

Chapter 1

Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals

1.1 Introduction

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, sets out a ‘supremely ambitious and transformational vision’ for global development (UNGA 2015). Central to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* are 17 SDGs broken down into 169 targets and 230 associated indicators (see Box 1.1). The SDGs seek to build on and complete progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that they replaced, but they are also more comprehensive and far-reaching in scope. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* emphasises that the SDGs are intended to be ‘integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental’ (UNGA 2015, preamble 1).

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The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and SDGs also align with the *Charter of the Commonwealth*, which affirms the importance of sustainable development to ‘eradicate poverty by pursuing inclusive growth whilst preserving and conserving natural ecosystems and promoting social equity’ (Commonwealth Secretariat 2013). While the SDGs have been devised to be universally applicable, there is shared recognition in the *Commonwealth Charter* and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* of the particular needs of the least developed countries and small island states. There is further shared commitment to address the needs of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people, with young people among those prioritised. In this respect, both the *Charter* and *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* recognise the importance of creating opportunities and supportive environments through which young people can realise their own potential and actively contribute to sustainable development.

Box 1.1 Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The potential for sport to contribute to sustainable development is explicitly stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

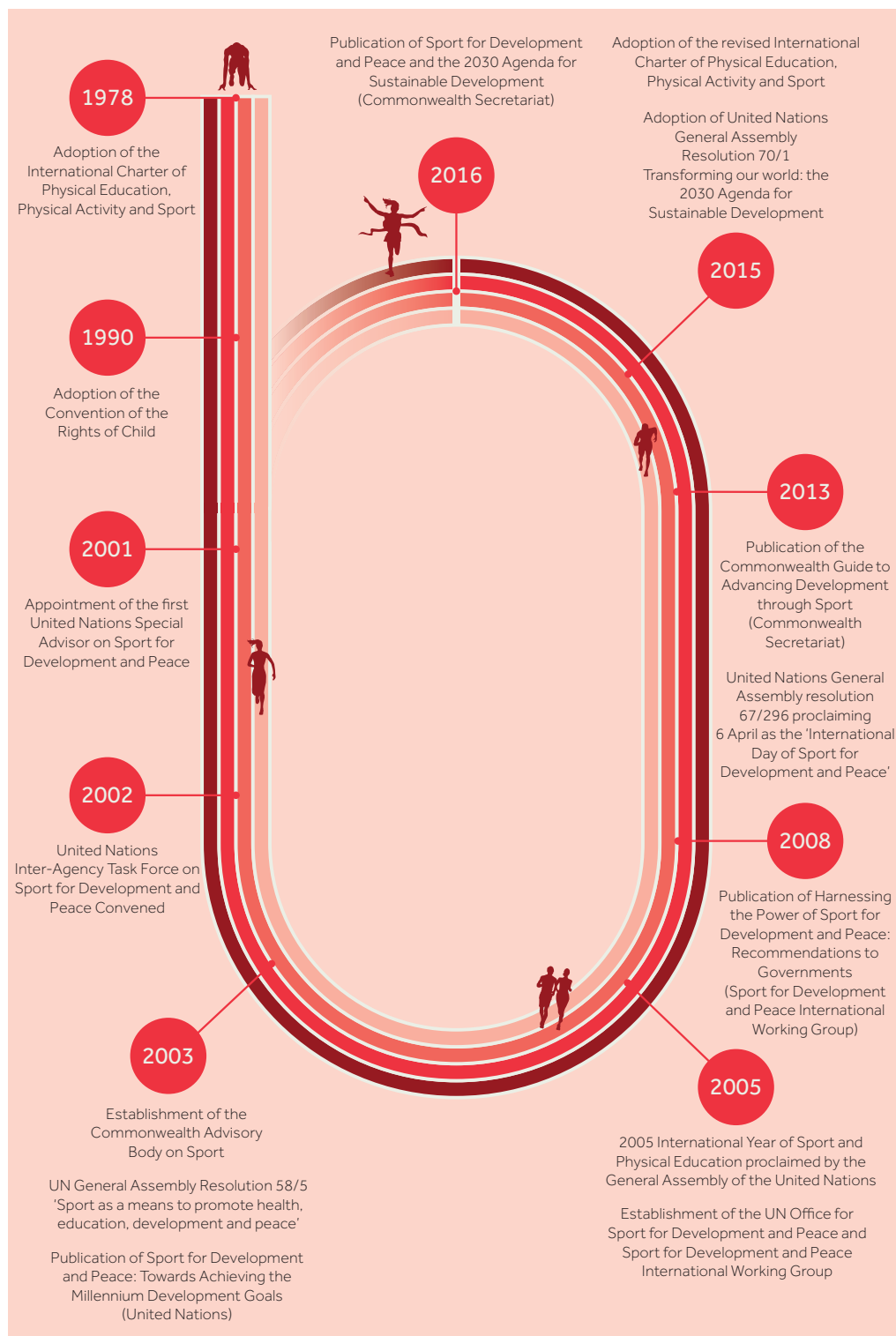
The potential for sport to contribute to sustainable development is explicitly stated in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, with identification of:

the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.

(UNGA 2015, para. 37, 10)

This statement extends previous key international declarations that recognise and advocate the use of sport as a catalyst

Figure 1.1 International declarations, policies and publications on Sport for Development and Peace



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for human and social development (see Figure 1.1). Nine such resolutions were passed by the United Nations General Assembly between 2003 and 2014 (See list of website resources). In this same period, Commonwealth governments also provided consistent endorsement of the role of sport in contributing to development and peace across multiple Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meetings and at the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Commonwealth Secretariat 2011).

The period since the introduction of the MDGs, therefore, has been one in which there has been increasing recognition of the contribution of sport to development agendas. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* represents a further important milestone for sport but also brings significant responsibility for all stakeholders to collectively contribute to global aspirations. This guide provides direction for governmental policy-makers and other stakeholders to enable sport to make the fullest possible contribution to sustainable development. Beginning with the following section, and throughout the following chapters, the guide is based on sound, balanced and evidenced analysis, both of existing practice in sport and of policy options that can enable further progress towards sustainable development.

1.2 Sport and sustainable development: Existing contributions to policy and practice

Since the millennium, a significant number and range of policy and practice interventions have sought to enhance the contribution of sport to sustainable development. The international policy impetus provided by the United Nations, Commonwealth and other multilateral institutions has been complemented in individual countries by interventions at different levels of government that have facilitated and framed the implementation of sport-based approaches to development. Global commitments and governmental policies, where present, have been accompanied by widespread expansion in the contribution of a variety of civil society organisations, sport federations and private sector organisations to the resourcing and delivery of numerous sport-based initiatives. Continued policy development, therefore, requires a detailed understanding of the existing landscape of sport-based approaches to development and appreciation of the ongoing fluidity that characterises a rapidly developing sector.

1.2.1 The Commonwealth and the United Nations system

Leadership provided through the Commonwealth and the United Nations system, and by other multi-national institutions, has been instrumental in guiding the global emergence and establishment of Sport for Development and Peace. The appointment of the UN's first Special Advisor on Sport for Development and Peace in 2001, and the establishment of the UN Office for Sport for Development and Peace in 2005, enabled sport to become better established within and across the UN system. From *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* in 2003 to *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments* in 2008, various policy documents published through the UN system and its associated bodies (see list of website resources) have played an important role in establishing global frameworks for sport and development.

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There has been interest across the UN system in the value of sport as a tool that could be used innovatively and symbiotically with interventions in other sectors to address a range of development agendas. During the period preceding the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, specific policy documents highlighted the potential contribution of sport across all eight of the MDGs (UNOSDP 2010). UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) member states adopted both the *Declaration of Berlin* in 2013 and a revised *International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport* in 2015 that further emphasise the importance of inclusive opportunities for all to participate in sport, and of efforts to combat threats to the integrity of sport. Besides global commitments and evidence-based documentation, sharing of effective policies and practice for sport-based approaches has also been furthered by UN bodies and other multilateral institutions through the organisation of global conferences and dissemination of documented examples.

1.2.2 National governments

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2014). There is diversity across countries with regard to the location of sport within national governmental structures. A minority of countries have specific ministries for sport. More commonly, governments' policy role for sport has been shaped by its positioning within broader ministries, such as those for young people, education, health or culture. Within these ministries, responsibility for sport in relation to development has typically been assigned to departments and national public bodies whose existing remits also include grass-roots and elite sport development. Partly as a consequence of these differing governmental structures, processes of national policy development can differ in respect of the extent of integration between sport and broader governmental priorities, such as those for education and health (Keim and de Coning 2014).

Sub-national and local governments can and do also make significant contributions to sport and development. However, the substantial diversity in sub-national and local governmental structures across and within countries means that any overarching analysis or policy prescriptions need to be offered with caution. The extent of decentralisation and also the level of coherence between national, sub-national and local priorities for sport need to be considered on a country-specific basis. Nevertheless, sub-national and local governments may have significant roles in infrastructure planning that can have significant implications for sport (Nicholson *et al.* 2010). At these levels of government, further attention can also be given to ensuring that the implementation of sport-based initiatives is appropriately resourced and effectively targeted towards specific community needs.

1.2.3 Civil society organisations

Civil society organisations have been particularly prominent in the emergence of sport-based approaches to development and, in increasing numbers, make a substantial contribution to the implementation of particular initiatives. A vital consideration for policy-makers is the range and diversity of civil society organisations that now exist across and within particular countries. Some major and now well-established international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have, over time, contributed to sport and development across multiple countries through building networks, developing specific sport-based curricula and providing funding and other resources (Giulianotti 2014).

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Similar forms of support are also provided by more recently emergent international NGOs that initially tend to be more reliant on the work of volunteers and so operate across a more limited range of countries (Svensson and Hambrick 2016). In-country NGOs vary similarly in scale, scope and operation (Giulianotti 2011). Many have emerged locally through the commitment and contribution of local activists, and some early in-country NGOs have expanded, sometimes with international support, to deliver sport-based activities across a variety of localities. Others remain small-scale, operating within specific communities and without or with only limited international support (Lindsey 2016).

The diversity of international and in-country NGOs is matched by significant variation in their established and emerging approaches to sport and development provision. Collectively, these approaches encompass different forms of sport, play, traditional games and other physical activities. Some organisations and approaches are specifically oriented towards specific issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS), while others use more holistic and flexible approaches to contribute to efforts to address a range of development outcomes. As a result, scope for increased alignment between NGOs and other sport and development stakeholders varies according to the extent to which the identification of common goals may be feasible (Sanders *et al.* 2014). A further relevant aspect of the work of NGOs is their common focus on targeted communities and with groups of young people who may be considered particularly vulnerable (Coalter and Taylor 2010). The feasibility and also desirability of scaling-up NGO provision is therefore an appropriate consideration for policy-makers.

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1.2.4 Sport federations

A variety of international, national and local sport federations and bodies have also increasingly contributed to efforts to use sport as a tool for sustainable development. Both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) have strongly engaged with sport-based approaches to development; as a result, their understanding of and commitment to the utilisation of sport events to lever sustainable social, economic and environmental legacies has been strengthened. International sport-specific federations have also contributed to sport-based approaches in similar ways through their own events, by sponsoring specific initiatives and via the use of high-profile

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athletes who serve as advocates, ambassadors and role models (Akindes and Kirwan 2009).

Many national sport federations and their local member clubs have also either delivered their own sport-based initiatives or worked in partnership with NGOs to do so (Giulianotti 2011a). Sport federations and bodies at all levels also have valuable expertise in the development of sport that can be applied to development objectives. In some instances, however, there can be challenges in aligning competitive and selective notions of sport development and performance with more inclusive approaches that use sport to address development objectives (Akindes and Kirwan 2009). Furthermore, efforts to contribute to development outcomes may be weakened if sports federations and their events become associated with high-profile doping, corruption or governance scandals.

1.2.5 Private-sector organisations

Increasing recognition of the contributions that private sector organisations can make to sport-based approaches to development has come as their global prominence has grown. However, private-sector support is by no means uniform; as yet this has tended to coalesce around particular clusters of activity and types of organisation. Major transnational companies associated with sport and other industries have both undertaken their own sport and development campaigns and provided funding for delivery of initiatives by NGOs (Levermore 2010). Smaller-scale sponsorship by private-sector organisations has long provided important resources for the development of community sport in some contexts, although the potential to generate income from similar sources has yet to be substantially realised in relation to sport and development specifically.

The wider roles and contributions of the private sector within the overall sport industry also require consideration. Securing the economic impact and legacies of both large- and smaller-scale sporting events requires leverage of the benefits of private-sector involvement. More generally, private-sector employment across the sport industry can also contribute to economic development. National governments have, on occasions, however, been called on to address concerns with the employment practices of transnational sport businesses (Thibault 2009). In contrast, locally focused models of social enterprise in sport have more recently emerged

and begun to spread across different countries and contexts. Finally, private media organisations are hugely influential in promoting and shaping perceptions of sport. There remains significant and underexplored potential for the capacities of mass-communication media to be harnessed to enhance the contribution of sport to sustainable development (Keim and de Coning 2014).

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1.3 Commonwealth policy guidance for sport and sustainable development

Commonwealth sports ministers, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sports have made ongoing commitments to support governments and other key stakeholders to collectively utilise sport in the service of development and building peaceful and inclusive communities. Resulting from these commitments, the *Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport* provided a ‘nuanced, measured and credible account’ that drew on evidence and learning from across sport and development (Kay and Dudfield 2013). It established six key principles upon which policies and practices for sport-based approaches to development can be based (see Box 1.2).

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Box 1.2 Six principles for advancing development through sport

Principle 1: Sport for Development and Peace must be explicitly linked to the Commonwealth’s shared values and commitment to promoting development, democracy and diversity.

Principle 2: Sport for Development and Peace should leverage sustainable, quality and ongoing sport activity and be intentionally planned to realise specific developmental goals.

Principle 3: Sport for Development and Peace is most effective when integrated with the development sector in support of regional, national and local development priorities.

Principle 4: Fully accessible programmes ensuring leaders and participants are safeguarded at all times.

Principle 5: Decentralised programmes that involve intended beneficiaries and their communities in the planning process and take local needs and assets into consideration.

Principle 6: Programmes designed on the basis of evidence-based models, and conducted with systematic measurement of progress and appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

The emphasis that these six principles give to various aspects of policy design, implementation and evaluation is strongly aligned with the priority given within the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* to strengthening the means of implementation required to achieve all SDGs. This is especially encapsulated in SDG 17, which emphasises policy coherence, country-leadership, multi-sectoral partnerships, mobilisation of financial and human resources, and measurement of progress towards all SDGs. The importance accorded to SDG 17, and its alignment with existing Commonwealth principles, therefore, centrally underpins this guide. Section One draws on analysis of SDG 17 targets to present frameworks for policy implementation and for reviewing and monitoring where sport may make contributions to sustainable development.

Section Two utilises these frameworks to inform identification of policy options that can serve to enhance the contribution of sport across specific SDGs associated with health (SDG 3); education (SDG 4); gender (SDG 5); economic growth and employment (SDG 8); cities and human settlements (SDG 11); and peaceful and just societies and institutions (SDG 16). These have been identified through extensive consultation, led by the Commonwealth Secretariat, as those goals to which sport-based approaches can make effective and cost-efficient contributions. Throughout Section Two, this guide therefore builds on the Commonwealth Analysis of *Sport for Development and Peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Commonwealth Secretariat 2016) to support further evidence-based policy development towards each of these six SDGs.

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Website Resources

International Platform on Sport and Development: www.sportanddev.org
<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/resourcecenter/publications>
<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/resourcecenter/resolutions/pid/19431>