



A Plan of Action to Counter Hate Speech
Through Engagement with Sport:

The Game Plan



ERADICATESM
HATE
SPORTS WORKING GROUP



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON
GENOCIDE PREVENTION AND THE
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

DECEMBER 2022



Mission Statement

The goal of the **United Nations/Eradicate Hate Global Summit Working Group** is to marshal the unifying principles and influence of sport to counter hate speech, while advocating for respect, inclusion, and hate-free communities. The Working Group will develop a Game Plan of resources and practices that fans, players, teams, leagues, governing bodies, and their business and corporate partners can deploy to counter hate speech in every aspect of their operations and their communities, ultimately cultivating the broadest possible participation from sports of every kind around the world in this highly visible global initiative.

Uniting the global convening power of the United Nations and the urgent call to action of the Summit with the practical expertise of the Working Group members, the UN-Summit Working Group will deploy the powerful voices of sport to foster acceptance and mutual respect and counter hate speech around the world.

Eradicate Hate Global Summit

On October 27, 2018, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania witnessed the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in United States history when a heavily armed gunman, who earlier had posted anti-Semitic and anti-refugee messages online, entered the Tree of Life synagogue at the start of Saturday Shabbat services. The gunman began shooting, and within minutes, 11 worshipers from three different congregations were dead. Others, including law enforcement officers who responded to the call for help, were seriously wounded. The carnage was so profound that the interior of the synagogue was said to resemble a battlefield.

The Eradicate Hate Global Summit was founded by Pittsburgh community leaders to drive cross-border and cross-discipline solutions that would help protect other communities from the kind of hate that was experienced on 10/27, and to ensure that Pittsburgh was remembered more for its global leadership against hate than for the terrible act of hate that had happened in its midst. The annual Summit brings together hundreds of the top global experts from around the world and, between Summits, curates working groups designed to deliver actionable solutions to the intractable problem of hate and the violence it begets. The progress of these Working Groups is reported at the annual Summit gatherings.

In 2021, the Summit held its first in-person gathering, and one of its esteemed keynote speakers was Alice Wairimu Nderitu, the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. Following the Summit, the Special Adviser reached out to Summit leadership to propose that the United Nations and the Summit team together to craft a Plan of Action for Sports Organizations and Fans to Reduce Hate Speech (the “Game Plan”), based on the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech.

In response to Special Adviser Nderitu’s request, the Summit created the UN-Summit Sport Working Group (“Working Group”). The Working Group is Co-Chaired by Special Adviser Nderitu; Michele Rosenthal, a member of the Summit Executive Committee and former head of community affairs for the Pittsburgh Steelers, whose two brothers, David and Cecil Rosenthal, were killed in the Pittsburgh Tree of Life attack; and by Laura Ellsworth, Co-Chair of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit and the Global Partner-in-Charge of Community Initiatives for Jones Day, one of the largest law firms in the world.

The current members of the Working Group are identified on Exhibit 1, and additional members are anticipated to be joining shortly.



Rationale

The UN-Summit Working Group are exploring and presenting new ways for sports teams, leagues, players and fans to recognize and effectively counter hate speech. Sports teams and events enjoy enormous global reach, and many individual players are beloved worldwide. This built-in receptive audience is the key to widely disseminating critical anti-hate information, and to fostering an environment in which spectators, players, and organizations work in partnership to stop hateful and dangerous rhetoric.

Process

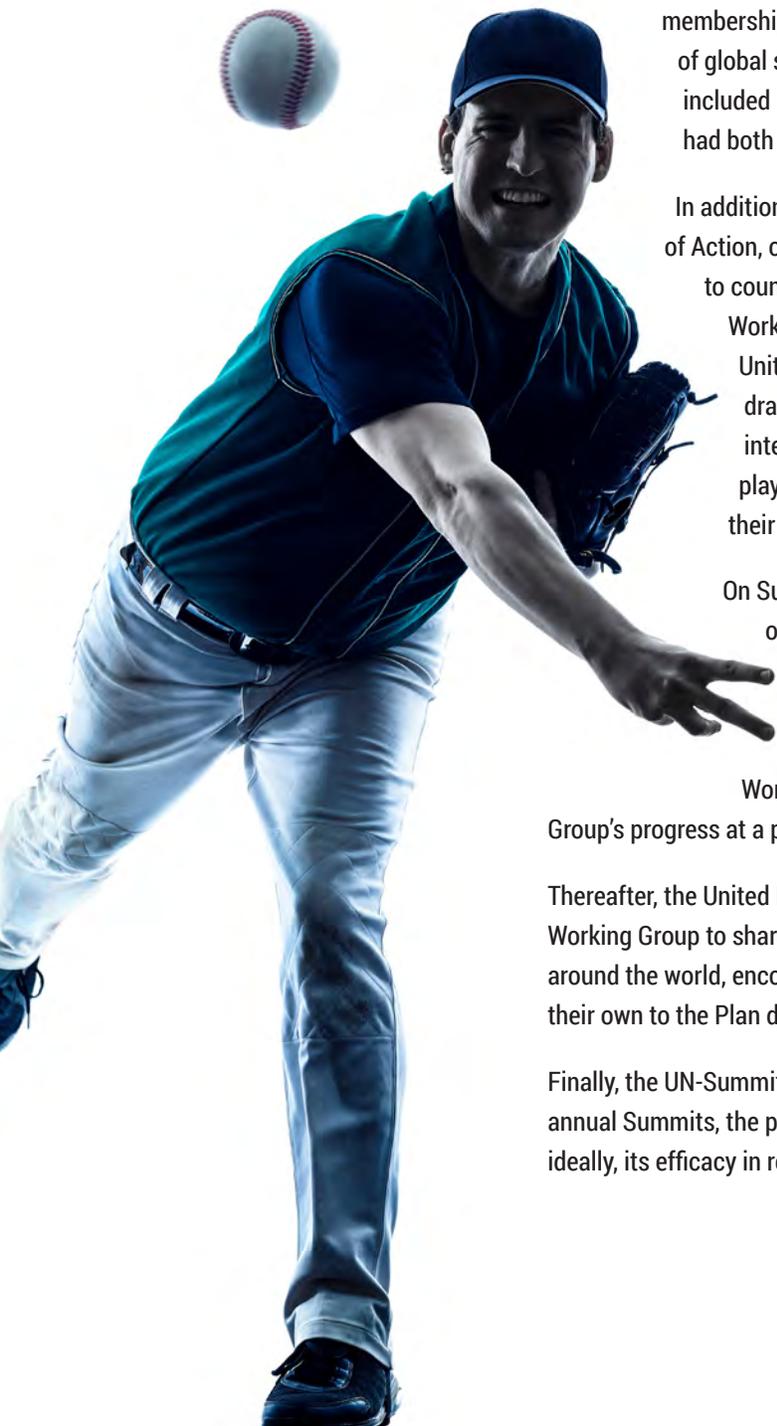
Beginning in May of 2022, the Working Group leadership began building out the membership of the Working Group, to create a highly diverse representation of global sport. Recruitment focused primarily at the league level but also included individual teams from the cities of Pittsburgh and Buffalo, which had both experienced terrible acts of hate-driven violence.

In addition, the Working Group began crafting a “working draft” of a Plan of Action, or Game Plan, for sports teams, leagues, players and fans to use to counter hate speech in their respective domains. As a first step, the Working Group gathered existing “best practices,” starting first in the United States and then expanding across the globe. This “working draft” is a living document, which continues to evolve and is ultimately intended to provide a “menu” of ideas from which leagues, teams, players, fans and related entities can select those that work best for their organization and community.

On Sunday, September 18, 2022, the day before the commencement of the 2022 Eradicate Hate Global Summit, the Working Group convened in person in Pittsburgh to continue to build and refine the Plan of Action document, with the goal of presenting its work at the United Nations on December 9, 2022. Members of the Working Group also presented on the work and status of the Working Group’s progress at a plenary session of the Summit on Monday, September 19, 2022.

Thereafter, the United Nations will use its convening power and work jointly with the Working Group to share the draft with other members of the global sport community around the world, encouraging participants to adopt the concepts and add new ideas of their own to the Plan document.

Finally, the UN-Summit Working Group will develop a process to report, at sequential annual Summits, the progress and real-world implementation of the Plan of Action and, ideally, its efficacy in reducing and preventing hate speech.



The United Nations

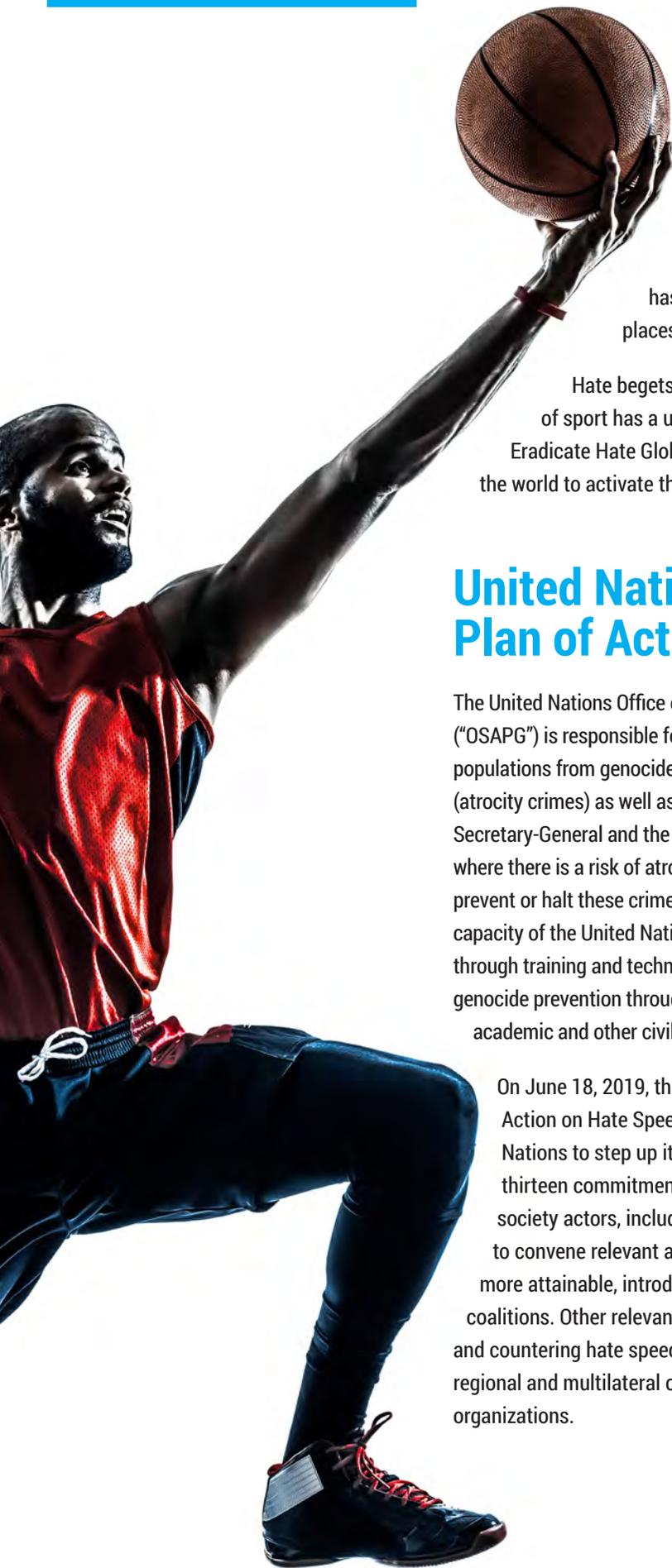
The United Nations has recognized that “Sports ... and physical activity have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours, as well as to inspire people, break down racial and political barriers, combat discrimination and defuse conflict.”¹ Sport has been a great tool for positive messages promoting social inclusion and cohesion, strengthening understanding and tolerance, and reducing stereotypes by connecting people through a common experience and goal. In fact, sport is universally recognized as a way to promote diversity, respect, dignity, and other values that support positive relationships between people, regardless of faith, race, socioeconomic status, or culture. Beyond its capacity to unite people at local, national, and global levels, sport is increasingly used as a vehicle to empower youth and women, improve wellbeing and health, support education and social development objectives, and strengthen the resilience of individuals and communities.²

People around the world cheer on their favorite athletes with incredible fervor. That fan loyalty and dedication imbues sports teams and athletes with a unique ability to shape viewpoints and to serve as global exemplars of the power of embracing diversity to counter hate speech. At a more basic community level, young people across the world engage in organized youth sports and less formal recreational sports, often imitating their favorite professional athlete or team. Around the globe, the power of sport can play a powerful role to counter hate speech, a cause that has never been more important.

Nearly every week, we are reminded that unchallenged hate speech can lead to unimaginable violence. These are not “just words;” this hateful rhetoric has the terrible potential to spark violence on the ground. A recent study by the Council on Foreign Relations found a connection between hate speech and “a global increase in violence toward minorities, including mass shootings, lynchings, and ethnic cleansing.”³

Hate speech is rampant globally. It is aimed at various times and places and at groups based on a limitless set of characteristics including religion, race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation and expression, and socioeconomic status. Hateful rhetoric is infecting our communities at an alarming rate.





Hate speech is a dangerous flame that can set a tense situation ablaze. When it explodes, it can lead to violence and untold physical and psychological pain, as we have seen it do in places as far apart as the United States, Norway, Nigeria, Kenya, India and New Zealand. As the United Nations has recognized, hate speech can – and has – led to genocide in places around the world.

Hate begets hate – unless there is a concerted effort to stop it. The world of sport has a unique and powerful global voice, and the United Nations and the Eradicate Hate Global Summit have teamed up with sports organizations around the world to activate that voice to speak out against hate speech around the globe.

United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech

The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (“OSAPG”) is responsible for advancing national, regional, and international efforts to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing (atrocity crimes) as well as their incitement. The Office alerts relevant actors, including the Secretary-General and the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, to situations where there is a risk of atrocity crimes and mobilizes the international community to prevent or halt these crimes; it works to enhance prevention, early warning and response capacity of the United Nations, Member States, regional organizations and civil society through training and technical assistance; and supports the normative development of the genocide prevention through further conceptual refinement, research, and collaboration with academic and other civil society actors.

On June 18, 2019, the UN Secretary-General launched the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. This document represents the commitment of the United Nations to step up its action to address this global challenge. Three out of the thirteen commitments set out in the strategy stress the importance of engaging civil society actors, including nonprofit sport organizations. They include commitments to convene relevant actors and reframe problems in ways that make solutions more attainable, introducing independent mediation and expertise and building coalitions. Other relevant commitments include using education as a tool for addressing and countering hate speech and leveraging partnerships with relevant stakeholders, regional and multilateral organizations as well as civil society actors such as nonprofit organizations.

On June 18, 2022, the United Nations observed the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, established by General Assembly resolution 73/509. At that time, the Secretary General observed that “we all have the moral duty of speaking out firmly against instances of hate speech and play a crucial role in countering this scourge.” In recognition of that obligation, the UN launched a new Plan of Action, this time focused on sports teams, leagues, and fans. The potential for sport to “promote peace, tolerance and understanding by bringing people together across boundaries, cultures and religions” cannot be overstated.⁴ OSAPG is the UN Focal Point of the implementation of this strategy.

Definitions of Hate Speech

International human rights frameworks distinguish among three categories of hate speech, depending on the severity of harm:

- The first relates to hate speech that States must prohibit; this includes hate speech that amounts to incitement to genocide as well as advocacy of hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence, as per Article 20 paragraph 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
- The second category relates to hate speech that States may prohibit under specific grounds under Article 19 paragraph 3 of the ICCPR.
- The third category is hate speech that, although problematic for social cohesion and inclusion, is protected by freedom of expression and cannot be restricted but requires a response.

International law uniformly protects this last category, but this kind of hate speech may also be harmful and can escalate to incitement and violence.

When the United Nations first adopted a Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, the Secretary General observed that “Hate speech is in itself an attack on tolerance, inclusion, diversity and the very essence of our human rights norms and principles. More broadly, it undermines social cohesion, erodes shared values, and can lay the foundation for violence, setting back the cause of peace, stability, sustainable development and the fulfillment of human rights for all.” The UN’s Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech (the “Strategy”) focuses on a whole-of-society approach to countering hate speech and the ways in which it is disseminated.



Proposed Plan of Action for Sports: The Game Plan

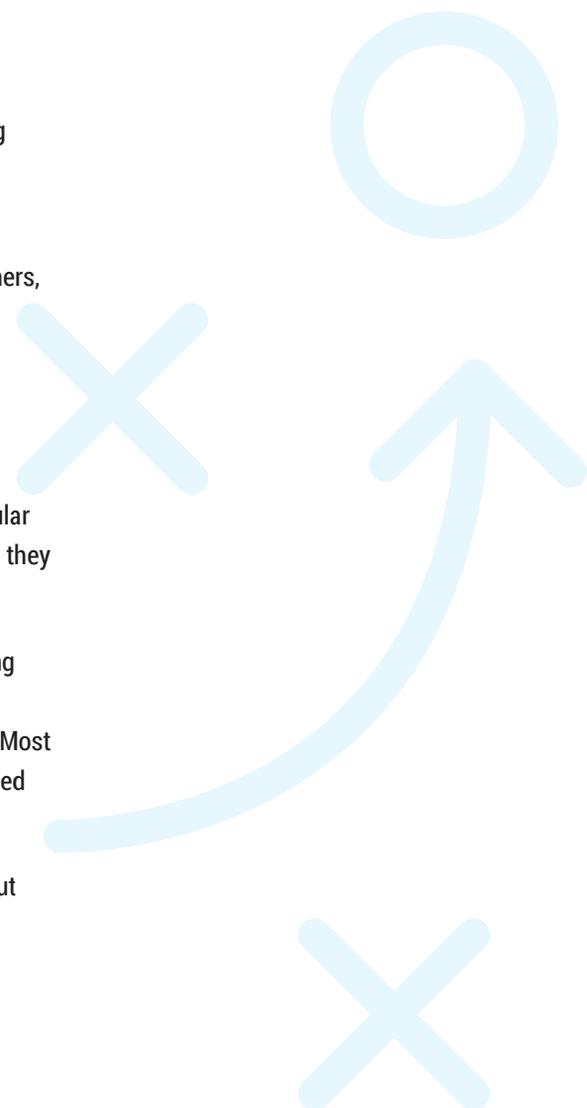


The Plan of Action for Sports: The Game Plan includes recommendations that are organized according to thematic focus: Speak, Promote, Organize, Recognize/Reward/Report, and Train (SPORT). More specifically, the Plan identifies strategies to **Speak** openly and honestly about hate speech with athletes, employees, the public, and those who are targeted by hate speech; **Promote** positive messages, practices, policies, and procedures to foster genuine respect and counter hate speech; **Organize** specific outreach to communities of fans (from back yards to stadiums) to educate them about hate speech and its consequences and to try to intervene before violence and messages of hate that may lead to incitement of violence can take root; **Recognize, Reward, and Report** success stories and positive impacts of athletes and sports figures who join the Game Plan; and **Train** at all levels to identify and address hate speech.

The Game Plan will focus not just on identifying and reporting hate speech, but on positive reactions everyday people and famous athletes alike have taken (or commit to taking) to counter it. We will develop a tagline that will bring an identifiable brand to the Plan, and further serve as a statement of unity—we should embrace our differences, which are often the targets of hate speech and focus on what brings the Global Sports community together.

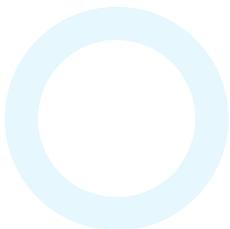
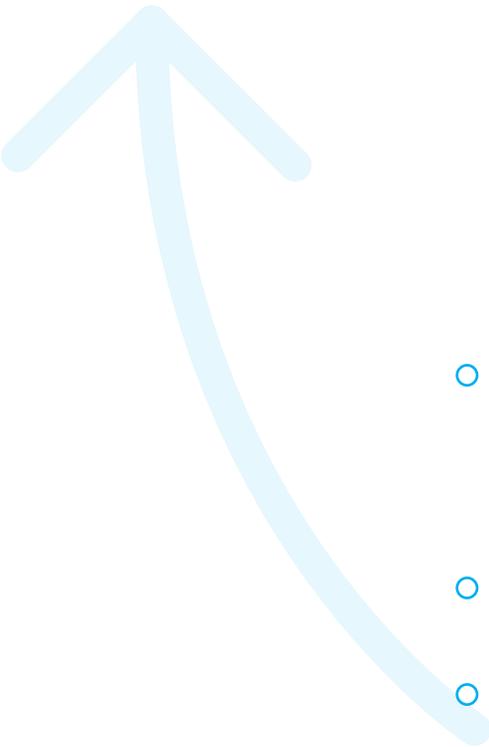
Speak openly and honestly about hate speech

- Cultivate first-person narratives from people who have been victims of hate speech across the spectrum of the sports community. These narratives will draw attention to the comprehensive problem of hate speech in ways that define hate speech for average fans using relatable anecdotes.
 - Speakers should include:
 - Well-known athletes.
 - Team and venue employees.
 - Amateurs who can talk about how hate speech has impacted them.
 - Produce video and print vignettes for distribution over various media channels (print, social media, stadium promotion, etc.).
 - Vignettes should be accompanied by messaging that shows the sports community's response to these incidents and support for victims and inclusion generally.
- Recruit leaders in sport to publicly adopt and endorse the Game Plan, increasing its profile and driving desirability for sports community members to sign on and participate.
 - E.g., a joint statement in support of the Plan signed by Commissioners, Owners, etc. timed to follow UN adoption.
 - Op-eds, social media posts, and signage from leagues.
- Engage professional athletes as campaign spokespersons.
 - Current and retired professional athletes are some of the most broadly popular figures in the world and occupy platforms (including on social media) where they can reach millions of fans via both traditional and new media outlets.
 - These spokespersons can perform a variety of important functions, including directly addressing hate speech narratives and countering drivers of radicalization, such as feelings of perceived oppression and hopelessness. Most importantly, they can speak directly to people who are considering hate-based acts of violence.
- Identify simple ways for players, employees, fans, and partners to speak up about and report hate speech.



Promote positive messages, practices, policies, and procedures

- Develop a positive messaging framework for teams and leagues to use to communicate to players, partners, and fans the “core values” of inclusion and acceptance that the global sports community stands for.
- Craft a plan for making this inclusive messaging part of the live game experience for fans in stadiums and at home. The plan will be designed to create opportunities for teams and leagues to be intentional about moving the “core values” messaging into the actual presentation of games.
- Develop model language for fan codes of conduct on hate speech at venues or otherwise directed at players or other fans.
 - Although many sports teams, leagues, and conferences already have policies and codes of conduct in place, there are significant variations. Some are limited to players and team employees, or do not specifically address hate speech and related behavior. Others lack specifics and do not set clear expectations for fans.
 - Creating standardized, specific fan codes of conduct on hate speech and related behavior (e.g., signage and gestures) would broadcast a clearer message to sports fans and communities at large about the types of speech, including incitement, that the sporting world and the larger social community does not tolerate.
 - The model language can also serve as a starting point for developing broader social messaging, which popular athletes can deliver as anti-hate spokespeople.
- Create mechanisms for teams and leagues to enforce their fan codes of conduct.
 - Creating clearer responses to hate speech and related behavior, particularly incitement, would help to set expectations about the types of repercussions that fans may face for engaging in hate speech and deter that conduct in the future.
- Promote academic research on factors that contribute to hate speech and targeting associations and the impact team/group sports can have on those factors.
- Gather information that will inform how the Game Plan’s messaging is targeted. Use social media/tech and academic partnerships to study and determine best practices as to how to reach people who are active in hate-filled communities and online spaces but may also be receptive to inclusive messages from the sports community.



Organize specific outreach to communities of fans

- Educate organizations, players and fans about hate speech, trends, and root causes, and ways to counter it in their communities, while respecting the right to freedom of expression.
 - The Game Plan encourages crossovers among different sports and joint communications from athletes on rival teams.
 - A key goal of the Game Plan will be developing a roster of diverse athlete spokespersons representing a globally united front of the sports community, speaking with one voice on behalf of popular sports, teams, leagues, and diverse peoples. The broader the campaign's reach, the more powerfully its message will resonate.
- Harness parent organizations that offer credentials to youth and school coaches and officials to incorporate messages of inclusion and acceptance into curriculum.
- Encourage pre- or post-game demonstrations of unity, particularly ones that can be incorporated into game broadcasts for fans at home to see.
- Use the power of social media.
 - Social media companies and sports organizations could work together to identify and support actors who challenge hate speech and develop hashtags, interest groups, and other methods of organizing and facilitating the creation of online communities that support and further the messages of the campaign.

Recognize, Reward, and Report successes

- Success stories of sports leagues, teams, fans, and athletes effectively using messaging and other tools developed by the campaign to counter hate speech, particularly incitement, should be reported using both traditional and new media outlets, including on social media.
 - The campaign should also consider highlighting stories of individuals who were positively impacted by athletes' anti-hate messages, potentially including media appearances with the athlete.
- Another focus of reporting successes should be the response by the sports community or a particular team or league to hate speech incidents and the positive impacts that came out of supporting the victims and encouraging inclusion and acceptance.

Train to identify and address hate speech

- Anti-hate speech training programs should be developed for all levels of operation.
 - Training front-office staff to identify problem situations and deal with hate directed at them, as well as modelling good behaviors internally and externally.
 - Training stadium staff to recognize hate speech, intervene when it is safe and appropriate to do so, and report it.
 - Training players, coaches, and other on-field staff on both content and delivery methods for sharing positive messaging.
 - Collegiate, high school, and youth sports coaches and officials should receive training on how to identify and intervene/report when hate speech occurs.



¹ General Assembly Resolution, A/RES/73/24, 2018 on “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development.”

² Report from the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace.

³ Council on Foreign Relations, Hate Speech on Social Media: Global Comparisons, <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/hate-speech-social-media-global-comparisons>, June 7, 2019.

⁴ Ingrid Beutler, ed., Sport for a Better World: Report of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, 2005 (Geneva, United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, 2005), p. 80.

Proposed Game Plan Rollout

- 12/9/2022** United Nations adopts the Plan of Action for Sport
- 12/10/2022** Public statements from US [and European Commissioners] and/or Owners in support of the Plan of Action

Phase One: Recruit Partners and Gather Information [by January 31, 2023]

- Identify and recruit speakers who can testify publicly to the impact hate speech has had on them in the context of sport.
- Recruit athlete spokespersons for a global campaign by the sports community to counter hate speech and promote the global sports community's "core values" of inclusion and acceptance.
- Recruit additional sports community leaders to sign onto and publicly endorse the Game Plan.
- Recruit parent organizations to offer credentials to youth and school coaches and officials to incorporate messages of inclusion and acceptance into curriculum.
- Leverage partnerships with social media/tech and academia to gather information on how to make the campaign's messaging most effective and targeted.

Phase Two: Craft and Target the Message [by March 31, 2023]

- Create video and print vignettes for distribution over various media channels (print, social media, stadium promotion, etc.).
- Craft positive "core values" framework for use by teams, players, employees, partners, and parent organizations, as well as in-game use.
- Develop a tagline that brings an identifiable brand to the Plan and serves as a statement of unity.
- Develop a social media strategy for rolling out the campaign's messages online, creating affinity/interest groups, and targeting those messages appropriately.
- Develop training modules for recognizing, reporting, and countering hate speech.

Phase Three: Global Campaign Rollout [by June 18, 2023]

- Distribute campaign vignettes and other messaging in accordance with targeted strategy developed with social media/tech and academic partners.
- Distribute "core values" framework and training modules to partners in sports community and assist with implementation into game presentation.
- Track success stories and positive outcomes and use the global sports community and United Nations platforms to publicize them.
- Deploy training modules to youth sports organizations.



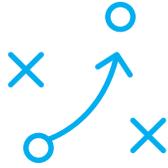


EXHIBIT 1

Sports Working Group Members

Kevin Acklin

President of Business Operations
Pittsburgh Penguins

Billy Bean

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Brian Blake

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Simona Cruciani

Senior Political Affairs Officer
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Zineb Curran

SVP/Chief Communications Officer
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Laura Ellsworth

Working Group Co-Chair
Jones Day

David Friedman

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Boston Red Sox
Chief Compliance Officer, Fenway Sports Group

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President, Buffalo Bills Foundation

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Vice President of Social Responsibility
Major League Soccer

Tara Gutkowski Schwartz

Senior Vice President of Social Responsibility
National Basketball Association

Blayre Holmes Davis

Director of Community Relations
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Pegula Sports and Entertainment

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United States Women's National Soccer Team

Tracey McCants Lewis

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Pittsburgh Penguins

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Senior Vice President, Fan Services & Entertainment
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Oren Segal

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Pete Stuart

Senior Director, Social Responsibility
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Rebecca Wald

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NASCAR

Raymond Whitfield

5/14 Survivor

Travis Williams

President
Pittsburgh Pirates





