

Milestones for diversity and anti-discrimination at FIFA

March 2016

1. Introduction

Racism and discrimination affect society at large, and football is no exception. Their impact on our sport is undeniable. FIFA recognises its responsibility to lead the way in abolishing all forms of discrimination in our game, but also to make the most of the influence football has beyond the pitch, thereby contributing to the fight against this scourge of society.

FIFA’s position on the issue is unequivocal: there is no place for racism or for any form of discrimination in football, as clearly described in the FIFA Statutes and several of FIFA’s regulations and codes. We are committed to fighting discrimination in football in all its forms.

Recent racist incidents in football stadiums have highlighted the need for immediate and concerted action. As a result, a Task Force was created in March 2013 with the aim of proposing concrete solutions for this pressing issue.

2. Strategic approach

In FIFA’s day-to-day operations, this preventive approach involves five key and intersecting elements that are crucial to embrace diversity and anti-discrimination in world football:



“Regulations” provides the legal basis for FIFA’s overall approach to diversity and anti-discrimination. This covers disciplinary matters, safety and security, employment policies and the position of a FIFA Diversity & Anti-Discrimination Manager.

“Controls and Sanctions” covers risk assessments, match observation, investigation of discriminatory incidents and possible sanctions, referees’ duties and the training of match officials.

“Communications” features all media information and PR on diversity and anti-discrimination issues, public awareness raising and campaigning.

“Education” means providing training for FIFA officials and FIFA staff, and providing an advisory framework for FIFA member associations.

“Networking and Cooperation” rounds off the approach by involving many areas of expertise and organisations such as member associations, confederations, and governmental and non-governmental organisations.

3. History – a selected timeline

1960: First resolution of the FIFA Congress on the issue of discrimination.

Following the policy of apartheid progressively implemented in South Africa, the FIFA Congress approves a resolution against discrimination for the first time.

1962: Article addressing discrimination in the FIFA Statutes.

A new paragraph is included in article 2 of the FIFA Statutes rejecting all forms of discrimination: “The objects of the Federations are [...] to prevent racial, religious or political discrimination or distinction among players whether their status be amateur, non-amateur or professional.”

2001: FIFA Conference and Extraordinary Congress against Racism in Buenos Aires.

The next day, the Extraordinary FIFA Congress ratifies the conference’s resolution to fight racism and discrimination.

2002: FIFA Disciplinary Code.

The newly created FIFA Disciplinary Code includes an article providing for strong sanctions against any acts of racism.

2002: Start of the annual FIFA Anti-Discrimination Days held at FIFA competitions.

2004: Creation of the Code of Ethics.

The FIFA Executive Committee approved a Code of Ethics that prohibits any form of discrimination among the football community.

4. Recent achievements

March 2013: Creation of the FIFA Task Force Against Racism and Discrimination.

The task force includes different stakeholders from the football community as well as a broad panel of experts in the fight against racism and discrimination. FIFA starts on the implementation of the task force’s recommendations.

May 2013: Resolution of the 63rd FIFA Congress on the fight against racism and discrimination.

Sep 2013: The the FIFA Task Force Against Racism and Discrimination identifies the following matters as key priorities:

- Allocation of specific resources for the fight against racism and discrimination
- Development of an anti-discrimination handbook to be given to all member associations for best practice and training
- Recruitment and training of anti-discrimination officers
- Identification of high-risk games
- Identification and engagement of anti-discrimination ambassadors
- Proposal of special award for achievements in the area of anti-discrimination

March 2015: First FIFA Women’s Football and Leadership Conference.

At the Home of FIFA in Zurich, FIFA celebrates International Women’s Day and signs the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration on Women and Sport to promote women in leadership.

May 2015: Introduction of the FIFA Anti-Discrimination Monitoring System.

The new monitoring system will assess more than 850 high-risk matches for potential discriminatory incidents during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ preliminary competition and selected friendly matches. It operates through the provision of evidence by the FIFA Anti-Discrimination Match Observers, special match reports and disciplinary procedures. Central to this project is FIFA’s close cooperation with the Fare network.

June 2015: Start of the FIFA Female Leadership Development Programmes.

July 2015: Launch of the FIFA Sustainability Strategy for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™.

The strategy forms the basis for a practical sustainability action plan which includes several actions on diversity and anti-discrimination.

October 2015: Publication of the FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination.

The Good Practice Guide offers an overall concept and outlines practical tools on how to foster diversity and anti-discrimination within and among FIFA’s member associations. It addresses the associations’ specific responsibilities and provides recommendations on how to build a network with partners inside and outside football.

March 2016: Second FIFA Women’s Football and Leadership Conference held on the theme “equality through reform”.

July 2016: Launch of the FIFA Diversity Award.

The jury (*11 for Diversity*), including different stakeholders of the football community as well as experts from governmental and non-governmental organisations, will decide annually on the winner of this award.

December 2016: 15th edition of the FIFA Anti-Discrimination Days at the semi-finals of FIFA Club World Cup 2016.

5. Conclusion

FIFA recognises and embraces its responsibility to lead the way in the global fight against discrimination in football. While this fight also relies on the implementation of measures by FIFA member associations at the national and local level, FIFA is striving to provide the appropriate framework for the eradication of discrimination throughout the football community. At every opportunity, we must send a clear message that discrimination will not be tolerated in any form. Discrimination is incompatible with the very essence of sport and the universal values inherent to it.