

FIFA[®]

UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Address by FIFA President Gianni
Infantino



Dear executive director, dear Mrs Waly, dear excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to be invited to address you as the President of FIFA, a proud ally of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

We are truly thankful for the partnership that we established with the UNODC last year to tackle some of the toughest issues facing our sport, including child safeguarding, protecting sporting integrity and preventing crime.

Football is the world's most popular sport.
This makes it a very attractive target for many types of crime.

First and foremost, many of you will no doubt have heard back in 2015 of the corruption scandal that brought down the previous administration of FIFA.

Today, FIFA, the new FIFA, is a solid institution that leads the way in terms of good governance in sports.

FIFA's commitment to good governance is rock solid, and we have a robust system of checks and balances in place, not just for individuals, but also for institutions.

Through the FIFA Forward Programme, we provide each of our 211 member associations worldwide with up to five times more investment than they received before 2016.

But the key difference is that each and every dollar of this investment is tied to specific contracts, and external independent audits in each and every country.

Every dollar is budgeted for and accounted for.

The new FIFA leaves no room for wrongdoing.

During the pandemic, we have again put this into practice with the FIFA COVID-19 Relief Plan, an unprecedented 1.5 billion dollar fund to support football through difficult times. Headed by Olli Rehn, who is a member of the Governing Council of the European Central Bank and a former Vice-President of the European Commission, the FIFA COVID-19 Relief Plan Steering Committee has been overseeing the operation of the plan, launched for the benefit of FIFA's 211 member associations and the six confederations all over the world.

In football's hour of need, funding only goes where it is needed.

Globally, football accounts for around 50% of all sports betting.

At the same time, FIFA monitors around 36,000 football matches per year, of which 0.4%, or around 150 matches, raise suspicions of manipulation. And that is still too many.

And with the financial strains of the recent pandemic, we will have to remain even more vigilant than ever to ensure that those involved in matches are not susceptible to match-fixing.

A very, very severe and incredibly sad aspect of sport, and society, is the increasing number of cases of abuse that have come to light in recent years.

Sports organisations need to have preventive safeguarding measures in place as well as appropriate means to respond to concerns or allegations.

This includes reporting lines, disciplinary, grievance and dispute resolution mechanisms as well as working with the authorities.

The successful prevention and eradication of abuse in sport rests on leadership by the major international and national sport organisations to implement comprehensive safeguarding programmes.

And also the international transfer system has been in great need of reform for many years.

The international player market is worth many billions of dollars.

Meanwhile, commissions paid to football agents have more than doubled since the deregulation of the market back in 2015.

In an unregulated market driven by speculation and not solidarity, the money is flowing away from football.

And an inflated market is contributing to increasing competitive imbalance.

These are all areas that pose a threat to the integrity of our sport.

Thoroughly changing a culture requires real in-depth reform. This is what we do.

The new FIFA started in 2016 with a set of robust, wide-ranging reforms, and I would like to provide a few examples:

- Eligibility checks for everyone, no exceptions
- Limits on terms of office
- Transparent, bulletproof bidding processes for global mega-events like the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup
- A tight control of cashflows according to International Financial Reporting Standards
- Human rights are front and centre of the FIFA Statutes and form a key consideration of competition bidding requirements
- Good governance has been brought into the everyday business of the whole global football pyramid, through compulsory independent audits for all FIFA members.

More than this, we have seen the clear need, not just to protect football and its institutions, but also the very people that practise the sport.

The FIFA Guardians Programme was set up with UNICEF, the Council of Europe and Safe Sport International. It provides a toolkit and, recently, a globally recognised diploma to professionalise the role of the safeguarding officers within FIFA's 211 member associations. The objective is to help prevent any risk of harm to children and those most vulnerable, and to respond appropriately if concerns arise.

And, through our partnership with the UNODC, we are currently discussing to potentially establish an independent, multi-sports, multi-government and multi-agency "international centre for safe sports" to help manage cases of abuse of children in sport.

In the face of one of the most serious crimes in society, we are all on the same side and we must work together to fight it.

Also working with the UNODC, we have developed the FIFA Global Integrity Programme, an initiative to provide education on match manipulation and the measures to tackle it.

The first edition will be launched later this month among FIFA's Asian member associations and all others will follow shortly thereafter.

We have taken major steps in reforming the transfer system.

Specifically it will make sure that the money paid by the new club is correctly distributed to the training clubs in compliance with national and international financial regulations, including applicable Anti-Money Laundering laws.

In 2018, we undertook a major revision of FIFA's codes of conduct and ethics, as well as establishing reporting tools.

By substantially enhancing the requirements for ethical conduct and transparency, the independent Ethics Committee, for example, can now investigate any official involved in bids to host the FIFA World Cup.

For further transparency, since 2019 we publish the decisions, including the reasoning behind them, of all FIFA's judicial bodies on FIFA.com for everyone to see.

And we recently published reports on the activities of the two main independent judicial bodies, the Disciplinary and Ethics Committees.

We can only encourage transparency if we lead by example.

And, finally, recognising the natural limits of our experience and expertise, we are forming global alliances with international and regional organisations to fight malpractices and help bring about positive social change.

Since 2018, we have entered into collaboration agreements with such globally recognised authorities as the UNODC, the World Health Organization, UN Women, UNESCO, the World Food Programme, the Council of Europe, the African Union, and ASEAN.

The common elements to these agreements include good governance, the protection of the integrity of sport, and the safeguarding of children.

In a global environment, we are only as strong as our networks.

It is as important as ever that we continue to forge alliances and mutually share vital information to ensure that every area of our sport is safe from harm.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you all today in this digital format, and I wish you a productive and successful Congress. You can count on the new FIFA.