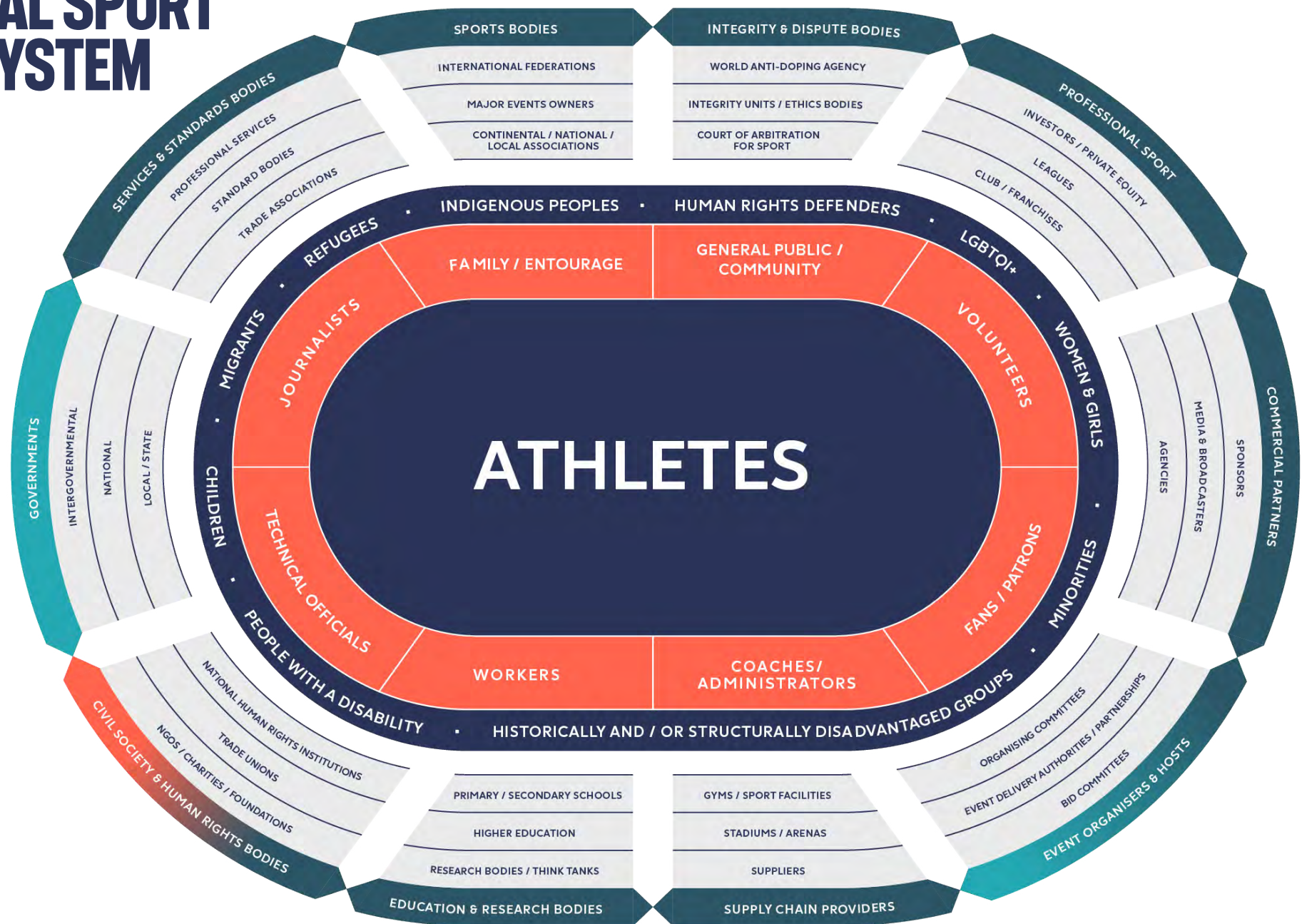
**Our work is anchored in internationally recognised human rights standards.** Our work is underpinned by a commitment to international human rights and labour standards, as established in conventions, instruments, and principles adopted by states at global and regional levels. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) provide the authoritative framework for understanding the responsibilities of non-state actors, including institutions in sport, whose activities and business relationships affect people. Widely recognised by companies and major sport bodies as the standard of reference in this area, the UNGPs require institutions to make human rights commitments, assess risks to people, take action to prevent and mitigate harm, report on progress, and provide access to effective remedy when harms occur. The application of these standards to sport, along with the aligned OECD Guidelines for

Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the ILO Tripartite Declaration on Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, are articulated in the Sporting Chance Principles and integrated throughout our work.

**Sport is a complex global ecosystem:** The world of sport encompasses not only athletes and sporting bodies, but also families, coaches, officials, volunteers, workers, fans, and communities, alongside institutions such as governing bodies, event organisers, sponsors, public authorities, and security actors. Decisions taken at one point in this system can have far-reaching consequences elsewhere. Every interaction within the ecosystem has the potential either to protect human dignity or to undermine it. Complex challenges in sport have no single owner and rarely yield to isolated interventions. They require collective action and sustained effort. We therefore seek to identify and support points of momentum within the system, recognising good practice where it emerges, strengthening it, and helping it travel further across the ecosystem.



# GLOBAL SPORT ECOSYSTEM





*"Mega-Sporting Events cannot solve every human rights problem, but they can respect the standards, recognise and avoid potential harm, open up the necessary space for dialogue with all concerned stakeholders and hence, have considerable leverage for the good."*

**Alexandre Fasel,**  
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs,  
Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs



# OUR FOCUS

CSHR concentrates its work where responsibility for people in sport is most decisively shaped: through governance systems and through the delivery of sporting events. These are the points at which authority, incentives, resources, and accountability converge, and where change, if achieved, can travel furthest across the sport ecosystem:

- **Responsible Sport Governance** – Embedding human rights into leadership, policy, and practice across sport.
- **Responsible Event Hosting** – Ensuring major sporting events uphold rights from bid to legacy and deliver lasting benefits for people and communities.

Governance determines how power is exercised in sport. It shapes how rules and policies are set, how decisions are made, whose interests are represented, and whether harm is prevented, addressed, or repeated. Across global sport, governance challenges persist: regulatory instability driven by unilateral rule-making, structural conflicts of interest, economic models that concentrate power and value while leaving athletes and workers exposed, and workplace environments that too often tolerate discrimination, harassment, and abuse. These conditions undermine trust, legitimacy, and the long-term sustainability of sport. Strengthening governance by embedding human rights standards into leadership, decision-making, and ultimately culture, is therefore foundational to responsible sport. Without it, commitments remain discretionary and protections uneven.

Sporting events concentrate authority, resources, and operational activity across a wide range of actors and sectors, often within compressed timeframes and under intense public scrutiny. They bring together governing bodies, event owners, host governments, organising committees, host cities, commercial partners, and suppliers across construction, hospitality, security, transport, and technology. This concentration and the time-bound nature of events heightens risks to people, but it also creates moments where responsibilities can be clarified and expectations aligned in ways that influence future events and sports governance more broadly. CSHR works across the full event lifecycle — from planning and bidding through delivery and legacy — recognising that responsibility for people is distributed across institutions and does not end when an event closes. Responsible event hosting extends beyond major international competitions. Regional events, youth tournaments, and community sport also shape norms, practices, and expectations, and provide important opportunities to strengthen protection, accountability, and inclusion at every level of sport.

Taken together, this is CSHR's approach to driving change in sport to provide greater protection for those affected by it, and where responsibility for people is most clearly shaped. By grounding our work in international human rights standards and concentrating on governance systems and sporting events, we identify where systemic risks are most acute and where meaningful progress can be made.

# OUR PRIORITIES

Over the next five years, we will pursue **five interconnected strategic priorities** that together contribute to systemic change:

## **RAISE AWARENESS**

Increasing visibility of human rights risks and responsibilities across sport.

## **BUILD COLLABORATION**

Convening diverse stakeholders to strengthen collective action.

## **DRIVE IMPLEMENTATION**

Supporting institutions to embed prevention of harm and access to remedy into policies and practice.

## **SHAPE THE AGENDA**

Identifying systemic and emerging risks and advancing reform across the sport ecosystem.

## **SUSTAIN AN ENDURING INSTITUTION**

Ensuring our ongoing independence, credibility, and long-term sustainability as a central platform for joint action and support for sport institutions.







# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 **RAISE AWARENESS**





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 RAISE AWARENESS

Making human rights visible, understood, and expected in sport

Our aim is to make respect for human rights recognised, understood, and achievable — and to mainstream it so that it becomes an expected part of how sport is governed, delivered, and evaluated. Through thought leadership, global summits, public engagement, campaigns, media relations, and targeted communications, we translate complex human rights challenges into practical insights that organisations can act upon with confidence.

Over the next five years, we will continue to grow the sport and human rights movement by meaningfully and constructively engaging a more diverse range of organisations and regions, adapting our approaches to ensure global principles can be translated to national and regional contexts. By 2030, we want human rights to be recognised as fundamental to sport's legitimacy and sustainability, informing public commitments, and providing a shared reference point for accountability across the ecosystem. **The intended outcome is that more institutions understand and publicly recognise how their policies and decisions impact people.** To achieve this, we aim to increase the number of organisations that engage with information about human rights in sport, and the number that publicly endorse human rights principles. Our flagship public-facing initiative will continue to be the **Sporting Chance Forum**.

## SPOTLIGHT ON **SPORTING CHANCE FORUM**

The [Sporting Chance Forum](#) is the leading global summit on sport and human rights. The Forum brings together hundreds of stakeholders from sport, government, business, and civil society to take stock, build bridges, and shape practical solutions that advance responsible sport. Since its first edition in 2016, the event has produced tangible outcomes and commitments, connecting expertise with lived experience, and amplifying the voices of those affected by sport-related human rights abuses.





## TRACK RECORD



In 2023, our Sporting Chance Forum returned to the Palais des Nations in Geneva, coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The centrepiece of our ["75" campaign](#), the forum gathered participants from around the world, contributing towards the UN's [human rights pledging initiative](#), culminating in a high profile [human rights awareness campaign](#) reaching millions of fans across the world via UEFA Champions League advertising. Communications and engagement is also a key part of our [Generation 2026](#) initiative where we have supported young journalists in Canada, Mexico and the United States through our [Youth Media Forward](#) project.

Creative outputs include a human rights awareness raising video that was delivered to tens of thousands of staff and volunteers at the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, demonstrating how targeted communications outputs can reach entire event workforces at scale. Other activations CSHR has delivered in the sport and human rights space include

[Echoes of the Rumble](#), a theatrical collaboration inspired by the 1974 Rumble in the Jungle boxing match, acknowledging the history and legacy of Muhammad Ali's activism and impact on human rights. We also regularly host topical webinars, including in collaboration with the UN's Human Rights Day theme, ["Human Rights – Our Everyday Essentials"](#), in 2025.

These activities are combined with a public appearances programme with key CSHR representatives positioned at relevant conferences and industry events, and through the publication of timely insights and analysis. Thought leadership pieces have addressed the intersection of [climate, sport, and human rights](#), [artificial intelligence](#), and [security governance](#).

Looking ahead, we will continue to innovate with the Sporting Chance Forum, expand our storytelling efforts, and offer opportunities to institutions to pledge support for international human rights standards.



*"We have reiterated our commitment to being an active participant in the Centre for Sport and Human Rights. We want to engage with civil society, and to continue to play a role to promote universal human rights among the football community."*

**Theodore Theodoridis,**  
General Secretary, UEFA  
Sporting Chance Forum 2023, Geneva







## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 **BUILD COLLABORATION**





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 BUILD COLLABORATION

Creating shared responsibility and collective solutions

We work to strengthen collaboration in sport by creating trusted spaces for dialogue, shared learning, and co-creation. Since inception we have convened diverse stakeholders, enabling courageous conversations, fostering mutual accountability and identifying common ground. We do so through differentiated pathways of engagement, supporting social dialogue by creating space to develop shared solutions.

Our engagement is global in scope but locally grounded. We work to build long-term partnerships that go beyond consultation — supporting locally anchored leadership and engagement with national and regional organisations. This approach, which brings together actors based on shared values and interests, enables participants not only to contribute, but to innovate, shape priorities, and drive collective impact. We have brokered unlikely partnerships, offered our good offices to facilitate dialogues that bridge divides, and supported decision-makers through our participation in advisory boards and policy-making processes. By helping organisations align around shared challenges, adopt common reference points, and engage meaningfully with those affected by sport, we reduce

fragmentation and support more coherent responses to complex challenges. We take a constructive, practical approach rooted in international standards and accessible language, structuring our partnerships around three guiding principles: leverage, engaging where collaboration amplifies reach and influence; influence, partnering where we can shape policy, practice, or discourse at scale; and impact, investing in relationships that deliver measurable change and build rights-respecting systems.

Over the next five years, we will continue to deepen our convening role and build partnerships with influential actors across regions and sectors. By 2030, we want stakeholder engagement and respect for human rights to be embedded norms; not exceptional, but expected. **The intended outcomes are that more institutions make formal commitments to addressing their human rights impacts and that affected groups gain meaningful opportunities to advocate effectively.** To achieve this, we aim to grow participation in the Responsible Sport Council and support organisations to adopt human rights commitments. Our flagship collective action initiative will continue to be the **Responsible Sport Council**.

## SPOTLIGHT ON RESPONSIBLE SPORT COUNCIL

A trusted space for collaboration and action, the Responsible Sport Council is CSHR's multi-stakeholder platform for embedding responsible business conduct and shaping the future of sport. The council brings together organisations in our network to learn, share, and develop good practice. Through regular meetings, thematic sessions, and peer exchange, members connect with affected groups, civil society organisations, independent experts, and international institutions to anticipate risks, co-create solutions, and strengthen governance. Participants endorse the Sporting Chance Principles and contribute to a shared vision of responsible sport. The council enables participants to listen, engage, co-create, and promote a model of shared value creation that delivers ethical credibility, increased value and competitive advantage. The council serves the full breadth of the sport ecosystem:

- Providing sports bodies and event hosts with practical tools to embed human rights in governance and delivery, building credible legacies and enhancing institutional legitimacy, as well as connect with important stakeholders vital to their work on responsible sport.
- Helping companies identify and mitigate risks, support efforts to meet human rights due diligence requirements, and protect brand value by demonstrating purpose-driven leadership.
- Supporting governments in aligning sport governance with human rights obligations, generating social returns and strengthening public confidence.
- Providing valuable input for UN agencies and Intergovernmental Organisations on policy and initiatives concerning sport
- Amplifying the voices of those impacted through the participation of a breadth of civil society organisations and trade unions.

All participants gain access to authoritative expertise, strategic dialogue with peers and decision-makers, and transparent reporting on how partnership contributes to system-wide change.



## TRACK RECORD

We host regular meetings, symposia, and conferences, including the annual [Host Government Forum](#) in partnership with the Government of Switzerland, which provides a platform for governments to share approaches and good practice. We have convened strategic dialogues including the [Doha Dialogue](#), a critical roundtable on the human rights legacy of Qatar 2022. In the context of the Women's EURO 2025 in Switzerland, we convened partners in Geneva to advance [women's sport and decent work](#). Our work in this area is reinforced through participation in international standard-setting and policy processes. We publish expert opinions, respond to consultations, and serve on advisory bodies and oversight mechanisms for sports organisations and major events.





*"Expectations in sport are changing, and sports organisations are looking to demonstrate their commitment to respecting human rights. We see responsible sport, in all its forms, as fundamental to the governance of Rowing and a key driver of its sustainable growth."*

**Jean-Christophe Rolland,**  
President, World Rowing



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 **DRIVE IMPLEMENTATION**





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

# DRIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Translate commitments to sustained action at greater scale

CSHR supports implementation by translating international human rights standards into actionable frameworks that organisations across the sports ecosystem can integrate into their operations. Grounded in research and evidence, we develop authoritative tools, guidance, and training that help institutions identify risks, strengthen safeguarding systems, conduct human rights due diligence, and establish effective grievance mechanisms. We build capacity through education, peer learning, mentoring, and tailored advisory support, with a focus on enabling action that endures. We work across sectors to reduce duplication, align approaches, and support coordination in the application of human rights standards — recognising that implementation challenges often arise at the intersection of public, private, and non-profit actors.

Over the next five years, we will expand access to practical guidance and expert support, helping more organisations move from commitment to delivery. By 2030, we want the sport ecosystem to demonstrate a proven ability to prevent harm and provide remedy, making protection the norm. **The intended outcomes are that sport develops agreed standards and best practices, and that institutions build expertise to embed these into operations.** To achieve this, we will provide open access to authoritative yet plain-spoken tools and guidance, deliver training and technical support, and facilitate cross-sector collaboration on implementation.

## SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Our technical cooperation partnerships have helped organisations develop [commitments](#) and translate them into action through policy development, risk assessment, [safeguarding procedures](#), and [grievance mechanisms](#) aligned with international best practice. Our support to the [German Olympic Sports Confederation \(DOSB\)](#) helped it become the first National Olympic Committee to adopt a dedicated human rights policy, setting a precedent across the Olympic movement. Our direct advisory work with bid committees, host governments, and event organisers, informed by workers, community members, and other affected groups, helps translate standards into context-specific strategies that address risks across the event value chain, from construction and procurement to fan experience. Our [Human Rights Volunteer Programme](#), first implemented at FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, pioneered the use of trained volunteers to identify and mitigate risks in real time.



## TRACK RECORD



Our globally recognised [tools](#) equip federations, leagues, and clubs to [understand due diligence](#), identify risks, [engage stakeholders](#), [develop policies](#), and [strengthen accountability](#) with practical frameworks that have become reference points across the ecosystem. Our standard-setting guides, grounded in [rigorous research](#) and [landmark publications](#), provide the framework for embedding human rights throughout the major event [lifecycle](#), encompassing [candidacy](#), [games time](#), and legacy. We have produced dedicated guidance for [sponsors](#), [broadcasters](#), and in relation to [fan welfare](#). This has included supporting organisations in conducting pre-event human rights due diligence. We supported UEFA in developing [human rights declarations](#) and establishing human rights boards for [EURO 2024](#) and [EURO 2025](#), producing an [independent report](#) with recommendations to strengthen UEFA's human rights approach. In standard-setting, we contributed to the revision of the [ISO 20121](#) event sustainability standard to explicitly integrate human rights. We deliver training bilaterally with partners such as European Athletics, and as part of courses such as UNITAR's sport diplomacy education programme.

Our [Generation 2026](#) initiative represents one of our most ambitious programmes to date. Engaging host cities across

Canada, Mexico, and the United States, we are advancing child rights, safeguarding, and youth participation in the context of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Generation 2026 amplifies child voice, strengthens [protection systems](#), offers [safeguarding tools](#) to sport organisations, venues, and city governments, and supports inclusive legacy planning. This work includes the [Child Rights and Sports Alliance](#), a [Youth Leadership Council](#), youth surveys, and a [playbook for host city committees](#) to support integrating child rights into major event legacy planning.

Our role as the global knowledge hub underpins this work. We maintain an extensive [resource library](#), [case collection](#), [policy repository](#), [glossary](#), and [research network](#) that connects evidence and practice. We have pioneered human rights education in sport through our [annual summer school](#), and our online [Global Sport and Human Rights Academy platform](#). Looking ahead, we will be consulting on and updating key standards and guidance, while co-creating practical resources with partners in specific sectors. Our emphasis on implementation will evolve from publishing tools to working in partnership. We will continue to grow our reach through further online education offerings, and explore opportunities to develop a responsible sport index and a helpdesk function.





*"The Centre for Sport and Human Rights is an important thought-partner in developing approaches to human rights questions in our industry and has collaborated in thinking through editorial considerations, safety when covering major events, and supply chain due diligence. Being a member of the Responsible Sport Council is a meaningful way for us to build relationships, engage with a diversity of stakeholders, and gather insights on emerging trends in sport."*

Charlotte Brierley,  
Human Rights Lead, Sky



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 **SHAPE THE AGENDA**





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 SHAPE THE AGENDA

Respond to critical risks and opportunities to drive systemic change

Over the next five years, we will continue to engage with the most resonant and critical human rights risks and opportunities, leveraging priority themes and prominent events to highlight the risks to affected groups and to advance coherent improvements to sport governance and event hosting. By 2030, we want the prevention of harm and access to remedy to be addressed consistently across sport. **The intended outcome of this work is that CSHR's priorities are set collaboratively and recognised as relevant and timely, and that affected groups are supported to co-create change.** To achieve this, we will work with our strategic partners and council participants on an annual basis to identify, highlight and coordinate action on pressing risks and priority topics, including through our **Annual Strategic Dialogue**.

Different sports, geographies, and operating contexts will present different entry points. We focus on a number of priority themes and opportunities where systemic risks to people's rights are most salient and severe, where our expertise and partnerships create impact, and where collaboration can close gaps and accelerate progress. We also respond to moments of opportunity — when reforms, events, or public attention create conditions for meaningful change. We consult extensively with stakeholders and experts to identify focus areas, using our own

leverage where it is strongest and supporting others to use theirs effectively. We identify not only systemic and emerging risks, but also emerging areas of reform where responsible practice is taking root. By supporting progress where incentives align and cultivating examples of effective progress, we help demonstrate that systemic change is possible and replicable.

**Systemic issues:** across all contexts, two essential pillars underpin our approach:

- **Prevention of harm:** Protection ensures that all people connected to sport and its activities, especially children and vulnerable adults, are protected from harm through meaningful stakeholder engagement, effective due diligence, robust safeguarding, proactive risk management, good governance, and cultures of care.
- **Access to remedy:** Effective remedy systems ensure that when harm occurs, people have access to mechanisms that restore trust, strengthen accountability, and create feedback loops to improve prevention and systemic learning.



**Priority themes:** We monitor a range of evolving themes that offer scope for innovation and impact. Some represent entry points where progress opens doors across the sport ecosystem, while others enable the advancement of rights and broader transformation within sport. Our cross-cutting priority themes are:

- **Women's sport:** the global growth of women's sport presents a unique opportunity to embed equity, equality, safety and representation, creating inroads that will benefit sport more broadly.
- **Athlete welfare:** encompassing the safety, wellbeing, and representation of athletes, working conditions free from harm, and the ability of athletes to express themselves and participate meaningfully in decisions that affect them, including through collective bargaining, is an enabling cause for the sport and human rights movement.
- **Non-discrimination:** addressing all forms of racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance while advancing equity so that sport is accessible and accountable.

Relevant topics come to the fore on a case-by-case basis, depending on context, and in partnership with relevant experts. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Safety and security** encompassing the protection of all people in sport from violence, harassment, and unsafe environments.
- **Decent work** across the sport and event value chain, which the ILO has confirmed requires respect for all fundamental principles and rights at work as defined by core international

labour standards: freedom of association and collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour, abolition of child labour, elimination of discrimination, a safe and healthy working environment, fair pay, ethical recruitment, and the protection of migrant workers.

- **Gender-based violence**, which demands sustained attention and coordinated responses that protect survivors and prevent harm.
- **Technology and data** related harms which present new challenges, requiring safeguards for fairness, consent, and privacy.
- **Environmental considerations** that demand protection for people from climate impacts and promotion of climate justice.
- **Finance and integrity** questions requiring greater transparency and shared benefit in investment and commercial practices.
- **Addressing historical injustices** in sport, requiring acknowledgement, accountability, and meaningful efforts toward redress and reconciliation.

These are all issues that we plan to address with our partners, leveraging resources available where there is significant potential for impact.

*"From integrating responsible sport into our strategy and practices, to our Declaration on Reconciliation and Partnership with Indigenous Peoples, advancing inclusive parasport programmes, and addressing historical injustices in and through sport, a human rights based approach provides the framework to advance our social responsibility work in alignment with global standards."*

Dr. Donald Rukare,  
President, Commonwealth Sport





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 **SUSTAIN AN ENDURING INSTITUTION**





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 SUSTAIN AN ENDURING INSTITUTION

Anchor the responsible sport agenda  
by embedding our unique role in the  
sport ecosystem

Over the next five years, we aim to reinforce CSHR's position within the sport ecosystem as a credible, trusted and long-term actor able to influence significant and systemic change. By 2030, we want to ensure that CSHR is sustainably funded, well managed and operated in accordance with its values, and maintains a governance structure that supports its independence and legitimacy. **The intended outcome of this is that CSHR is recognised equally by actors from sport and human rights as a legitimate and reliable partner in which time, trust and resources are worth investing.**

CSHR was initiated and supported through its early development by a network of key stakeholders and has been taken forward by an expert and experienced team with a unique blend of human rights expertise, diplomatic acumen, and sport-sector knowledge, enabling us to engage at senior levels and navigate complex institutional environments. This work has been carried out with the oversight of a unique governance structure designed to provide accountability and transparency to the ecosystem as a whole. Nevertheless, CSHR remains a small organisation punching above its weight to engage with powerful and well-resourced organisations to facilitate difficult discussions and advocate for change in the face of significant challenges.

### Key operational priorities include:

- **Organisational positioning, legitimacy and visibility** - we will use our public communications to ensure that CSHR is clearly positioned, well-understood, and trusted by stakeholders, with its value, expertise and impact conveyed consistently.
- **Financial sustainability** - we will aim to strengthen and diversify our funding - with a balanced mix of partners, institutional grants, advisory clients, and philanthropic support - while managing our financial resources effectively in order to support our independence, stability and strategic impact.
- **Governance and accountability** - we will ensure that CSHR continues to be governed effectively and transparently, with decision-making that supports our strategic impact, regulatory compliance and organisational values. We will revisit our original aspiration to incorporate as a Swiss foundation, ensuring that our institutional structure supports long-term independence, accountability, and global legitimacy.
- **People and culture** - we will steward the expert team that is at the heart of our effectiveness, investing in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace culture to ensure that staff and collaborators are supported, aligned, and enabled to work effectively and sustainably.
- **Information systems** - we will ensure that CSHR plans, manages, learns from and is able to report its work effectively in order to adapt and to demonstrate accountability and the impact of its work.
- **Environmental responsibility** - we will work to minimise our environmental footprint and integrate environmental responsibility into our operations, travel, and events, recognising that responsibility to people and responsibility to the planet are inherently linked.



*"The Centre for Sport and Human Rights is not just another international organisation, not just another multistakeholder initiative, not just another non-governmental organisation. It is unique as it brings all actors involved in the world of sports together to address the challenges comprehensively, recognising that each participant has a key role to play."*

**Roberto Suárez Santos,**  
Secretary-General, International Organisation of Employers

# JOIN US

Realising responsible sport at scale requires sustained commitment, credible partnerships, and an institutional home capable of convening, advising, and supporting action across a complex global ecosystem. The Centre for Sport and Human Rights exists to provide that home.

We work with organisations that recognise both the risks and responsibilities that come with sport's reach and influence, and that understand the value of engaging early and constructively to strengthen governance, protect people, and deliver lasting benefits. Partners do not come to CSHR for endorsements. They work with us to navigate complex environments, address difficult issues, align with international standards, and translate principles into action. In doing so, they strengthen institutional credibility, reduce fragmentation, and contribute to the long-term resilience and sustainability of sport. Across all partnerships, our role is consistent: to connect principles with practice, elevate affected voices, strengthen institutional capacity, and support progress that is credible, durable, and centred on people.

- **For sport bodies and event hosts**, we provide a trusted platform and practical support to embed human rights into governance, risk management, and event delivery — strengthening legitimacy, improving decision-making, enhancing organisational resilience, and safeguarding long-term value.
- **For governments**, we offer an independent space to promote policy coherence and align sport policy, event hosting, and public investment with international human rights standards, strengthening event legacies and social impact, while supporting progress in complex and high-scrutiny environments.
- **For host cities**, we support the integration of human rights into event planning, procurement, infrastructure development, and community engagement, protecting residents and workers, and ensuring that event legacies deliver social benefit.
- **For companies, sponsors, and broadcasters**, we help translate human rights responsibilities into due diligence and risk management frameworks, reinforcing reputational resilience, protecting brand integrity, and contributing to more predictable, rights-respecting operating environments.
- **For investors**, we support the integration of human rights considerations into decision-making, enabling responsible investment, sustainable value creation, and alignment with long-term governance stability and social risk management.
- **For professional sport**, we support the integration of human rights into governance, supporter engagement, and commercial partnerships, strengthening community trust, and long-term value.
- **For philanthropic partners and foundations** we offer a vehicle to advance systemic change at scale — strengthening accountability, participation, and protection across sport's global reach.
- **For civil society organisations, trade unions, athlete associations, and academic institutions**, we offer a platform to ensure that lived experience, independent expertise, and evidence inform solutions, strengthen access to remedy, and contribute to system-level reforms that address root causes.





Through the **Responsible Sport Council**, participating organisations and governments take part in collective leadership, structured collaboration, and shared learning with peers, experts, and affected groups, helping to shape norms, align standards, and advance responsible sport. Through our **Advisory Services**, partners work with us directly to strengthen governance, manage risk, and implement human rights commitments in practice. Both pathways reinforce our role and provide sustained investment in the independent, ecosystem-level infrastructure that is essential if responsible sport is to move from aspiration to reality. By partnering with and supporting CSHR, organisations contribute not only to their own resilience and credibility, but to a stronger, more accountable global sport system.

At the heart of responsible sport are people: athletes, workers, fans, communities, and journalists, and others whose rights and dignity must be protected. When people have voice and agency, they can participate freely, perform at their best, and help shape a culture of fairness and inclusion. When governance is coherent, standards are aligned, and institutions act with clarity and accountability, sport is better equipped to fulfil its promise.

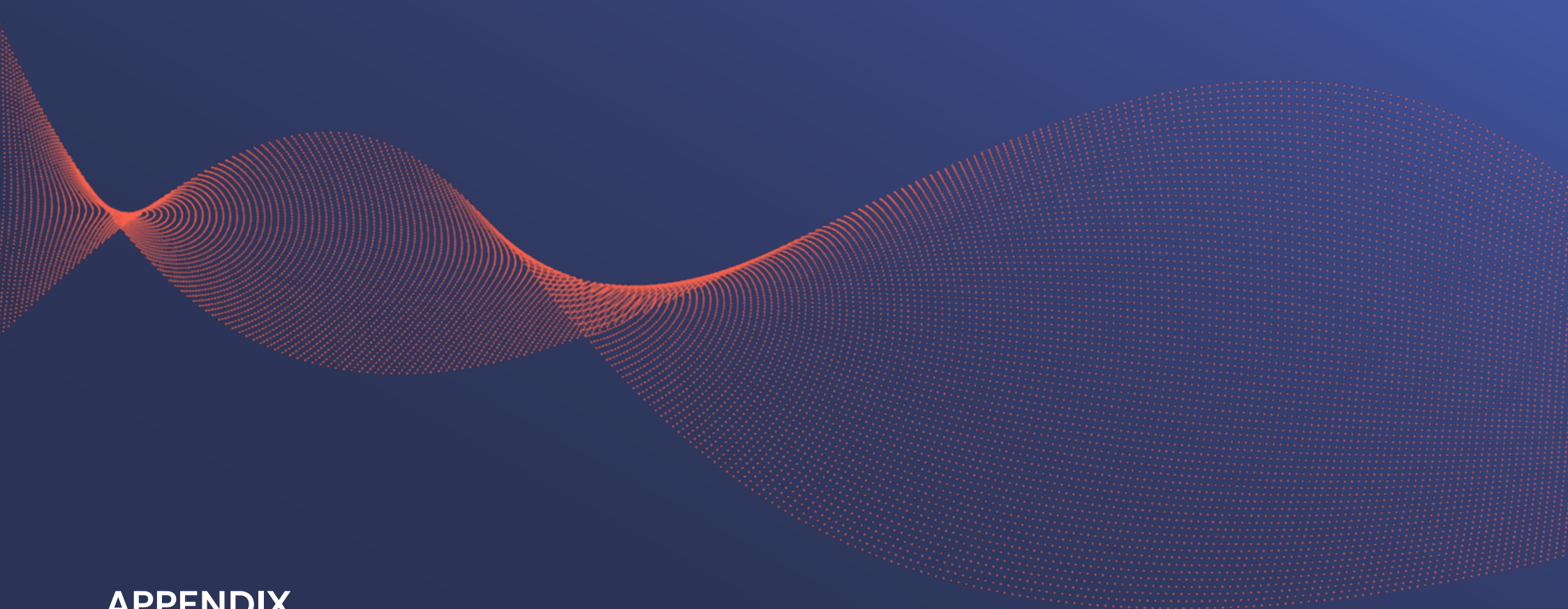
We invite partners who share this vision to work with us in building the conditions under which sport can protect people and earn lasting trust.



*"The Centre's unique structure elevates and centres the experience of survivors of human rights abuse so they and their partners can seek to end systemic abuse in sport. The Centre joins together human rights defenders, governments, sports bodies, corporate sponsors and UN agencies in a common quest to uphold human rights standards to protect athletes, fans, workers, volunteers, officials, communities and the media. We welcome this platform for urgent and necessary work to safeguard the rights of all people affected by sport."*

**Kenneth Roth,**  
Former Executive Director, Human Rights Watch





## APPENDIX SPORTING CHANCE PRINCIPLES

Sport relies on a rules-based system, fair play, respect and the courage, cohesion, support and goodwill of society in all its facets, including athletes, fans, workers, volunteers and local communities, as well as governments, businesses large and small, the media and sports bodies. The foundational principles of the world's preeminent sports bodies speak to universal humanitarian values, harmony among nations, solidarity and fair play, the preservation of human dignity, and commitment to non-discrimination. These values have much in common with international human rights instruments, principles and standards.

Recognising that there is a generation of work to be done to fully align the world of sport with the fundamental principles of human dignity, human rights, and labour rights; the Centre for Sport and Human Rights and its Responsible Sport Council are committed to working towards the fulfilment of these Sporting Chance Principles.



**1. Sport has inherent power to create positive change.** Sport can help promote human rights and sustainable development, and foster cooperation, solidarity, fairness, social inclusion, education and health at the local, regional and international levels. To realise this potential, it is essential that the protection of and respect for human rights are embedded within the governance and operations of sport, and that the policies, systems, and practices of all actors regularly evolve to reflect the continually developing human rights landscape. This should also be the starting point for engaging with critical issues such as integrity, equality, development, and fair play.

**2. Internationally recognised human rights apply.** The governance and delivery of sport should at all times be based on international human rights instruments, principles and standards, including those expressed in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the ILO Tripartite Declaration on Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as well as those that may apply to potentially vulnerable or marginalised groups such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**3. All actors involved in sport commit to internationally recognised human rights.** All actors involved in sport should commit to protecting and respecting internationally recognised human rights through their activities and business relationships. Harms that do occur should be addressed. All actors should strive to act responsibly, through their governance, through proper safeguarding, and through protecting/respecting the rights of all stakeholders including athletes, fans, communities, workers, children, volunteers, journalists, human rights defenders, and potentially marginalised groups.

**4. Human rights are taken into account at all times.** All actors involved in sport should identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address their impacts on human rights through a robust and ongoing process of human rights due diligence. This applies to any actor involved in the delivery of sporting events at each stage of their lifecycle from bidding, bid evaluation, planning, development, delivery, staging to legacy, as well as throughout the entire sport value chain.

**5. Affected groups have a voice in decision-making.** Principled and practical ways should be found to strengthen the voice of all those affected by sport, including athletes, fans, communities, workers, children, volunteers,

journalists, human rights defenders, and potentially marginalised groups, through meaningful and ongoing engagement. Special efforts should be made to engage with vulnerable and hard to reach groups, and address any discrimination or failure to protect, respect and uphold enabling rights.

**6. Access to remedy is available.** Effective remedy should be available to those whose human rights are negatively impacted by the activities or business relationships of the actors involved in sport, including during any stage of a mega-sporting event lifecycle. Governments, trade unions, national human rights institutions, OECD National Contact Points, corporate partners, civil society groups, and sports bodies should coordinate and collaborate on this issue.

**7. Lessons are captured and shared.** Lessons learned with regard to human rights successes and failures of the activities and business relationships of the actors involved in the governance and delivery of sport, including throughout a mega-sporting event lifecycle, should be captured, disclosed and shared in transparent ways to raise standards and improve practices in order to prevent a recurrence of adverse human rights impacts over time.

**8. Stakeholder human rights capacity is strengthened.** To address human rights risks and opportunities, governments, sports bodies, organising committees and other key stakeholders involved in the governance and delivery of sport should develop human rights knowledge and capacity, and seek expert advice as required.

**9. Collective action is harnessed to realise human rights.** To help all actors involved in sport continue to be a source of inspiration for decades to come, all stakeholders should forge collective solutions to address human rights challenges that are beyond the capacity of any single stakeholder to resolve. All actors should work collectively to coordinate, support, and develop alignment between the world of sport and international human rights instruments, principles, and standards.

**10. Bidding to host mega-sporting events is open to all.** All nations and localities should be able to bid to host mega-sporting events and bring these celebrations of human achievement to their people, provided that in doing so they demonstrate their commitment to meeting their responsibilities and obligations under relevant international human rights instruments, principles, and standards in relation to the event.

## ABOUT **THIS STRATEGY**

This document sets out the strategy for the Centre for Sport and Human Rights group, comprising Centre pour le Sport et les Droits de l'Homme (a Swiss Association domiciled at Rue Baylon 2bis, 1227 Carouge), its subsidiary Centre for Sport and Human Rights Limited (CSHR UK - a registered charity with the Company Number 11422595, Charity Number 1187647, and registered address at 19c Commercial Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3XE, UK) and its subsidiary Centre for Sport and Human Rights Trading Limited (CSHR Trading - Company Number 13509798, registered at the same address). The strategy offers a framework for implementing the objects and purposes expressed in the statutes and governing documents of CSHR's legal entities.

The lead author of this document is William Rook, CSHR's Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer, in collaboration with Mary Harvey (Chief Executive), Guido Battaglia (Head of Partnerships and Institutional Affairs),

Alison Biscoe (Head of Programme Development and Capacity Building), James Brown (Head of Operations and Governance) with support from Matt Stone (Head of Communications) and Claire Wilton Magras (Events and Engagement Manager) and input from across the team.

The strategy refresh process was overseen by a working group of CSHR's Board of Directors comprising Philip Jennings and Moira Thompson Oliver, with the full board consulted and updated regularly. The process began in 2024 under CSHR's previous board of directors, and continued through a transition and the onboarding of new directors in 2025. Three foundational documents were initially developed to orient the strategy: (i) Going the Distance; (ii) State of Play; and (iii) Meeting the Moment. More than 50 interviews were conducted and the full membership body of CSHR's Responsible Sport Council was surveyed. The strategy was approved by the board in February 2026 and published in May 2026.



Centre for Sport  
& Human Rights

[sporthumanrights.org](https://sporthumanrights.org)