

Conference: “Responsibility and rights: Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games upholding human rights, preventing forced labour and trafficking”

Tuesday 22 October 2013

Remarks by David Grevenberg - Chief Executive Glasgow 2014

Good afternoon everyone.

I'd like to begin by thanking the Institute for Human Rights and Business for their invitation to speak at today's event. The topics that are under discussion at this conference are hugely important, and they matter in Glasgow, in Scotland and across the wider Commonwealth.

The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games is all about people: the athletes at the centre of our planning; our workforce, including up to 15,000 volunteers; spectators; contractors; the Games family; the young people we want to engage and inspire; and a wider Commonwealth population of more than two billion citizens.

Each of these people, by virtue of their very human being, has rights and freedoms which are defined and agreed in domestic and international law. As an Organising Committee, we have an obligation – both moral and legal, and with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in mind – to respect, support and promote these rights through the course of our day-to-day working.

Before I get into the detail of the OC's approach, I'd like to take a moment to stare at the Games head on. The Games represents something different to each one of us. To some it might represent an employment opportunity, a business contract or the chance to volunteer. For other it offers the chance to change attitudes, improve people's health or transform a city. The Games is loaded with meaning, but at its heart it is athlete centred and sport focused.

Next summer we will witness 11 days of competition featuring the best sporting talent in the Commonwealth. A programme of 17 electrifying sports is on offer and the Para-Sports programme is fully integrated in to the competition schedule. 70 nations and territories will take part in the Games and 6,500 athletes and team officials will live in the Athletes' Village in the east end of the city. Around one million tickets will be available and more than 1.5 billion people from all corners of the globe will tune in to watch the Games. Quite simply, it is going to be Scotland's biggest ever celebration of sport and culture.

As you can probably tell, those 11 days of sport are something I'm incredibly excited about. But I'm also aware that an event of this scale comes with responsibilities.

To put the Games into their Commonwealth context, it's worth mentioning that the Commonwealth Charter, presented to the Queen in March 2013, was the first time that the Commonwealth has had a single document setting out its core values and aspirations. Within that Charter there is a commitment to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It also makes clear that the Commonwealth is opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds.

For many people, the Commonwealth Games is the most visible manifestation of the Commonwealth. The Games brings the Commonwealth to life in front of our eyes. The Commonwealth Games Federation has three core values: Humanity, Equality and Destiny. These values inform every aspect of the OC's work.

That's not to say that it's easy transforming values into action. Some concepts and issues are so big that it can be difficult to see how to tackle them. We do it one step at a time.

The OC's Procurement Sustainability Policy requires that the employment standards expressed in the International Labour Organisation's Fundamental Conventions are met by our suppliers. We acknowledge that there will be times when we procure goods and services from outside the UK and where that is the case we require our suppliers to adhere to the terms of the Ethical Trading Initiative's Base Code and, if relevant, the Code of Conduct of the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry.

Here at home, the OC itself is a Living Wage employer and we aim to promote the Living Wage through our supply chain.

Sustainability is another key area and we want the Games to set a high benchmark. Our aims have been clearly set out in the OC's Environmental and Sustainability Policy and we are committed to sustainable sourcing – ensuring that the goods and services we require are procured in a way that demonstrates, wherever feasible, ethical, social, environmental and economic benefits.

We are putting on a Games for everyone – of any religion or none, and regardless of political beliefs. Ways of achieving this include the provision of multi-faith facilities, engagement with faith leaders and by satisfying a diverse range of cultural dietary requirements in the Athletes' Village – in fact Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, takes in the first few days of competition and this is something that informs our planning.

Our Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is another guiding document. It sets out principles for developing a culture where diversity and inclusion are embedded across all of our plans, processes, and services.

We aim to develop accessible and inclusive venues, services and processes for athletes, Games Family, workforce, spectators and any other groups who come into contact with our activities.

We ensure that the procurement of all work, goods and services is transparent, fair and open to a diverse range of suppliers including social enterprises, community organisations and small and medium-sized businesses. We also undertake direct engagement and outreach work with equality groups, particularly through our Sport, Accessibility, Volunteering, Engagement & Legacy and Human Resources teams.

We want the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games to provide a genuinely inclusive, memorable and equitable Games experience for all – and importantly, with long-lasting benefits.

The legacy we'd like to see includes:

- effective engagement practices;
- wider participation in sport, the economy, volunteering and culture;
- improved disability equality and diversity awareness;
- enhanced awareness of Para-Sport;
- more accessible and inclusive public service provision); as well as
- knowledge transfer, including best practice and lessons learned, for future mega-sporting events.

What's important to realise is that the Games is a launch pad, not a landing strip. The Games isn't a quick fix for big issues like poverty, health or human rights. What we can do as an Organising Committee is live our values and do our job in a positive way. Advances will be made, but they will be made one step at a time.

I'd like to finish where I started, and that's with sport. Sport is a critical part of every strong, healthy, confident community. UNESCO has described sport as a "fundamental right for all". The values of sport – integrity, teamwork, excellence, respect, tolerance, fair play, friendship – mean that it provides an excellent context in which young people can learn and grow up.

Human rights are universal but that does not mean that respect for them is consistent throughout the world. That's something we all realise. The current state of ratification of the major international human rights conventions by Commonwealth member states can be seen on the Commonwealth Secretariat's website, and there are gaps.

Clearly, not all countries are party to all rights conventions; however, all countries play sport. All countries, across the globe, participate in sport in some shape or form, and that is what makes sport so powerful. As a channel – as an opportunity to promote respect for human rights – it is unparalleled.

Sport unifies us. It allows us to have courageous conversations. Next summer sport will bring thousands of athletes and tens of thousands of visitors to Scotland. It has brought us here today and I'm very grateful to have been given this chance to join the conversation.

Thank you.

Related:

[Glasgow 2014 human rights policy document](#)

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