

## FIFA Congress Speeches for President Blatter

Ladies and gentlemen.

I want to talk to you today about **where we stand** and **where we are heading**.

**What we have achieved and what we must now achieve.**

What football and FIFA must try to be in the future.

This is our 64<sup>th</sup> Congress. That in itself is some achievement.

It shows the lasting power of football and it reminds us of how far we have come.

Our agenda today shows the range of our mission and the changing nature of football.

The job of managing international football and steering it on the right path is becoming more complex and more challenging.

**There is much to be proud of**, but we must now push on and take football into a new era.

Congress, it is because of your devotion and hard work that **football is a success story**.

And it is our shared success story.

Since 1904, FIFA and its member associations have dedicated every day to the game.

We carry on in the spirit of those original seven pioneers.

Sowing the seeds for **football everywhere, for the good of all** - not just the few.

**Today, we are stronger than ever.**

Our reach is greater than ever. We are a truly global community.

209 member associations, **300 million active participants – 1.2 billion people in all**, and growing...

And we all know what we can achieve together.

Even if we do not always agree on everything.

Because 209 nations and six confederations must have their own views.

Congress is the right place to share these different views and to agree a way forward.

We are one when it comes to our belief in football and what we can do through football.

And we must have a **shared vision of where football goes next.**

- **Strong leadership and strong decision makers.**
- **A strong FIFA.**
- **A strong Executive Committee.**
- **And a strong Congress.**

**Here we are in Brazil.**

**Bringing the FIFA World Cup back to one of football's true spiritual homes.**

A nation overflowing with a love of football. A style of playing that everyone loves.

And a shining example of the way football brings all people together.

**The World Cup is growing and becoming more successful.**

And so is football. And it won't stop.

There is so much untapped potential in all the footballing nations of the world.

And **women's football offers huge opportunities for growth.**

**Grassroots, youth football, futsal, beach soccer...** Everyone wants to play!

There is **more commercial interest, more media interest, more political interest.**

**With success** and that higher profile **comes pressure. And responsibility.**

As this great game grows, we must manage this success in the right way.

We must be aware that the business of football affects lives in so many different ways.

That staging a football tournament has an impact beyond the game.

That a competition as big as the FIFA World Cup can now be a platform for change.

And an opportunity for national and international debate.

Even though we would like football to always be independent of politics, **we must also recognise that football also has a political dimension.**

Everything is inter-connected. Every action has a consequence.

And we must have the **strength and courage to manage all this in the right way.**

- To defend football's integrity and popularity.
- To support those fighting for a better, fairer society.
- To support the right to peaceful protest and freedom of speech.

Because football is all about freedom, equality and respect.

And people have a right to want a more equal, better world for their children to grow up in.

**Football should be a force for positive change in the world**, not an obstacle to it.

And so should FIFA.

**Congress, how do we do this?**

**The answer is simple.**

- **We must lead by example and we must listen to all voices.**
- **We must be responsible and upright in all that we do.**
- **We must do the right thing even if that comes at a cost.**

Because that is our duty. It is what the world expects. If we do not, who will?

We all have that choice in life. To go one way or another.

To seek to be a selfless force for good. Or to take the easy road of self-interest.

**Large institutions must set the right example because we shape society.**

We make decisions that impact lives.

We cannot expect others to act in the right way if powerful organisations like FIFA do not.

**My vision for FIFA in this changing world is this:**

**We must become one of today's pioneers of hope – just like those seven original pioneers who started everything for us.**

We must **carry that flame of honesty, responsibility and respect.**

If we do not, we will betray the true spirit of this game we all love.

- **The simple spirit of fair play.**
- **The simple spirit of solidarity.**
- **And the simple spirit of integrity.**

It is that spirit that has made football the people's game, from the street to the palace.

And it is that spirit that gives football the power to be a force for good.

Thanks to those visionaries in 1904, and to you, football is the most popular sport on earth.

It is an incredible reality. It is because of your belief and vision that we can keep moving forward. You give us the platform to invest in football across the world.

**To turn the commercial success of the FIFA World Cup into concrete support for football everywhere, from the grassroots up.**

Few sports have this opportunity. Few organisations do what we do.

And that is what makes FIFA special. We don't seek to make a profit, just for the sake of it.

We want to **raise funds because we know there is a need for it.**

**We can never spend too much on investing in football** for all, everywhere.

Striving to improve the lives of others, creating opportunities and a healthier world through football.

FIFA redistributes **more than half a million dollars every day into developing football** in our 209 member associations.

**Two billion dollars** invested in football development **since 1998**.

And we are set to do more. **I want us to do more. This is my mission.**

Developing the game from Somalia to the Solomon Islands.

Since 1998, we have given financial support for all our members every year through the Financial Assistance Programme.

**Levelling the playing field between football nations** from the Netherlands to Nepal. **Since 1999, more than 600 Goal projects** across the world.

Giving extra help to those who need it so that everyone can realise their potential.

**PERFORMANCE** programmes, **Grassroots** projects to get children playing, **Live Your Goals** to encourage more girls and women into football.

**A programme for less privileged nations.**

This is the true work of FIFA.

And we have taken our **tournaments all over the world** to keep football growing.

Not just Europe, not just South America, but new places where football is just as popular and has just as much potential.

All this we do together.

Creating jobs, developing skills, and **bringing enjoyment, good health and hope**.

And our **Football for Hope** programme has shown we are committed to improving society.

**More than 425 programmes in more than 75 nations.**

Support for 25 projects here in Brazil as part of the FIFA World Cup legacy.

Working through football to give young people a chance.

We are also showing the world that we care about the environment.

**Protecting this beautiful planet for future generations with our Football for the Planet programmes.**

We are working hard to make the World Cup more sustainable.

We offset the carbon emissions from all of our flights and FIFA's activities at the World Cup.

Reducing the negative impact of the competition and maximising its positive impact.

Football also has a big role to play in **promoting healthier behaviour and a healthier world.**

Our **Football for Health** programme has been doing just that.

And one of our key legacies for this World Cup in Brazil will be to invest in health education for 11-12 year old school children in cities across the nation.

Teaching those children that if they want to be like their heroes – Neymar, Oscar or Hulk – they have to put their health first.

We are also dedicated to **protecting the health of our players.**

**Reducing injuries**, helping in rehabilitation, promoting good practice, **tackling doping.**

FIFA has led the way in providing **help to treat sudden cardiac arrest.**

**The health of our players** – and our children – **must come first.**

And we are taking our **duty to society** seriously.

**Football can influence and inspire a change in behaviour.** So can FIFA. And so can you.

**If we stand united against all forms of racism and discrimination, we will defeat it.**

**We must impose the toughest punishments to send a clear message.**

**We should be docking points, expelling teams or relegating them.**

We have the power to do this. So let us show the world we mean what we say.

That we are not just saying the right things, but doing the right things.

We have **partnered with the Nobel Peace Centre** to work towards a more peaceful world.

The **Handshake for Peace** will feature at all FIFA World Cup matches, bringing players and match officials together to send a signal of solidarity across the world.

**That gesture – a celebration of humanity** – will show everyone that respect and fair play must prevail, regardless of a result.

If we want people to respect each other in society, we must lead by example through football.

Without integrity on the pitch and throughout the game, football will never prosper.

That is why **we are fighting the threat of match manipulation**. We know the damage it does.

**So we are educating players to recognise, resist and report any kind of approach from fixers.**

We won't tolerate any kind of match manipulation because football must be fair.

And as we recognise and tackle new threats to the game, so we must also keep improving the administration of the game.

Our reform process has put FIFA on steady ground for the future.

But we must not be complacent. We must all embrace these new rules across the world.

**And we must also embrace new ideas to improve the game, such as goal line technology.**

Innovating at the heart of football to stay one step ahead. This is my aim.

Friends, this is a critical time for FIFA and for football.

The world is becoming more complex and more challenging.

And those challenges are only set to grow.

**To prosper, football needs a stable, steady leadership to guide the way.**

**Supported by a dynamic, responsible and ambitious Congress.**

I am an optimist. **In these challenges, I also see an abundance of opportunities.**

**Opportunities to improve the game and to improve the world around us.**

- A FIFA that sets an example to others.
- A FIFA that brings people together and builds bridges – just like the game we all love.
- A FIFA that works for the good of others through football.

We must **protect that spirit of those original seven pioneers who set us on our way in 1904** and whose work is celebrated in **our inspirational new film on the history of FIFA *United Passions*.**

And we must protect the spirit of football so that always remains the people's game.

And **we** at FIFA **have a duty to society that goes beyond the game.**

**FIFA must stand firmly on the side of positive change to do what we can to make the world a better place for all.**

**We have that power. Football has that power. A duty to serve. And a duty to do what is right.**

Congress, let us seek to do this today in the decisions we make.

Leading football forward in the right way and for the right reasons.

**We have reason to be proud, but the hard work lies ahead.**

**The next episode for the world's beautiful game awaits.**



**Let us write it together.**

**For the Game. For the World.**