



General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 June 2021

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-seventh session

21 June–9 July 2021

Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related
forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

Written statement* submitted by Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 May 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Racist Media attacks concerning Qatar 2022 FIFA World cup host Intolerance of naysayers

It has become necessary to pay attention to the media infighting and the attacks on Qatar as the 2022 FIFA World Cup tournament draws near the current media attacks notably by the West against Qatar concerning her 2022 FIFA World Cup host is unnecessary and may be seen as racist attacks if the attacks persist.

Qatar was among the first GCC nations to have taken their investments out of the Arab world to the West by investing in football clubs and promoting Qatar airways in western media. To date, there has not been any claim or allegation that these investments violate any ethical principles and norms, including labour rights. No doubt, these investments are aimed at advancing soft powers for the tiny nation, especially to boost her diplomacy and image.

The hosting of major events are considered to be awarded to ‘competent’ nations who are capable of organizing such spectacles. The World Cup 2022 will be the first of its kind in the region, and only the second in Asia after the Japan-South Korea World Cup in 2002. The awarding of the World Cup has dispelled orientalist notions of ‘desert countries’ in the region. Qatar had already hosted various major events like the ATP Tennis tour, the Asian Games, the World Men’s Handball Championship, the IAAF Athletic Championships, and the FIFA World Club Cup Championships.

Qatar is already a model of success for hosting such international events and could contribute to regional and global success. Qatar is leading in two agendas, (sustainability and human rights). The development stimulus package of Qatar is a good and integrated which covers rights for development, inclusive growth, innovation and technology and good governance with more focus on labour rights and good quality of life.

The Sustainable strategy of Qatar (FIFA 2022)- 5 Pillars¹:

- Environmental: Deliver innovative environmental solutions

Qatar is committed to delivering a fully carbon-neutral FIFA World Cup™ and aim to set a benchmark for environmental stewardship by implementing leading sustainable building standards, waste and water management practices and low- emission solutions. They will leave a legacy of world-class environmental management expertise, technologies, businesses and standards in Qatar and the region.

- Economic: Catalyse economic development

They aim to catalyse economic growth and diversification in Qatar and the region by linking local businesses to FIFA World Cup 2022™ value chains and innovation opportunities.

- Governance: Set an example of good governance and ethical business practices

They take responsibility for addressing the impacts of the FIFA World Cup 2022™ from their own activities as well as those linked to their business relationships and value chains. They establish a culture of compliance based on legal requirements and organisational policies, and demonstrate transparency and accountability to sustainability decision-making and performance.

- Social: Provide an inclusive tournament experience

They will deliver an inclusive FIFA World Cup 2022™ tournament experience that is welcoming, safe and accessible to all participants, attendees and communities in Qatar and around the world. Through this, we will leave a legacy of cultural understanding, accessible infrastructure and services, and associated expertise among the local population.

- Human: Develop human capital and safeguard workers’ rights

¹ FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022; Sustainability strategy, October 2019.

Qatar is committed to safeguarding the rights and welfare of workers engaged on FIFA World Cup 2022™ sites and promoting their rights in projects and supply chains directly linked to the FIFA World Cup™, leaving a legacy of world-class standards and practices for workers in Qatar and internationally. They also aim to leverage the unique platform provided by the FIFA World Cup 2022™ to develop a capable and motivated workforce and empower young people across the region.

Human Rights reforms

Qatar as part of her commitment to hosting a fair and successful first “Arab World Cup” has successfully undertaken and continues to make remarkable human and labour rights reforms aimed at improving the lots of migrants.

Given the global cry against the dehumanizing nature of the Kafala system and practice of labour recruitment, as it has been described as modern-day slave trade cum human trafficking, Qatar moved with speed to reform and abolish retrogressive and oppressive elements of the system. Some of these laudable reforms to the Kafala system include the removal of exit permit before a sponsored labour migrant can leave the country; removal of authorization that a sponsored labour migrant must obtain before changing job and employer; provision of redress mechanism in the case of rights’ infraction. Qatar becomes the first and only one to have introduced an anonymous complaint number where workers, most immigrants can report inhuman treatment whether labour related or not. And the state had been serious with addressing these complaints, thereby reducing the nightmares of immigrant in Qatar.

The organized labour across the globe appreciated and commended the effort of the Qatari government to increase the national minimum wage in that country. Aside from salary increase, the national minimum wage made it compulsory for employers of labour to make provisions for accommodation for their workers, mainly immigrants, or pay a stipulated amount enshrined in the constitution to the workers as accommodation allowance.

As a mark of genuine demonstration to these reforms and her readiness to ensure a transparent process necessary for the proper consolidation of the gains of the reforms, Qatar has opened her doors to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to be domiciled in Doha. The ILO carry out their operations in the monitoring of the labour-related reforms and regulations in the country.

They have made a policy that illegalizes construction workers to be made to work under the hot midday sun in Qatar, thereby enforcing that all construction work be carried out at night when the temperature is conducive for humans, especially immigrants not used to the hot weather. They went ahead to declare the minimum temperature above which workers should not be allowed to work in.

The Global Institute for Water Environment and Health (GIWEH) finds that there is perceived envy and jealousy of Qatar hosting the World Cup, from some neighbours in the GCC region – this was based on travel and engagement across the region. It was argued that this is one of the fronts where the media battle continues, as some states/stakeholders are (or had been) allegedly supporting media attacks on Qatar’s hosting of the World Cup, despite Doha’s significant strides around human rights reform vis a vis migrant workers.²

GIWEH finds that global stakeholders should be supportive and encouraging of the World Cup being hosted in a Middle Eastern and Islamic country, especially if the shining light gives the region something unifying to rally around, and further engenders human rights and labour market improvements in Qatar and across the region. The Stronger Africa’s Anti-racism Stance Campaign Coordinator of PID, Ernest Iyagi said, “We are excited that African migrants are happy about the growing spaces for rights enjoyment in this tiny Gulf

² Chatham House Rule, April 2021: Qatar World Cup 2022: Soft Power, Human Rights, and Labour Market Reforms. The Global Perspectives Forum.

country. Interestingly, Saudi Arabia is following the steps of Qatar to reform its Kafala labour migration sponsorship system”.³

GIWEH finds that there is a tone of ‘superiority’ as well as outright double standards to the Northern European national team protests and calls for boycott. GIWEH call this protested team to encourage Qatar, moving out of any political agenda, calling for accountability, offering technical expertise, engaging in multilateralism on the area of human rights.

These shenanigans are being extended to Qatar’s preparations and hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. From within the region and outside, especially by hired media and PR goons, the country is being labeled as a human and labour rights violator. Qatar can be considered as the least Gulf nation with an egregious human and labour rights climate.⁴

GIWEH finds that Qatar is now officially one of the first countries in the Arab world to have a hotline for migrant workers to which they can report cases of inhuman treatment. The new Qatari legislation is an important building block for the future of many foreign workers that will end work-related discriminatory measures in the country.

We can conclude that Qatar is now a model for success, all of this makes the state on the Persian Gulf a model of success with prospects and great growth potential. Qatar must demonstrate during the World Cup 2022 and thereafter that it is not only able to host the greatest show on earth, from a logistical perspective, but that it is indeed an open and tolerant society while and openness does not mean that the state compromises its own societal norms to satisfy demands from ‘western’ media and stakeholders.

³ Leadership-2021 Africa Day: CBO Calls For Stronger Africa’s Anti-racism Stance.

⁴ Qatar and the intolerance of naysayers, May 26, 2021, by Kenneth Smith.