CHILDREN WIN CHANGING THE GAME OF MEGA SPORTING EVENTS

Terre des Hommes International Federation

PRESS RELEASE

FIFA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ANSWER ON HUMAN RIGHTS

ONLY ONE CANDIDATE MAKES FIRM PLEDGE TO TACKLE HUMAN RIGHTS AND CORRUPTION IN WORLD FOOTBALL

(Berlin, 14 May 2015) In response to a survey from a coalition of leading NGOs, sports organisations and trade unions, only one of the four candidates for the FIFA presidency has set out a plan to address human rights, labour rights and corruption issues if successful in their bid for the top job at world football's governing body.

The Sport and Rights Alliance (SRA) sent a questionnaire to the candidates - Sepp Blatter, Luis Figo, Prince Ali bin Al Hussein and Michael van Praag - last month. It asked specific questions about abuses linked to the 2018 World Cup in Russia and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, and about the FIFA reform process. The FIFA presidential election takes place on 29 May in Zurich.

All four candidates responded to the survey, the first time they have been asked to answer for human rights and transparency crises around World Cups and in FIFA's wider work. Only Michael van Praag made a detailed, personal pledge to address the issues raised by the SRA.

Luis Figo issued a brief statement expressing the need for a zero tolerance approach to human rights abuses, corruption and labour issues, but gave few details of how he would address these problems.

Despite numerous allegations of corruption and controversies over human rights concerns during his 17 years at the helm, current FIFA President Sepp Blatter made no personal commitment to addressing the issues. Instead, his office issued a statement outlining the work FIFA has done to tackle corruption, and pointed to a revision of the bidding process relating to human rights, labour standards, sustainability and anti-corruption measures.

The office of current FIFA Vice President Prince Ali bin Al Hussein replied saying he was too busy to respond, and referred the Alliance to his manifesto and previous statements.

Meanwhile in a separate development, FIFA says it is working on new bidding criteria for the FIFA World Cup 2026, although no details are publicly available yet.

Ignacio Packer, Secretary General of **Terre des Hommes** which is a member of the SRA, said:

"By responding to the questionnaire, all candidates have shown that the next FIFA President can no longer ignore the human rights impact of the FIFA World Cup, including lack of proper health care

and education for children due to forced evictions, police violence and arrest of street children and increased risk of sexual exploitation. It is time FIFA aligns its practice to its ideals and does well, while doing good. We offer our expertise to the president to be elected in framing the future of FIFA from a human rights perspective.Terre des Hommes supports these endeavours by offering its child rights expertise and determination for change on behalf of children everywhere."

RESPONSES

Sepp Blatter

The statement from Sepp Blatter's office said that as part of the reform process that began in 2011, the decision on the awarding of the FIFA World Cup will be taken by the congress now, while age and term limits have been discussed but not approved by the congress.

Luis Figo

Luis Figo said his manifesto contains several proposals to "reform FIFA, including term limits, independent directors, integrity checks and transparency not only with regard to the remuneration of officials but also on several other aspects of FIFA governance".

He said:

"Corruption, labour issues and other human rights are matters with which we should have zero tolerance to infringements. Human rights are not negotiable and they should be respected not only in sports but in all organisations and sectors of our society.
I'll ask for detailed reports on the current FIFA events and will act accordingly.We'll prepare bidding processes also having in consideration civil society stakeholders."

Prince Ali bin Al Hussein

Prince Ali bin Al Hussein's office directed the SRA to answers he gave to the Associated Press recently on labour rights in Qatar, as part of their recent questionnaire to candidates.

He told the AP that football's governing body should introduce new safety standards to prevent "tragic incidents occurring during stadium construction and ensuring labour rights and fair working conditions." He also committed to propose "clear guidelines that all host nations of FIFA events must adopt - ensuring the safety and security of every worker employed to deliver FIFA's football projects." He told the AP that there was evidence that progress was being made in Qatar on workers' rights.

Michael van Praag

Michael van Praag said if elected he would only serve one term, he would publish his remuneration and all of FIFA's spending, publish and explain decisions after every Executive Committee meeting and make public the Garcia report into corruption in world association football, which FIFA refused to publish last year.

On human rights, he said future World Cup bid regulations should include a specific human rights section.

He said:

"In general there should be more attention to human rights in FIFA's statutes. I stand for a world football association that applies the highest ethical and moral standards. This means that FIFA itself must set a good example and ensure that these standards play a key role in awarding large tournaments. It should be clear that violation of human rights - whether it concerns labour rights or any other type of violation - will not be tolerated. All World Cup related contracts should include a clause that allows for FIFA to pull out of an agreement with a country (or other organisation) that doesn't apply the same high standards, thus sending a strong message that such things can't be tolerated."

On labour rights in Qatar, he said:

"As for the Qatar situation, it is my understanding that certain measures have been taken to ensure uniformly fair working conditions. As a candidate I cannot fully assess the workings of these measures. Being FIFA president would open doors to follow and judge what happens in every country hosting a large tournament very closely and act accordingly. The fact of the matter is, that the choice for Qatar has been a democratic decision, and is therefore definite. We'll have to prepare ourselves to play in this World Cup. The best we can do, is to make sure this World Cup is organised well and, together with the Local Organisation Committee, do what we can to make sure the conditions are as good as possible."

Background

The SRA questionnaire was sent to the four candidates on 16 April 2015.

They were asked specifically whether in the first 100 days of their presidency they would address corruption, labour issues and other human rights concerns around the Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022 World Cups.

They were also asked if they would use their influence as president to exert pressure on the Qatari authorities to bring the country's labour laws into line with international standards and reform the *kafala* sponsorship system, which effectively ties migrant workers to their company and prevents them from leaving the country without express permission from their employer.

The questionnaire pressed them on whether they would continue with the much-needed FIFA reform process, including the implementation of term limits, independent directors, integrity checks and transparency regarding remuneration of officials and decisions of the Ethics Commission.

FIFA has come under fire in the last few years over human rights abuses linked to the World Cup.

The run up to Brazil 2014 was marred by police violence against anti-World Cup protestors and forced evictions to make way for infrastructure for the event.

Russia's appalling record on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, environmental protection and freedom of expression, exposed during the Sochi Winter Olympics last year, remains a serious concern ahead of the 2018 World Cup.

Meanwhile, stadiums and infrastructure for the staging of the Qatar 2022 World Cup are being built in a context where serious abuses of migrant workers' rights are routine and widespread, including deaths at work, non-payment of wages, harsh and dangerous working conditions and shocking standards of accommodation.

Furthermore, the awarding of the World Cups 2018 and 2022 and other decisions have raised serious corruption allegations and further damaged FIFA's reputation.

The SRA is calling on whoever becomes the next FIFA president to urgently introduce measures to ensure the World Cup is always organised in a way that respects human rights, the environment and anti-corruption requirements at all stages of the process - from bidding, through to the development and delivery phase to final reporting.

The SRA includes Amnesty International, Football Supporters Europe, Human Rights Watch, International Trade Union Confederation, Terre des Hommes, Transparency International Germany

ENDS

Full responses available on request

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Dr. Marianne Meier
Head of Project 'Children Win'
marianne.meier(at)terredeshommes.org
+41 78 664 77 57

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The "**Children Win**" Campaign sets out the changes we all need for Mega Sporting Events to be safe and fair for children. The campaign doesn't speak for children — it amplifies their voices.
We encourage leaders of the sport industry , business, media, and the broad public to meet the chil dren we spoke to along the way on www.childrenwin.org. Let them tell you how Mega Sporting Events affected their lives.