

## International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport

### Preamble

The General Conference of UNESCO,

1. *Recalling* that in the Charter of the United Nations the peoples proclaimed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and affirmed their determination to promote social progress and better standards of life;
2. *Recalling* that by the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein without discrimination of any kind, such as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status;
3. *Convinced* that a condition for the exercise of human rights is the safety and freedom of every human being to develop and preserve their physical, psychological and social well-being and capabilities;
4. *Emphasizing* that resources, authority and responsibility for physical education, physical activity and sport must be allocated without discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other basis, to overcome the exclusion experienced by vulnerable or marginalized groups;
5. *Acknowledging* that cultural diversity in physical education, physical activity and sport forms part of humanity's intangible heritage and includes physical play, recreation, dance, organized, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games;
6. *Recognizing* that physical education, physical activity and sport can bring a variety of individual and societal benefits, such as health, social and economic development, youth empowerment, reconciliation and peace;
7. *Highlighting* that the provision of quality physical education, physical activity and sport is essential, to realize their full potential to promote values such as fair play, equality, honesty, excellence, commitment, courage, teamwork, respect for rules and laws, respect for self and others, community spirit and solidarity, as well as fun and enjoyment;
8. *Stressing* that, in order to achieve quality physical education, physical activity and sport, all personnel, professional and volunteer alike, must have access to suitable training, supervision and counselling;
9. *Underlining* that early play experience with parents and carers, and participation in quality physical education are essential entry points for children to learn the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge, understanding and enjoyment necessary for lifelong participation in physical activity, sport and in society at large;
10. *Emphasizing* that physical education, physical activity and sport should seek to promote stronger bonds between people, solidarity, mutual respect and understanding, and respect for the integrity and dignity of every human being;

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11. *Insisting* that concerted action and co-operation between stakeholders at all levels is the prerequisite for protecting the integrity and potential benefits of physical education, physical activity and sport from discrimination, racism, homophobia, bullying, doping, manipulation, excessive training of children, sexual exploitation, trafficking, as well as violence;
12. *Aware* that physical education, physical activity and sport can be enriched by undertaking them responsibly in a natural environment, and that this inspires respect for the Planet's resources and a concern to conserve and use these resources for the greater good of humanity;
13. *Proclaims* this International Charter that puts physical education, physical activity and sport at the service of human development, and *urges* everyone, especially governments, intergovernmental organizations, sports organizations, non-governmental entities, the business community, the media, educators, researchers, sport professionals and volunteers, participants and their support personnel, referees, families, as well as spectators to commit to and disseminate this Charter, so that its principles can become a reality for all human beings.

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### **Article 1 – The practice of physical education, physical activity and sport is a fundamental right for all**

- 1.1 Every human being has a fundamental right to physical education, physical activity and sport without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or any other basis.
- 1.2 The freedom to develop physical, psychological and social well-being and capabilities through these activities must be supported by all governmental, sport and educational institutions.
- 1.3 Inclusive, adapted and safe opportunities to participate in physical education, physical activity and sport must be available to all human beings, notably children of preschool age, women and girls, the aged, persons with disabilities and indigenous people.
- 1.4 Equal opportunity to participate and be involved at all supervision and decision-making levels in physical education, physical activity and sport, whether for the purpose of recreation, health promotion or high performance, is the right of every girl and every woman that must be actively enforced.
- 1.5 The diversity of physical education, physical activity and sport is a basic feature of their value and appeal. Traditional and indigenous games, dances and sports, also in their modern and emerging forms, express the world's rich cultural heritage and must be protected and promoted.
- 1.6 Every human being must have the opportunity to attain a level of achievement through physical education, physical activity and sport which corresponds to their capabilities and interest.



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1.7 Each education system must assign the requisite place and importance to physical education, physical activity and sport in order to establish a balance and strengthen links between physical activities and other components of education. It must also ensure that quality and inclusive physical education classes are included, preferentially on a daily basis, as a mandatory part of primary and secondary education and that sport and physical activity at school and in all other educational institutions play an integral role in the daily routine of children and youth.

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### **Article 2 – Physical education, physical activity and sport can yield a wide range of benefits to individuals, communities and society at large**

2.1 When appropriately organized, taught, resourced and practiced, physical education, physical activity and sport can make distinct contributions towards a wide range of benefits to individuals, families, communities and society at large.

2.2 Physical education, physical activity and sport can play a significant role in the development of participants' physical literacy, well-being, health and capability by improving endurance, strength, flexibility, coordination, balance and control. The ability to swim is a vital skill for every person exposed to risks of drowning.

2.3 Physical education, physical activity and sport can improve mental health, psychological well-being and capability by enhancing body-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, by decreasing stress, anxiety and depression, by increasing cognitive function, and by developing a wide range of skills and attributes, such as cooperation, communication, leadership, discipline, teamwork, that contribute to achievement whilst participating, learning and in other aspects of life.

2.4 Physical education, physical activity and sport can support social well-being and capability by establishing and strengthening community-ties and relationships with family, friends and peers, creating a sense of belonging and acceptance, developing positive social attitudes and behaviours, and bringing people from different cultural, social and economic backgrounds together in the pursuit of shared goals and interests.

2.5 Physical education, physical activity and sport may contribute to prevention and the rehabilitation of those at risk of drug addiction, alcohol and tobacco abuse, delinquency, exploitation and abject poverty.

2.6 For society at large, physical education, physical activity and sport can yield significant health, social and economic benefits. An active lifestyle helps prevent heart disease, diabetes, cancer as well as obesity and ultimately reduces premature death. In addition, it reduces health related costs, increases productivity, and strengthens civic engagement and social cohesion.

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### **Article 3 – All stakeholders must participate in creating a strategic vision, identifying policy options and priorities**

3.1 Strategic visions for physical education, physical activity and sport are prerequisite for balancing and optimizing the impact of policy options and priorities at different levels.

3.2 All stakeholders, especially national and local authorities responsible for sport, education, youth, health, active recreation, development, urban planning, environment, transport, gender and disability matters, and intergovernmental organizations, the Olympic and Paralympic movements, sports organizations, non-governmental entities, the business community, the media, educators, researchers, sport professionals and volunteers, participants and their support personnel, referees, families, as well as spectators share the responsibility for developing and supporting physical education, physical activity and sport policy; and all mentioned stakeholders should be given opportunities to exercise this responsibility.

3.3 Public authorities at all levels and those bodies acting on their behalf must take action to develop and implement legislation and regulations, define national sport development plans with clear objectives, and adopt other measures to encourage physical education, physical activity and sport, including the provision of material, financial and technical assistance.

3.4 Strategies and policies for physical education, physical activity and sport must provide particular support to the voluntary sector, in order to assure its continued development and engagement, strengthen respect for freedom of association and acknowledge the sector's contribution to democratic culture.

3.5 Sustained investment in physical education is a fundamental component of all countries' educational and sport commitment, and allocation of budgets for public provision of quality physical education programmes should be protected and strengthened.

3.6 States and cities considering hosting major sport events should integrate this option in their long-term strategy for physical education, physical activity and sport, in order to sustain and strengthen participation in physical activity, and help improve social cohesion.

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### **Article 4 – Physical education, physical activity and sport programmes must inspire lifelong participation**

4.1 Physical education, physical activity and sport programmes must be designed to meet the needs and personal characteristics of those practicing them over their whole lifespan.

4.2 Early positive experiences of play, games and physical activities should be prioritized for all so as to lay a foundation of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation necessary for the maintenance of lifelong participation in physical activity and sport.

4.3 As the only area of school curricula concerned with developing students' competence and confidence in sport and physical activity, physical education provides a learning gateway for the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for lifelong physical activity and sport; quality and inclusive physical education classes, taught by qualified physical education teachers, should be mandatory in all grades and levels of education.



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4.4 Physical education, physical activity and sport policy and programmes must be systematically monitored and evaluated by appropriate national agencies, to assess whether they satisfy the needs of their intended beneficiaries.

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### **Article 5 – All stakeholders must ensure that their activities are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable**

5.1 When planning, implementing and evaluating their activities, providers of physical education, physical activity and sport, as well as the organizers of sport events must pay due consideration to the overarching principle of sustainability, be it economic, social, environmental or sporting.

5.2 Whereas the growing consumption of sporting goods can generate a positive impact on the global economy, the industry must take responsibility for developing and integrating social and environmentally-friendly practices.

5.3 Any negative impact of indoor and outdoor activities to the environment should be prevented. Owners of sport infrastructure have a particular responsibility to avoid negligent behaviour risking danger to bystanders, noise, waste, use of chemicals and other potential damage to nature.

5.4 All parties involved in the realization of major sports events – in particular event owners, public authorities, sports organizations, commercial stakeholders, the media – must ensure a sustainable legacy for the hosting communities with regard to the financial cost, environmental and social impact, the post-event use of the infrastructure and the effect on participation in sport and physical activity.

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### **Article 6 – Research, evidence and evaluation are indispensable components for the development of physical education, physical activity and sport**

6.1 Policy decisions must be based on sound factual evidence. Good quality policy-making depends on high quality information gathered from a range of sources, including scientific research, expert knowledge, the media, stakeholder consultation, as well as evaluation and monitoring of previous policies and programmes.

6.2 Governments and other key stakeholders should initiate and support research in the area of physical education, physical activity and sport.

6.3 Research, evidence and evaluation should adhere to established ethical standards and reject inappropriate applications in physical education, physical activity and sport, such as doping, cheating or other misconduct.

6.4 It is vital to collect and disseminate research findings, evaluation studies and other documentation on physical education, physical activity and sport. The results of scientific research and evaluation should be communicated in a way that makes them accessible, comprehensible and relevant for all concerned stakeholders and the public at large.

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6.5 The media can play a crucial role in providing information on and raising awareness of the societal importance, ethical values and benefits of physical education, physical activity and sport. It is both a mutual responsibility and opportunity to increase co-operation between the media, the scientific community and other stakeholders with a view to informing public debate and decision making.

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### **Article 7 – Teaching, coaching and administration of physical education, physical activity and sport must be performed by qualified personnel**

7.1 All personnel who assume professional responsibility for physical education, physical activity and sport must have appropriate qualifications, training and access to continuous professional development.

7.2 All physical education, physical activity and sport personnel must be recruited and trained in sufficient numbers to ensure they attain and sustain the competence necessary to nurture the rounded development and safety of all persons in their charge. Personnel who have received such training should be given a professional recognition in keeping with the duties they perform.

7.3 Volunteer coaches, officials and support personnel should be offered suitable training and supervision, given their status as an invaluable resource for the sector, to carry out essential functions, facilitate increased participation, ensure participant development and safety, and foster broad-based engagement in democratic processes and the life of the community.

7.4 Opportunities specific to inclusive and adaptive training across all levels of participation should be widely available.

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### **Article 8 – Adequate and safe spaces, facilities and equipment are essential to quality physical education, physical activity and sport**

8.1 Adequate and safe spaces, facilities, equipment, and dress-options must be provided and maintained to meet the needs of participants in physical education, physical activity and sport mindful of different needs associated with climate, culture, gender, age, and disability.

8.2 Public authorities, sports organizations, schools and other institutions that administer facilities at all levels should work together to design, provide and optimize the use of installations, facilities and equipment for physical education, physical activity and sport, taking into account the opportunities and conditions of the natural surroundings.

8.3 Private and public workplaces should offer opportunities for physical activity and sport by putting appropriate facilities, staff and incentives at the disposal of employees at all levels, contributing to their well-being and to enhanced productivity.

8.4 To support, develop and maintain an active and healthy lifestyle for citizens, public authorities should integrate opportunities for physical activity and sport into all urban, rural and transportation planning.





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8.5 When building, maintaining and operating facilities and public spaces for physical education, physical activity and sport, the responsible authorities and owners of sport infrastructure must strive to maximize energy- and resource-efficiency and minimize adverse impact on the natural surroundings.

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### **Article 9 – Safety and the management of risk are necessary conditions of quality provision**

9.1 Physical education, physical activity and sport must take place in a safe environment that protects the dignity, rights and health of all participants. Practices and events that undermine safety, or involve inappropriate risk, are incompatible with the integrity and potential benefits of physical education, physical activity and sport; such practices and events require a determined and immediate response.

9.2 Safety and the management of risk require that all stakeholders seek to rid physical education, physical activity and sport of practices that limit or harm participants, spectators and educators, especially the more vulnerable groups in society such as children, youth, the elderly, women, persons with disabilities, migrants and indigenous people. Harmful practices include discrimination, racism, homophobia, bullying, doping and manipulation, deprivation of education, excessive training of children, sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence.

9.3 Physical Education, physical activity and sport can serve as a powerful tool to prevent the universal phenomenon of gender-based violence by addressing its root causes, especially gender inequality, harmful social norms and gender stereotypes.

9.4 It is important that all stakeholders in physical education, physical activity and sport, including participants, administrators, teachers, coaches, and parents are conscious of the potential risks, especially for children, of dangerous or inappropriate training methods and competition, and psychological pressures of any kind.

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### **Article 10 – Protection and promotion of the integrity and ethical values of physical education, physical activity and sport must be a constant concern for all**

10.1 All forms of physical education, physical activity and sport must be protected from abuse. Phenomena such as violence, doping, political exploitation, corruption and manipulation of sports competitions endanger the credibility and integrity of physical education, physical activity and sport and undermine their educational, developmental, and health promoting functions. Participants including referees, public authorities, law enforcement, sports organizations, betting operators, owners of sports-related rights, the media, non-governmental organizations, administrators, educators, families, the medical profession and other stakeholders must collaborate to ensure a coordinated response to integrity threats.

10.2 Every effort must be made to counter the harmful effects of doping, and to protect the physical, psychological and social capabilities and well-being of participants, the virtues of fair play and competition, the integrity of the sporting community and the rights of people involved at every level. The universally adopted anti-doping rules must be implemented at all levels of performance by the competent international and national authorities.



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10.3 The manipulation of sport competitions undermines the core values of sport. Combined with betting, the manipulation of sport competitions offers large scale business opportunities for transnational organized crime. Effective measures must be taken to foster national and international co-operation against the manipulation of sport competitions, as well as a coordinated global response in line with the relevant international instruments.

10.4 All organizations and institutions dealing with physical education, physical activity and sport must implement principles of good governance. These include transparent and democratic procedures for elections and decision-making, regular consultations with stakeholder groups, as well as clear provisions for the redistribution of funds, and the rigorous enforcement of the principles of accountability and transparency.

10.5 Any employer in the field of physical education, physical activity and sport or related areas must pay due consideration to the psychological and physical health of their employees, including professional athletes. International labour conventions and basic human rights must be respected, in particular to avoid child labour and human trafficking.

10.6 To reduce the risk of corruption and overspending related to major sport events, event owners, public authorities and other stakeholders must take measures to maximize transparency, objectivity and fairness in the bidding, planning and hosting of these events.

10.7 Public authorities which contribute financial, material or other support to providers of physical education, physical activity and sport, have a right and duty to audit and control the proper use of the resources they have granted on behalf of society.

10.8 Public authorities and sports organizations are invited to enhance their co-operation in a spirit of mutual respect, and to minimize the risk of conflict by clearly defining their respective functions, legal rights and mutual responsibilities in physical education, physical activity and sport.

10.9 Prevention programmes which include values-based education and information components are crucial. These programmes should foster positive attitudes towards anti-doping in sport and negative attitudes towards manipulations, corruption, misconduct and exploitation and should be provided to participants, including referees, public authorities, law enforcement, sports organizations, betting operators, owners of sports-related rights, the media, non-governmental organizations, administrators, educators, families, the medical profession and other stakeholders.

10.10 Public authorities and sports organizations should encourage the media to promote and protect the integrity of physical education, physical activity and sport. The media are invited to fulfil their role as critical and independent observers of events, organizations and stakeholders, informing the public of the benefits, risks and educational values of physical education, physical activity and sport.

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### **Article 11 – Physical education, physical activity and sport can play an important role in the realization of development, peace and post-conflict and post-disaster objectives**

11.1 Sport for development and peace initiatives should aim at eradicating poverty, as well as strengthening democracy, human rights, security, a culture of peace and non-violence, dialogue and conflict resolution, tolerance and non-discrimination, social inclusion, gender equality, the rule of law, sustainability, environmental awareness, health, education and the role of civil society.

11.2 Sport for development and peace initiatives should be promoted and utilized to support conflict prevention, post-conflict and post-disaster interventions, community building, national unity, and other efforts that contribute to the effective functioning of civil society and international development goals.

11.3 Sport for development and peace initiatives should be inclusive, and culture-, gender-, age- and disability-sensitive, and include strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. They should encourage local ownership of projects and embody the same principles of sustainability and integrity as other physical education, physical activity and sport initiatives.

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### **Article 12 – International co-operation is a prerequisite for enhancing the scope and impact of physical education, physical activity and sport**

12.1 Through international co-operation and partnerships, all stakeholders should place physical education, physical activity and sport at the service of development, peace, solidarity and friendship among individuals, communities and nations.

12.2 International co-operation and partnerships should be used for effective advocacy, at the international, regional and national levels, about the important contributions of physical education, physical activity and sport to social and economic development, while supporting and sharing related research and evidence.

12.3 International co-operation and partnerships amongst public authorities, sports organizations and other non-governmental organizations are crucial to reduce existing disparities between and within States in the provision of physical education, physical activity and sport. This can be achieved through the exchange of good practice, education programmes, capacity development, advocacy, as well as indicators and other monitoring and evaluation tools based on the universal principles set forth in the present Charter.