

## **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SPORT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In contemporary society, the global interconnectivity of various sectors, including international governance, sport, and sustainable development, has become increasingly evident. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations, outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address economic, social, and environmental dimensions of global development. Beyond its traditional role in recreation and competition, sport is increasingly recognized as a powerful instrument for promoting peace, social inclusion, education, and public health. International organizations play a pivotal role in harnessing sport as a catalyst for achieving the SDGs. Through strategic initiatives, collaborative programs, and policy integration, entities such as the United Nations (UN), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the World Health Organization (WHO), FIFA, and the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation actively contribute to advancing goals related to health promotion, quality education, gender

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equality, social equity, and the creation of sustainable communities. The aim of this paper is to explore the role of these international organizations in utilizing sport as a mechanism for social transformation and sustainable development. The research focuses on the strategies, frameworks, and programs implemented by these institutions to support key SDGs. Employing a descriptive, primarily qualitative analysis, the study draws on official policy documents, scientific literature, institutional publications, and organizational reports that examine the intersection of sport and development. Findings highlight the substantial contribution of sport to the realization of the SDGs, while also acknowledging persistent challenges in translating international strategies into actionable policies at the national and local levels. Although numerous sport-based initiatives have yielded positive outcomes, the research identifies a need for strengthened institutional frameworks, enhanced financial investment, and more effective alignment of sport policies with broader global development agendas.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, international organizations, sport, SDGs, inclusion, sports policy

## **MEĐUNARODNE ORGANIZACIJE, SPORT I ODRŽIVI RAZVOJ: ULOGA U SPROVOĐENJU AGENDE 2030**

### **APSTRAKT**

U savremenom društvu, globalna povezanost različitih oblasti, uključujući međunarodne organizacije, sport i održivi razvoj, postaje sve izraženija. Agenda 2030, usvojena od strane Ujedinjenih nacija, definiše 17 ciljeva održivog razvoja (SDGs) koji obuhvataju ekonomske, socijalne i ekološke dimenzije razvoja. Sport je pored svoje osnovne orijentacije prepoznat kao snažan alat za promociju mira, inkluzije, obrazovanja i zdravlja. Brojne međunarodne organizacije aktivno koriste sport za sprovođenje razvojnih politika i ostvarenje SDG ciljeva kroz različite inicijative, strategije i partnerstva. Cilj ovog rada je da pruži uvid u ulogu međunarodnih organizacija u korišćenju sporta kao sredstva za postizanje društvenih i razvojnih ciljeva. Fokus istraživanja je na strategijama i programima organizacija kao što su Ujedinjene nacije, Međunarodni olimpijski komitet (MOK), Svetska zdravstvena

organizacija (WHO), FIFA, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, koje kroz različite inicijative doprinose ostvarivanju SDG ciljeva, uključujući unapređenje zdravlja, kvalitetnog obrazovanja, rodne ravnopravnosti, smanjenja nejednakosti i održivih gradova i zajednica. U radu je primenjena deskriptivna, pretežno kvalitativna analiza relevantnih zvaničnih dokumenata, naučnih radova, publikacija međunarodnih institucija i izveštaja organizacija koje povezuju sport i održivi razvoj. Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju na značajnu ulogu sporta u promociji održivog razvoja, ali i na izazove u implementaciji strategija međunarodnih organizacija na nacionalnom i lokalnom nivou. Iako postoje pozitivni pomaci kroz različite sportske inicijative, istraživanje pokazuje potrebu za dodatnim institucionalnim okvirima, jačanjem finansijske podrške i boljim povezivanjem sportskih politika sa globalnim razvojnim strategijama.

**Ključne reči:** održivi razvoj, međunarodne organizacije, sport, SDGs, inkluzija, politika sporta

## Introduction

International organizations represent significant actors in shaping and implementing global development policies. Their role includes coordinating international initiatives, setting standards, and providing financial and technical support to various sectors, including sport. These organizations bring together member states, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and the academic community to collectively address global challenges (Karns et al., 2024). Their influence spans the formulation of sustainable development strategies, support in implementing development goals, and evaluating the results achieved.

Globalization has enabled a greater connection between sport and different aspects of social and economic development. Once viewed primarily as a form of recreation or professional activity, sport is now recognized as a powerful means of promoting social inclusion, education, health, and gender equality. Many international organizations, including those not primarily sports-related, utilize sport as a mechanism for achieving sustainable development goals (Blouce & Smith, 2010). This role of sport is particularly emphasized in the 2030 Agenda, where it is acknowledged as a tool for combating poverty,

promoting educational quality, and improving health standards (UN, 2015).

Sport contributes to achieving the SDGs through various dimensions. Inclusive sports policies provide marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, women, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds, opportunities for participation and social integration. Organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and FIFA implement projects that use sport to empower individuals and communities (Šiljak et al., 2022). FIFA, for example, through the “Football for Schools” program, offers youth access to educational content through sports activities, while the IOC, through the “Olympic Refugee Foundation,” helps refugees around the world integrate into society through sport (IOC, n.d.).

In addition to social aspects, sport plays a significant role in environmental protection and the sustainable development of urban areas. Organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Union (EU) use sport to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce negative ecological impacts. The application of environmentally sustainable practices in sports competitions and infrastructure projects has become an important segment of sustainable development strategies (McCullough & Kellison, 2018).

The subject of this research is the analysis of the role of international organizations in achieving sustainable development goals through sport. In line with the research subject, the fundamental research question posed is: How do international organizations utilize sport as a tool for implementing the sustainable development goals defined by the 2030 Agenda?

To answer this question, a descriptive, primarily qualitative analysis of official documents from international organizations, scientific publications, and reports of relevant institutions was conducted. Special attention is given to analyzing the strategies of specific organizations and their programs in relation to the SDGs. Content analysis was employed to identify key thematic areas and the impact of sports initiatives on social development. Additionally, a case study method was used to review concrete programs implemented by international organizations worldwide, with a particular focus on initiatives by the IOC, WHO, and FIFA.

This research provides deeper insight into how global institutions use sport as a means to achieve development goals, while simultaneously identifying challenges and opportunities for improving existing strategies.

### **International Organizations and Sustainable Development Through Sport**

International organizations are entities with international membership, defined scopes of work, and specific principles of operation. Depending on the type of organization, members may be state actors or non-state participants (Karns et al., 2024). The growing interest in international organizations stems from their expanding role in global governance and their broad areas of activity. The core mission of these organizations includes connecting members, overcoming operational barriers, promoting peace and security, and supporting economic development.

International organizations are formal institutions primarily composed of sovereign states (known as member states) or other intergovernmental entities (e.g., the UN, EU, NATO, IMF, G8), operating in diverse fields such as economics, sport, and more.

### **The United Nations (UN) and the Sustainable Development Goals through Sport**

The United Nations (UN) is a global organization dedicated to promoting peace, security, human rights, and international cooperation among its 193 member states. Among its many initiatives, the UN supports the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which address economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development (UN, 2015). These goals are designed to ensure balanced progress for humanity and the planet by 2030. The UN provides a platform for policy coordination, resource mobilization, and the establishment of global partnerships for their realization.

The 2030 Agenda serves as the UN's foundational framework for sustainable development, incorporating mechanisms such as political forums, global indicators, and voluntary national reviews to track

progress (UN, 2015). The UN coordinates efforts and offers technical support to countries in achieving these goals, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction, health, education, and climate change (McCullough & Kellison, 2018).

Sport has been recognized by the UN as a powerful tool for advancing sustainable development, especially in promoting healthy lifestyles, education, and social inclusion. UN sport-related initiatives aim to leverage the universal appeal of sport to foster peace, tolerance, and inclusion (UN, 2015). The organization encourages member states to integrate sport into efforts to enhance social cohesion and prevent conflict, in collaboration with sports organizations and civil society (Veselinović et al., 2022).

The UN actively uses sport to advance several SDGs:

- SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being): Sport promotes physical activity and reduces the risk of non-communicable diseases.
- SDG 4 (Quality Education): UN sports programs support youth education and development through physical education.
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality): Sport fosters equal access and empowers women and girls.
- SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities): Sport is used for the inclusion of marginalized groups and refugees.
- SDG 13 (Climate Action): Sport serves as a platform for raising awareness on climate change and promoting sustainable practices (UN, 2015).

In addition to the 2030 Agenda, the UN adopted the Paris Agreement, which addresses climate change, with sport playing a key role in promoting environmental sustainability. The UN's Sport for Climate Action initiative encourages sports organizations to reduce their ecological footprint and promote climate education (McCullough & Kellison, 2018).

### **The World Health Organization (WHO) and Sustainable Development through Sport**

The World Health Organization (WHO), founded in 1948, is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for promoting global health and protecting vulnerable populations (WHO, 2023). With 194 member states, WHO operates through regional and national

offices worldwide. It provides technical support to countries in developing and implementing health programs, sets global health standards, and coordinates emergency responses in the field of public health (WHO, 2023).

Sport and physical activity are recognized as essential tools in WHO's strategies for improving public health. Acknowledging their importance, WHO collaborates with numerous international sports institutions, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIFA, and UEFA, to promote healthier lifestyles and improve population well-being (WHO, 2021).

One of WHO's key initiatives linking sport and sustainable development (particularly SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being) is the Sport for Health program. Its goal is to leverage the potential of sport in promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing risk factors for non-communicable diseases. This initiative is based on several core principles:

1. Raising awareness of the importance of physical activity – To reach one billion people with this message, WHO utilizes media and sports events to communicate the health benefits of physical activity and motivate more active lifestyles.
2. Creating healthy sports environments – Aimed at providing conditions that promote health for athletes, spectators, and staff at all levels of sports competition.
3. Integrating physical activity into education systems – Promoting physical education as a core component of school curricula.
4. Health and safety at sports events – WHO supports organizers of major sporting events in planning public health measures and preventing health risks.
5. Injury prevention and combating violence in sport – Focused on reducing injuries and eliminating discrimination and social exclusion through sport (WHO, 2021).

In addition to specific programs, in 2018 WHO published the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030, aiming to reduce global physical inactivity by 15% by 2030 (WHO, 2018). The plan recognizes physical activity as a key factor in preventing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and mental disorders.

WHO research has shown that global urbanization and technological development contribute to decreasing physical activity levels. In some countries, up to 70% of the population does not meet recommended activity levels (WHO, 2018). Therefore, one of WHO's primary goals is to encourage national governments to integrate physical activity into their public health strategies and urban planning (Šiljak et al., 2023).

Mass sports gatherings such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup require special attention regarding public health and safety. WHO provides technical and logistical support to the organizers of major sporting events through:

- Risk assessment and emergency preparedness – Preventing infectious diseases, ensuring infection control, and implementing vaccination measures.
- Sanitary safety – Ensuring hygiene standards related to food, water, and air during major events.
- Strengthening health infrastructure – Enhancing medical support at event sites and building rapid medical response capacities.
- Promoting healthy behavior among participants and spectators – Through advocacy of physical activity, reduced tobacco and alcohol use, and education on healthy nutrition (WHO, 2021).

### **The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Sustainable Development through Sport**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is an international sports organization based in Lausanne, Switzerland. As a non-profit entity, the IOC is the main governing body of the Olympic Movement, with its primary mission being the promotion of sport and the education of youth through values of friendship, solidarity, and fair play (OKS, 2022). Through various initiatives, the IOC plays a key role in advancing sustainable development goals aligned with the 2030 Agenda, with particular focus on inclusion, environmental protection, and social responsibility.

The IOC provides financial and educational support to developing countries through its Olympic Solidarity program, which includes a series of projects aimed at athlete development and strengthening national Olympic committees (Šiljak & Đurović, 2017). This initiative



enables athletes from underdeveloped countries to access resources, infrastructure, and training, thus contributing to equity in sport and improving athletic achievements on a global level. Additionally, the program offers education and training for sports administrators and coaches, ensuring the long-term development of sports systems worldwide.

One of the program's goals is also to increase the participation of women in sport, thereby contributing to the achievement of SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Through targeted grants and mentorship programs, the IOC encourages the inclusion of women in sports leadership and competitions, helping to reduce gender disparities within sports institutions.

A particularly notable IOC initiative is the Olympic Refugee Team, which first competed at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. This team symbolizes resilience, hope, and equality, offering athletes from refugee backgrounds the opportunity to continue their sports careers (IOC, 2021). In partnership with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations, the IOC supports programs that provide access to sport in refugee camps, thereby contributing to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) (Zbiljić & Šiljak, 2024).

Beyond the competitive sphere, the IOC invests significantly in the empowerment of young refugees through sport, helping them develop teamwork, leadership skills, and psychological resilience. These programs include the provision of sports equipment, infrastructure, and training for coaches working with refugee communities, using sport as a tool for integration and psychosocial support.

The IOC was one of the first sports organizations to recognize the ecological impact of major sporting events. As early as 1994, it adopted a sustainable development strategy, and through its Sport for Climate Action project, it works closely with the UN to reduce the environmental footprint of the Olympic Games (UN, 2017). This project aims to raise awareness about environmental challenges in sport and to implement ecologically sustainable practices in event organization.

As part of this strategy, the IOC introduced several measures, including the use of renewable energy, reduction of plastic waste, and the implementation of sustainable urban solutions in the construction of Olympic villages (Šiljak et al., 2023). For example, during the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, an innovative CO<sub>2</sub> natural refrigeration system was used, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These initiatives directly contribute to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

The IOC also promotes the construction of sustainable sports facilities, which are repurposed for local community use after the Olympic Games. According to an IOC study from 2022, 85% of all permanent venues used in Olympic Games from Athens 1896 to PyeongChang 2018, and 92% of venues from the 21st century, are still in use. This approach helps reduce the environmental impact of major sporting events and improves the quality of life in host communities.

In addition to the Olympic Refugee Team, the IOC supports various initiatives promoting inclusion and equality in sport. Programs such as “Green Games” and “Earth Day: Color Sport Green” promote environmental responsibility, while projects aimed at improving access to sport for marginalized groups enable greater participation in physical activity (Đurović et al., 2017). These efforts contribute not only to environmental sustainability but also to the social responsibility of sports organizations.

Moreover, the IOC collaborates with national Olympic committees to ensure the implementation of equal opportunity policies and anti-discrimination measures in sport. Through dedicated educational programs and institutional guidelines, the IOC fosters the inclusion of diverse social groups in sporting activities, establishing sport as a powerful instrument for social cohesion and inclusion.

### **FIFA and Sustainable Development through Football**

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is the global governing body for football, headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. Established in 1904, FIFA is responsible for organizing and overseeing the world’s most prominent international football tournaments, including the FIFA Men’s and Women’s World Cups, held

every four years. With 211 member associations, FIFA is one of the most influential sports organizations in the world and actively supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its activities, projects, and policies (FIFA, 2023).

As the second-largest international sports organization after the IOC, FIFA plays a leading role not only in football governance but also in global sports management, commercialization of sporting events, infrastructure development, and the implementation of sustainability programs, despite focusing on a single sport. Its sustainability strategy emphasizes the integration of environmental, social, and economic aspects into the organization of football tournaments and development projects.

In 2016, FIFA became the first sports federation to join the UN's Sport for Climate Action initiative, committing to reduce the ecological footprint of its events and encouraging football organizations worldwide to adopt sustainable practices (FIFA, 2023). This initiative directly supports SDG 13 (Climate Action) by promoting strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve resource management, and encourage responsible consumption.

FIFA has developed a sustainability framework for its World Cups, including a range of concrete measures to minimize the negative environmental impact of football competitions. During the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, energy-efficient vehicles were used, 24% of the fuel consisted of lower-emission biofuels, and PET materials were recycled to produce sports gear and jerseys – a practice that has since become standard (FIFA, 2014).

At the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, sustainability was a top priority. Measures included energy-efficient stadiums, waste recycling, optimized transport systems, and the use of hybrid and electric vehicles. All stadiums used during the tournament received Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS) certification. Additionally, most stadiums were designed as modular structures to allow for future repurposing, thereby reducing the tournament's environmental footprint. These initiatives contribute directly to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) (Vajić et al., 2022).

Beyond ecological efforts, FIFA promotes social inclusion through

football. The Football for Schools program provides children worldwide – especially in underdeveloped regions – with educational and life skills through football. Developed in cooperation with UNESCO, this program supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by offering equal access to sports regardless of social background (FIFA, 2023).

FIFA also invests in gender equality through the development of women's football. The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand achieved record-breaking viewership and the highest representation of female coaching teams in tournament history, contributing to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) (FIFA, 2023).

FIFA recognizes the importance of ethical business practices and the economic impact of football on local communities. Hosting World Cups generates significant revenue and creates new employment opportunities, contributing to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). FIFA has introduced strict requirements for decent working conditions in the construction and maintenance of football facilities (Vajić et al., 2022).

A key component of FIFA's policy is the fight against corruption and the promotion of transparency in football. The organization has implemented a series of reforms to ensure responsible resource management and fair play, thereby maintaining sport as a tool for positive social transformation.

### **The European Union (EU) and Its Influence on Sport**

The European Union (EU) plays a significant role in regulating sport through various legal frameworks and programs, directly influencing the development of sports policy within its member states. One of the key aspects of the EU's influence on sport relates to legal regulation within the single market, particularly the freedom of movement for workers, which also applies to professional athletes. The Court of Justice of the European Union has shaped the legal framework governing the rights of athletes through its rulings, most notably the Bosman ruling (EU, 1995).

The Bosman ruling, adopted in 1995, allowed professional athletes within the EU to move freely between clubs without transfer fees after

the expiration of their contracts. The decision followed a legal case brought by Belgian footballer Jean-Marc Bosman, who appealed to the EU Court of Justice on the grounds of free market rights, challenging restrictions imposed by the Belgian Football Association. The Court ruled in Bosman's favor, eliminating rules that prevented player movement within the EU without compensation after contract expiration (EU, 1995). This ruling strengthened SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by ensuring fair labor conditions and equal market opportunities for athletes, improving their legal security and supporting their professional development (Garg, 2021).

Through the Erasmus+ program, under EU sponsorship, numerous projects have been launched aimed at enhancing sustainability in sport. One of the program's major contributions is the publication of the guide titled "How to Organize a Sustainable Sports Event" (EU, 2018). This document offers practical guidelines for organizing sports events that minimize environmental impact and align with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). The guide covers the following areas:

- Recycling and waste reduction – Implementing recycling systems at sporting events to minimize waste volume.
- Efficient resource use – Optimizing the use of energy, water, and transport to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Eco-friendly practices – Promoting sustainable actions such as reducing food waste, using renewable energy sources, and encouraging volunteer participation (EU, 2018).

The EU continuously supports projects aimed at the sustainability of sports events, contributing to global efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of sports. Through these initiatives, the EU emphasizes the importance of integrating sustainability into the sports sector, making it more accountable to both the environment and society as a whole (Zbiljić & Šiljak, 2024).

### **UEFA and Sustainable Development through Football**

The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) is the administrative and regulatory body for football in Europe and one of the six continental confederations under FIFA. Founded in 1954, UEFA currently brings together 55 national football associations and organizes prestigious club and national team competitions such as the Champions League, the European Championship, and the Nations

League. In addition to its role in managing the sporting aspects of football, UEFA actively promotes sustainable development goals by integrating principles of social responsibility and environmental protection into the European football ecosystem (UEFA, 2021).

UEFA recognizes football as a powerful tool for social change and, through its “Strength Through Unity” strategy, defines 11 key policy areas that encompass the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainability. This strategy aligns with global initiatives such as the UN 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework, focusing on five main domains: UEFA as an organization, sports events, national football associations, the football ecosystem, and social stakeholders (UEFA, 2021).

UEFA actively uses football as a vehicle for education and awareness-raising on important societal issues. In collaboration with the Football Association of Serbia (FSS), UEFA launched the project “Tips and Tricks for Sustainable Development” in 2015, targeting elementary school students across Serbia. Through this initiative, UEFA educated children on environmental protection, ecology, and sports values, linking football to sustainable development goals. This initiative contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by using sport as a tool for knowledge dissemination and youth awareness (Novosti, 2015).

Through its sustainability strategy, UEFA strongly promotes decent work and responsible resource consumption. As part of the “Strength Through Unity” initiative, UEFA introduced standards for labor conditions at football events and incorporated the principles of the circular economy. UEFA’s circular economy model is based on the “4R” principles – reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover. This model has been applied in UEFA competitions by optimizing the use of food, packaging, and branded items to reduce waste and increase resource efficiency (Šiljak et al., 2022). These measures directly support SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by reducing the environmental impact of football events.

As part of its commitment to environmental protection, UEFA supports the UN Sport for Climate Action initiative and implements concrete measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes promoting environmentally sustainable stadiums by optimizing energy efficiency,

using renewable energy sources, and enhancing recycling systems. UEFA also encourages the use of eco-friendly materials in the construction of football infrastructure and works to reduce waste during sporting events. These actions are in alignment with SDG 13 (Climate Action) and contribute to the long-term sustainability of football as a global sport (UEFA, 2021).

### **Laureus Sport for Good Foundation and Sustainable Development through Sport**

The Laureus Sport for Good Foundation is an international non-profit organization that uses sport as a tool for addressing social challenges, promoting inclusion, and improving the quality of life for marginalized groups. Founded in 2000, the Laureus Foundation has supported hundreds of projects worldwide that promote social justice, education, and violence prevention in communities through sport (Laureus, 2020).

One of the foundation's key focuses is the use of sport to foster social cohesion and reduce conflict in impoverished communities. Through numerous programs, Laureus helps young people from vulnerable groups develop positive life skills, build a sense of community, and avoid risky behaviors. These initiatives directly contribute to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by using sport to build safer and more inclusive urban environments (Laureus, 2020).

The Laureus Foundation also emphasizes the importance of education and development through sport. Many supported projects integrate educational modules into sports activities, helping youth acquire communication, teamwork, and leadership skills. This approach contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by providing access to informal learning and the development of life competencies (Laureus, 2021).

In addition, the Foundation runs initiatives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment through sport. Special attention is given to involving girls in sports activities, breaking down social barriers and encouraging equality in sports and society. These actions align with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by creating environments in which girls and women have equal opportunities to participate in sports programs and leadership (Laureus, 2021).

Sport is not only a means of physical health but also of mental well-being. Laureus supports programs that use sport to improve the mental health of young people, particularly in communities affected by poverty, violence, and social exclusion. Through physical activity and team sports, participants develop resilience, emotional stability, and coping strategies for stress, directly contributing to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) (Laureus, 2022).

### **Green Sports Alliance and Sustainable Development**

The Green Sports Alliance is an environmental trade organization that brings together stakeholders from across the sports world – including teams, leagues, conferences, venues, corporate partners, government agencies, athletes, and fans – to promote healthy and sustainable communities through sport. This organization, also endorsed by the World Economic Forum, aims to leverage the cultural and market influence of sport to foster sustainable practices and community engagement (Green Sports Alliance).

The power of sport is used as a universal platform to generate meaningful impact by mobilizing stakeholders across the sports industry through the engagement of athletes, fans, and communities. The Alliance focuses on seven core program initiatives: energy, food, procurement, transportation, venues, waste, and water.

Members and partners of the Green Sports Alliance gain access to resources, practical guides, and a network of professionals dedicated to “greening” the sports sector. In this way, the Alliance enhances both social and environmental responsibility, using the influence of sport – especially among youth and communities – as a driver of sustainable development, behavior change, and best practices.

The Green Sports Alliance collaborates with major sports organizations such as Major League Soccer (MLS), the National Football League (NFL), and the National Basketball Association (NBA), among others, in the United States. These partnerships promote environmentally conscious policies in the design, implementation, and legacy planning of sporting events and infrastructure.



## **Conclusion**

This study has analyzed the role of international organizations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through sport, with a specific focus on the 2030 Agenda. The research included leading institutions such as the IOC, FIFA, UEFA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, and the Green Sports Alliance—all of which utilize sport as a tool to advance sustainable goals including environmental protection, inclusion, gender equality, and health improvement.

The analysis confirms that sport has become a powerful instrument for implementing the SDGs. Organizations such as the IOC, FIFA, and UEFA are particularly active in promoting ecological sustainability through infrastructure optimization, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the implementation of circular economy principles at sports events. These efforts contribute to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

The WHO employs sport to promote healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and social inclusion, thereby supporting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). Through various initiatives, the UN links sport with global development strategies, especially in the fields of education, inclusion, and climate action (SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 13). The EU utilizes sport as a tool for integration and development through programs such as Erasmus+ and initiatives focused on sustainable sports events and economic growth, contributing to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

The Laureus Foundation plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and inclusion through sport, with a focus on marginalized groups, youth, and women. Its programs support education, mental health, and community empowerment, aligning with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The Green Sports Alliance emphasizes the importance of sustainable sports initiatives through the reduction of environmental impact, further contributing to global efforts for ecological responsibility in sport.

The findings of this research demonstrate that international organizations have recognized sport as a powerful tool for promoting sustainable development. Sport not only enhances health and social inclusion but also contributes to global environmental objectives through innovative strategies and projects. The integration of sport with the SDGs is becoming increasingly evident, as international organizations continue to develop new policies and initiatives to strengthen this connection.

The results confirm that the study's objective has been fulfilled, as various strategies and initiatives of international organizations utilizing sport to implement the 2030 Agenda have been analyzed. These findings can serve as a foundation for future research in the field of sport and sustainable development, offering valuable guidance for improving sports policies and enhancing global cooperation in this domain.

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