

Giving Childhood a Chance



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On International Children's Day, a global coalition of NGOs covering all parts of the world and different sectors, comes out with big hugs for children worldwide and with a fundamental message for the global community:

"Putting back alcohol into the stadiums is not supporting children to follow the messages of role models like Cristiano Ronaldo," says Sven-Olov Carlsson, President of IOGT International.

"Therefore we support the Brazilian President, the parliament and government in putting Fifa back on track towards living up to common goals and virtues. And that is why this global, heart-driven coalition supports decision-makers to stand up for Human Rights and the Best Interest of children."

During the last couple of months a political struggle has unfolded between Fifa and Brazilian decision-makers about the so called "World Cup Law" and the question whether alcohol should be re-introduced into the stadiums of the 2014 football world cup.

In 2003, Brazil had put in place a law to keep football stadiums alcohol free, in order to prevent violence in and around football matches. These measures go along with scientific evidence from, among others, a WHO study, which included Brazil, showing that ca. 46% of violent incidents seen in emergency rooms are related to alcohol use.

Nevertheless Fifa Secretary-General Mr. Valcke claims: "Alcoholic drinks are part of the Fifa World Cup, so we're going to have them. Excuse me if I sound arrogant but that's something we won't negotiate."

In recent developments the Brazilian parliament has passed the World Cup Law, effectively paving the way for alcohol re-entering stadiums.

President Dilma Rousseff now has to decide whether to sign the bill into law, or not. She will have to consider that Brazil signed the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, and the Brazilian parliament ratified it in November the same year, fully incorporating it into Brazilian law.

“We support the Brazilian government and parliament – like all other decision-makers – and especially the Brazilian President Mrs. Rousseff now in giving meaning to their own promise to protect children and to give primary consideration to the Best Interest of children when deciding about policies,” says Prof. Mina Seinfeld de Carakushansky, President of the Brazilian Humanitarians in Action.

Article 3.1 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child states: “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.”

In video messages Fifa President Blatter says that “it’s all about children. They’re football’s future. They are our world’s future. We want children to play football and therefore have fun and enjoy a healthy activity.”

To support this message Cristiano Ronaldo – the world’s best football player 2008 – says in a video message for the Fifa “11 for health”: “Forwards make the right moves on the pitch to avoid defenders. Make the right moves off the pitch to avoid drugs and alcohol.”

“How is forcing alcohol back into football stadiums true to those messages? Every person in the world knows that there are more important things than money and profit,” says Sven-Olov Carlsson, President of IOGT International.

“This truth is easiest to see when looking into the eyes of children, into a child’s smile when enjoying the game of football, for example – full of hope, happiness and dreams. Children’s Day is about cherishing this and taking as good actions as possible to endow it with meaning.”

Global coalition signatories:



Human Rights Generation



Active - sobriety, friendship and peace

“You only get one chance for a childhood. It’s not possible to do it all over again if you weren’t satisfied with the first try. Childhood never comes back and it has huge impact on the course of a human life.

“That’s the basic idea behind the responsibility that grown-ups have for children and why there is the Convention of the Rights of the Child. It is absolutely vital that all grown-ups, parents and teachers as well as governments, and bodies like Fifa, make it a matter of their heart what we call in official language ‘the best interest’ of children – which in every day life translates to: dreams, hopes, needs and wishes and well-being of the world’s children.”

Kristina Sperkova, Coordinator, Human Rights Generation and Secretary-General, Active – sobriety, friendship and peace



Alcohol Justice, USA

“The people of sovereign nations such as Brazil, Qatar and Russia should be allowed to protect their own public health and safety. The Brazilian managers of Anheuser-Busch InBev are the puppet masters of the World Cup; they are making the directors of FIFA rich and they are promising economic development to host governments and they don’t care at all for the safety and health of soccer fans.”

Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director, Alcohol Justice, an American alcohol industry watchdog



BRAHA, Brazil

“The people of Brazil know why a ban on alcohol in football stadiums was put in place almost a decade ago. And we have all experienced the benefits of football stadiums that are safer places for families and kids.

“We strongly believe that government and parliament in Brazil can and should do more to protect children from harmful substances. Fifa should not be allowed to overrule Brazilian law for the benefit of industries whose products harm our children. Therefore we express our support for President Roussef in living up to the Convention of the Rights of the Child and making the best interest of our children a matter of her heart.”

Prof. Mina Seinfeld de Carakushansky, President, Brazilian Humanitarians in Action



“We like to join this coalition and to support this important cause.”

Prof. Isidore Olcott, Director, Centre for Research and Information on Substance Abuse



Drug Free Australia

“The ban is all the more important at these larger, more prestigious football matches, because they attract huge crowds, the competition is taken more seriously, emotions are more highly charged, and it has the world stage. Alcohol-fuelled violence and anti-social behaviour could definitely ruin the event for all concerned.

In Australia, restrictions to alcohol sales at major football matches do occur – especially when the matches are deemed to be special occasions. For example, this year, sales of wine were recently banned at an Australia Football League (AFL) match in Alice Springs because authorities feared the influx

of spectators for an AFL game ‘will stretch police and hospital resources’.

The rationale is that the organisers want people to enjoy the game, without the distractions of severe intoxication. They are particularly concerned that it is a family-friendly occasion and that children enjoy the sport, with their parents. At a time when countries should be re-assessing their commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is timely to put protective factors into practice, rather than just paying lip-service to these matters.”

Jo Baxter, Executive Officer, Drug Free Australia



INCAS, India

“Safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility- they are our future. It is a criminal act if the government puts the interests of the alcohol industry before the interests of children worldwide. India has the largest youth population in the world with a huge fan following for football. FIFA world cup is a part of the Indian youth psyche. We do not want this game to be turned into a mere pastime amid hooliganism and drunken revelry. Let’s make football fun and safe. Let each mother watch the game with the consolation that her children are in safe territory.”

Johnson J. Edayaranmula, Executive Director, Indian Center for Alcohol Studies



IOGT International, worldwide

“The world community has to become better at translating the Convention of the Rights of the Child into law practice and they have to shape up in giving primary consideration to the Best Interest of the Child when making policy decisions. “Doing this is a crucial step towards ensuring a better present for children, for their happiness, well-being and development. And it is of course a crucial step towards a better, more just and sustainable world in the future.”

Sven-Olov Carlsson, President, IOGT International



UYDEL, Uganda

“The grown-up world should send out the message that alcohol is not an ordinary commodity and must be drunk in controlled environments. A stadium is not the best way to do it.

The Alcohol industry has always hidden behind sponsorship to aggressively and adversely promote its product as though alcohol is an ordinary commodity. FIFA must know that these are two products which should not go together and as such they need to be separated. The costs of alcohol induced violence is everywhere in every one’s face. Alcohol has also contributed gravely to many sports men to decline in their football talent because alcohol destroys them.”

Rogers Kasirye, Executive Director, Uganda Youth Development Link



Solidar Suisse, Switzerland

“All profiteers of the World Cup should pay taxes as usual. Fifa, too. Solidar Suisse demands from Fifa not to use the World Cup for its own profits only, but to make sure that the Brazilian people benefit from the billion-dollar event.”

Andrea Arezina, Communication and Campaigns, Solidar Suisse



StopDrink Network, Thailand

“Myself, on behalf of StopDrink Network (Thailand) all over the country would like to appreciate and encourage all the networks who’s trying to protect the children and youth from harmful use of alcohol. Nowadays, all people know that the alcohol is not ordinary commodity. And the alcohol consequences are all bad to every people in the world and not only bad for health, it’s more than that, whether the economics, or society.

“It would be a shameful of FIFA if they push the alcohol sales into the stadium in the World Cup at Brazil 2014”

Theera Watcharapranee, Manager, StopDrink Network



Accident Prevention Network, Thailand

“In football, a sport that makes you strong. There is no reason anymore to be related to alcohol, because that is the symbol for alcohol abuse and a leading cause of loss of life on this planet. Accident Prevention Network. objects to the profit over people approach of the alcohol industry and Fifa driving alcoholic beverages back into football stadiums.”

Prommin Kantiya, Director, Accident Prevention Network



IOGT International is the largest worldwide community of non-governmental organizations with a mission to independently enlighten people around the world on a lifestyle free of alcohol and other drugs.